

Deliberate metaphors in political discourse: the case of citizen discourse

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Abstract

This article proposes to apply Steen's (2008) three-dimensional model of metaphor analysis in communication to a corpus of political discourse, in this case citizen discourse. Our corpus has accordingly been analysed by making a distinction between three layers of metaphor, respectively at the linguistic (direct vs. indirect metaphors), conceptual (novel vs. conventional metaphors) and communicative levels (deliberate vs. non-deliberate metaphors). Our results suggest that making the distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors leads to meaningful political insights, notably pointing to differences in saliency of the source domains in terms of which citizens make sense of Belgian federalism. In this regard, the family domain, and more especially the metaphor *BELGIAN FEDERALISM IS A LOVE RELATIONSHIP* appears to function as an important conceptual reference point for the citizens' understanding of the political relations in the Belgian context.

In diesem Artikel wird Steens (2008) dreidimensionales Modell der Metaphernanalyse auf ein Korpus politischer Reden von Bürgern angewendet. Es wurden drei Metapherenebenen unterschieden, nämlich eine linguistische (direkte vs. indirekte Metaphern), eine konzeptuelle (konventionelle vs. neue Metaphern) und eine kommunikative Ebene (gezielte vs. nicht-gezielte Metaphern). Unsere Ergebnisse weisen darauf hin, dass der Unterschied zwischen gezielter und nicht-gezielter Metapher zu bedeutenden politischen Erkenntnissen führen kann, indem wichtige Unterschiede in der Bedeutung der Quelldomänen für den belgischen Föderalismus bei belgischen Bürgern deutlich werden. Vor allem die Familiendomäne und noch spezifischer die Metapher *BELGIAN FEDERALISM IS A LOVE RELATIONSHIP* scheinen ein wichtiger konzeptueller Referenzpunkt für das Verstehen der politischen Beziehungen durch die Bürger im belgischen Kontext zu sein.

Keywords: metaphor analysis, political discourse, MIP, deliberate metaphors, citizen discourse, Belgium, federalism

1. Scope and issues¹

Since the work of Aristotle, or more recently Lakoff's (1996, 2004) research on the metaphorical patterns underlying American politics, political discourse has frequently been recognized as a genre which quite naturally lends itself to

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the use of metaphors (see for instance Charteris-Black 2011), an observation that has been confirmed by numerous studies focussing on the analysis of political metaphors (see among others Carver/Pikalo 2008, De Landtsheer 2009, L'Hôte 2011, Musolff 2004, 2010). When analysing metaphors in political discourse, one can however be struck by the varying communicative nature of the identified metaphors, ranging from unnoticed conventional ways of talking about political issues to explicitly used devices aiming at persuading one's audience and framing the political debate in a conscious manner. While this distinction has often been recognized in the literature (see for instance Charteris-Black 2011: 25-32), it remains strikingly the case that it is not accounted for in the literature on political metaphors. In this contribution, we therefore propose to specifically apply Steen's (2008) model of metaphor analysis to political discourse, in this case citizen discourse.

Unlike most studies on metaphor in political discourse, which tend to focus on elite discourse with the underlying assumption that the political leaders might consciously use metaphors to convince (or manipulate) their audience (a rather top-down approach to political communication), studying political discourse from a citizen perspective offers a bottom-up way to tackle the question of how metaphors might impact on the citizens' framing of complex political processes. Indeed, as has been suggested by Bougher (2012) and shown by Reuchamps/Perrez (2012), citizens also produce metaphors when they talk about political issues. However, the metaphors used by the citizens sometimes show various degrees of communicative functions (as has been suggested by Perrez/Reuchamps submitted). In this regard, we suggest that a more thorough analysis of the communicative status of these metaphors, by introducing the notion of deliberateness, might lead to interesting political insights, regarding the way citizens understand and spontaneously frame such political issues.

In this light, the article is structured as follows. In the next section, we discuss the notion of deliberate metaphors specifically applied to the study of political discourses. In section 3, we discuss the methodological issues specifically raised by the analysis of deliberate metaphors in citizens' discourses and, on this basis, we present (section 4) and discuss (section 5) the results of our quantitative analysis.

2. (Deliberate) metaphors in political discourse

In the wake of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work (1980), much attention has been devoted to the study of metaphors not as rhetoric figures but as conceptual tools structuring complex realities. According to the defenders of CMT, metaphors play a major role on our perception and categorization of abstract entities and make it possible to structure our comprehension of complex processes. Their suggestion that metaphors structure our comprehension of our surrounding environment has led to a widespread scientific endeavour to use conceptual metaphors as analytic tools to explore various areas of social sciences.

While conceptual metaphors occur in every area of life, the political domain remains one prominent area where to find metaphors. As Semino (2008: 90) puts it: "it is often claimed that the use of metaphor is particularly necessary in politics, since politics is an abstract and complex domain of experience, and metaphors can provide ways of simplifying complexities and making abstractions accessible." The need for more research on the political impact of metaphors has therefore been often emphasized: "if metaphor is at the heart of cognitive framing then it should be crucial to political study" (De Landtsheer 2009: 60).

Accordingly, scholars in linguistics and in political science have moved toward investigating the use and especially the identification of metaphors in various political domains (for an overview, see Bougher 2012). For instance, Lakoff has offered an account of American politics in terms of conceptual metaphors (1996, 2004), Musolff has explored how we conceive and thus speak about Europe (1996, 2000, 2004) but also about the Holocaust (2010) in metaphorical terms, Beers and De Landtsheer have looked at the use of metaphors in international relations (2004), Charteris-Black (2011) has analysed speeches by major British and American politicians and their persuasive power. As suggested by this short overview, many different types of discourses and topics have been uncovered by scholars interested in political metaphors (see also Carver/Pikalo 2008).

Yet, in these accounts of the metaphor's role in politics, the predominant focus has always been on discourses by the political elites. And even then, the amount of literature has only just recently started to "[reflect] the importance of the subject" (De Landtsheer 2009: 60). What is more, while the metaphors

used by the elites are definitely relevant because they illustrate how they frame the political debate (L'Hôte 2011), citizens' discourse about politics should also be taken into account. In fact, beside a few exceptions (see for instance Cameron and Maslen 2010 on the public and expert perceptions of terrorism), such an investigation has been left out of the analysis: "while research on metaphors in political discourse has flourished in recent years, the focus on elite communication has left metaphor's wider capacity as a reasoning tool for citizens underexplored" (Bougher 2012: 149). Research on citizen data can lead to two specific kinds of insights: on the one hand, it makes it possible to assess to what extent metaphors produced by the political elite are integrated in the citizens' political reasoning, but on the other hand, it also offers the opportunity to look at how citizens "generate their own metaphors (i.e., spontaneous metaphors) to make sense of the political environment" (Bougher 2012: 149).

Hitherto, following Lakoff's (1996) seminal work on metaphors in American politics, the focus in the study of political discourse has been on the identification of conceptual structures accounting for our perception and understanding of politics. As stressed by Billig and MacMillan (2005: 459), this results in two main observations, namely (i) that "political speakers can use metaphors in rhetorically effective ways to create new meanings and to challenge previously established ways of understanding" and (ii) that "metaphors can function as routine idioms in political discourse in ways that deaden political awareness". While such accounts have shown the omnipresence of metaphors in political discourses, they have not paid attention to the rhetorical effectiveness of metaphors and above all to their – possibly – varying nature. As pointed out by Billig and MacMillan (2005: 460) traditional research often fail to consider the "complex rhetorical processes by which a metaphor might pass from a striking, novel comparison into an unthinking idiom." The two following examples of metaphors found in citizens' discourses are illustrative of this varying nature of metaphors in political discourses.

- (1) Fr. "...le fédéralisme tel qu'il a été *construit* progressivement,..."
(PBF, D8, 3897-3898) ^{2 3}

² The examples taken from our data are marked with an ID-number, composed of three parts. The first part points to the corpus, the label 'PBF' referring to the corpus of

En. '...federalism, as it has been *constructed* progressively,...'

(2) Fr. "..., parce que pour moi la Belgique reste une espèce de grande famille, malgré tout." (PBF, D1, 2289-2290).

En. '..., because to me, Belgium remains a kind of large family, after all.'

In both examples, Belgium is metaphorically accounted for, being respectively presented in terms of a physical structure in (1) and of a family in (2). While, on the conceptual level, both metaphors are instances of frequent conceptual metaphors in political discourse (respectively ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and THE STATE IS A FAMILY), they appear to have a quite different nature. With the family metaphor in (2), this citizen is explicitly presenting his own conceptualization of Belgium. This is not the case in (1), where the construction metaphor is only indirectly expressed, through the use of a conventional metaphorical extension of the verb *construire* ('to build'). While it is not our intention to undermine the importance of conventional metaphors in political discourse, and more specifically their potential impact on collective conceptualizations of complex processes through their automatic diffusion via language, we are convinced that in political discourse analysis, it is crucial to distinguish conventional metaphors, which are the result of common ways of expressing things, from non-conventional ones, which are produced intentionally to achieve some rhetorical goal. Indeed, only such a distinction can help us understand (i) why political actors use metaphors in their discourse and (ii) how they actually perceive and conceptualize complex notions such as state structure and interactions.

In order to take this distinction into account, we based our analysis on Steen's (2008) three-dimensional model of metaphor analysis in discourse and communication. This discourse analytical framework relies on the distinction between different layers of metaphors at the linguistic, conceptual and communicative levels. At the linguistic level, Steen (2008, 2010) distinguishes

French-speaking citizens, the label 'PBN' referring to the corpus of Dutch-speaking citizens. The second part is the ID of the participant and the third part points to the lines the passage is referring to in the respective corpora.

³ In our examples, the relevant metaphorically used expressions are put into italics. The lexical units pointing to potential metaphors are underlined.

direct metaphors from indirect ones. Direct metaphors “embody a direct expression of a conceptual domain that functions as a source in a metaphorical comparison” (Steen 2010: 55). In this case, “there is some conceptual domain that functions as a source in a metaphorical mapping” (Steen 2010: 54) which “is expressed directly as such by the language” (ibid.). Typical examples of such direct metaphors are metaphors of the ‘A is B’ (see example 3) type, similes ‘A is like B’ (see example 4) or cross-domain mappings made explicit by a lexical signal (see example 5). Indirect metaphors are metaphors in which this cross-domain mapping is not explicitly expressed (see example 1 above).

- (3) Fr. “alors on voit qu'actuellement on est en train d'essayer de constituer l'Europe, mais que la Belgique, comme d'habitude, est un *laboratoire*.” (PBF, D6, 2247-2249)
En. ‘then we see that currently we’re trying to constitute Europe, but that Belgium, as always, is a *laboratory*.’
- (4) Fr. “Alors voilà ce que je dis: fédéralisme entre peuples de cultures différentes, est-ce bien possible ? Est-ce que à un moment donné, comme un *couple* pas bien associé, est-ce qu’on n’a pas envie de retourner chez papa maman, de rentrer au bercail ?” (PBF, D5, 2545-2548)
En. ‘Here is what I am saying: federalism between peoples with different cultures, is it really possible ? Won’t we at a given moment, like a mismatched *couple*, want to get back to mam and dad, to come back home?’
- (5) Du. “als je vergelijkt [authors’ note: Belgisch federalisme] met een *bedrijf*, een *bedrijf* laat je ook niet leiden door de werkman of de kuisvrouw bij wijze van spreken.” (PBN, L3)
En. ‘if you compare [authors’ note: Belgian federalism] with a *company*, you don’t let a *company* be run by a workman or a cleaning lady, so to speak.’

At the conceptual level, Steen (2008) makes a distinction between novel and conventional metaphors. Conventional metaphors, sometimes called dead metaphors, are those metaphors which have been lexicalized in the language system and which function as metaphorical extensions of polysemous words.

As discussed above, in example (1), Belgian federalism is presented as an entity under construction. This use of the verb *construire* ('to build') denoting the construction of abstract entities such as countries can be considered as a lexicalized conventional metaphorical extension of the verb whose basic meaning refers to the construction of concrete entities such as roads or buildings. On the contrary, novel metaphors are based on original mappings between two domains of experience, such as in examples (2) and (4) in which Belgian federalism is compared to a family or a couple, or (3) and (5) in which Belgium is respectively compared to a laboratory and a company.⁴

Finally, at the communicative level, one should distinguish deliberate metaphors from non-deliberate metaphors. According to Steen (2008: 222), deliberate metaphors are produced on purpose "to change the addressee's perspective on the referent or topic that is the target of the metaphor, by making the addressee look at it from a different conceptual domain or space, which functions as a conceptual source". Accordingly, examples (2) to (5) could be considered as deliberate metaphors, whereas example (1) would be regarded as an instance of non-deliberate metaphor.

As suggested by Steen (2008, 2010), and highlighted by Krenmayr (2011) and Beger (2011), the boundaries between these various types of metaphors at various analytical levels (linguistic, conceptual, communicative) are not always clear-cut. Though most direct and novel metaphors often tend to be deliberate, this link is not automatic. And similarly, while indirect and conventional metaphors would often be considered to be non-deliberate, one cannot rule out the possibility of them being deliberately used since "the deliberateness lies in the use of the linguistic metaphor in its discourse context, for a particular purpose on a particular occasion" (Cameron 2003: 101). Krenmayr (2011) for instance suggests that the repeated use of some conventionalized metaphors from the same source domain across a small text span could be considered as an indication of their deliberateness (see also Beger 2011). She gives the example of the English idiom *play fire with*, which at first sight is a clear case of conventional metaphor. However, when appearing

⁴ Some authors (see Steen 2008 for an overview) suggest that this difference between conventional and novel metaphors can be accounted for in terms of processing differences, claiming that novel metaphors would rather be processed by comparison between two domains, whereas conventional metaphors would rather be processed by categorization. However, discussing these processing differences lies beyond the scope of this contribution.

in an article on rugby, next to lexical items belonging to the same source domain, such as *consumed*, *conflagration* and *ashes* (see Krenmayr 2011: 159-160 for the concrete examples), one would obviously draw the conclusion that the idiom *play fire with* had been intentionally used by the journalist to achieve a given communication goal (see also Beger 2011 for other examples of conventional metaphors used deliberately through repetition in academic discourse). The repetition of lexical items belonging to the same source domain across a small text span is one of the few textual cues on which the researcher can rely to decide whether a conventional metaphor has been used deliberately or not.

Apart from this, considering that the identification of deliberate metaphors comes down to identifying the speakers' intentions at the moment of speaking, it remains a delicate enterprise, since the researcher, who is virtually cut off from this context of production at the moment of analysis, has to reconstruct it post-hoc on the basis of his/her own methodology. So doing, relying on Steen's analytical framework should allow us to distinguish the metaphors that fulfil a communicative function in discourse interaction, from those that do not. Further methodological issues regarding the identification and categorization of metaphors are discussed in section 3.2 but before we turn to them, we will present the political context in which our data have been collected.

3. Data and method

3.1 Citizen corpora

To study deliberate metaphors, academic (Beger 2011) and media (Krenmayr 2011) discourses have been used. After all, in such discourses and despite their differences, because their aim is to convince an audience, it is likely to find deliberate metaphors. By contrast, in citizen discourses and in particular citizen discussions, this persuasive function may be less salient. Therefore, citizen corpora offer an interesting ground of investigation to understand the (non-)deliberate nature of metaphors. Nonetheless, as such, public citizens' discourses hardly exist. Yet, citizens do talk about politics. To apprehend these talks, two different ways are possible: one is to use "recorded" real conversations for instance in online forums, another one is to

foster such conversations using the focus-group technique (De Cillia, Reisigl/Wodak, 1999). Though the latter offers promising avenues for language and metaphor analysis, it has only occasionally been applied in linguistic and/or metaphor research (see Cameron 2007, Cameron/Maslen 2010 for a few exceptions). The focus-group technique also offers a delineated setting, where some variables may be controlled, such as the number of participants and the issues at stake, allowing for more scientific leverage.

To study the deliberate nature of metaphors, this research relies on original data from eight focus groups composed of 6 to 9 people and held in Belgium after the 2007 federal elections, at a time where there was much discussion about the future of the country (Deschouwer/Reuchamps 2013, Reuchamps/Perrez 2012). Four focus groups were organized in French-speaking Belgium and four in Dutch-speaking Belgium in order to collect citizen discussions on both side of the language border. In each case, for over four hours, the participants, who came from various backgrounds and who held different political beliefs, discussed the future of Belgian federalism with fellow citizens as well as with politicians and experts (Reuchamps 2011, 2013). The discussions with the politicians and the experts were meant to offer the citizens different points of views on the issue at stake. In fact, the purpose of these focus groups was to allow participants to learn about, reflect and then discuss Belgian federalism and specifically its future. In this qualitative research design, the participants discussed and pondered topics relating to federalism for a quite extensive period of discussion. The group discussions were recorded and transcribed. This resulted in two distinct corpora of citizens' discussions respectively in French (FR-corpus: 52,003 words) and Dutch (NL-corpus: 47,579 words).

3.2 Metaphor identification

In order to assess to what extent the citizens used metaphors to talk about Belgian federalism, we performed a slightly adapted version of the MIP procedure (Pragglejazz Group 2007). To identify the potential metaphorical expressions related to Belgian federalism, we firstly read the entire corpora to come to a global understanding of their respective contents (MIP, step 1) and subsequently determined the different lexical units in the corpora (MIP, step 2). However, unlike the traditional MIP procedure would prescribe, we did

not consider all the lexical units from the corpora but automatically preselected the potentially relevant contexts, e.g. the contexts in which the citizens talked about Belgian federalism, by performing a concordance search (i) for the lexical units directly referring to the target domain of the Belgian federal state (see table 1 for an overview of the target words included in this concordance search) and (ii) for lexical signals of cross-domain mappings, i.e. words which might explicitly point to metaphorically used expressions (such as *comme* 'like', *(zo)als* '(such) as', *comparer* 'to compare', *vergelijken* 'to compare', *symboliser* 'to symbolize', *symboliseren* 'to symbolize', *représenter* 'to represent', *representeren* 'to represent', *vertegenwoordigen* 'to represent', *évoquer* 'to evoke', *être synonyme de* 'to be synonymous with', *synoniem zijn met* 'to be synonymous with', ...)⁵. This concordance search resulted respectively in 492 relevant occurrences in the FR-corpus and 496 relevant occurrences in the NL-corpus.

Corpus	Terms referring to the target domain of Belgian federalism
FR-corpus	<i>Belgique</i> 'Belgium', <i>défédéraliser</i> 'to defederalize', <i>état</i> 'state', <i>fédéralisme</i> 'federalism', <i>fédérer</i> 'to federate', <i>nation</i> 'nation', <i>pays</i> 'country', <i>refédéraliser</i> 'to refederalize'; Noun + <i>belge</i> 'belgian', + <i>communautaire</i> 'community', <i>fédéral</i> 'federal', + <i>fédéré</i> 'federated', + <i>institutionnel</i> 'institutional', + <i>national</i> 'national'.
NL-corpus	<i>België</i> 'Belgium', <i>deelstaat</i> 'federated entity', <i>federaal</i> 'federal', <i>federalisme</i> 'federalism', <i>land</i> 'country', <i>natie</i> 'nation', <i>staat</i> 'state'; Noun + <i>Belgisch</i> 'belgian', + <i>communautair</i> 'community', + <i>federaal</i> 'federal', + <i>institutioneel</i> 'institutional', + <i>nationaal</i> 'national'.

Table 1: Terms referring to the target domain of Belgian federalism used for the automatic corpus extraction

The relevant contexts⁶ have then been analysed to find metaphorically used expressions. It should however be emphasized, that, since we were primarily interested in the way citizens talked about *Belgian federalism*, we did

⁵ This list of lexical signals is inspired from Krenmayr (2011: 60-61) and has been adapted for French and Dutch relying on our own intuitions.

⁶ The analysed contexts consisted of 150 characters to the left and of 150 characters to the right of the target word.

not assess the metaphorical potential of each lexical units in these contexts, but only of the words that were used to refer to Belgian federalism (hereby departing from the traditional MIP procedure). This implies for instance that we did not take the potential metaphorical uses of function words into account nor the various extensions of the word 'Belgium'. The latter decision has been made on the grounds that some of these extensions do not directly relate to the citizens' perception of the Belgian political system but rather encode instances of conventional metonymies, such as in example (6) where the word 'Belgium' is used to refer to Belgian authorities (*totum pro parte*), or present Belgium as an abstract container, such as in (7). Considering such examples were not directly relevant to our central research question, they were left out of the analysis.

(6) Du. "Het heeft geen enkele zin dat bijvoorbeeld *België* zich alleen bezighoudt met de Schelde rein te houden als Frankrijk en Nederland niet meedoen." (PBN-L6-1424-1425)

En. 'It makes no sense that for instance *Belgium* takes care of keeping the Scheldt clean if France and The Netherlands do not participate'

(7) Fr. "On va parler aussi d'une perception qui est (...) peut-être propre d'une communauté même à l'intérieur de la *Belgique*." (PBF-A-393-394)

En. 'We will also talk of a perception which is (...) perhaps typical of a community within *Belgium*'

In order to find metaphor-related expressions, we relied on the steps 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 of the MIP procedure by comparing the meaning of the word in context with its more basic meaning, the latter being related to sensory perception, bodily action or being more precise (Pragglejazz Group 2007). As suggested by Steen et al. (2010), however, we did not take the historical dimension into account to establish the basic meanings of the analysed words. For this stage of the analysis, we respectively used the electronic version of *Le Petit Robert de la langue française 2014* as reference dictionary for the FR-corpus, and the electronic version of the *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse*

*Taal*⁷ as reference dictionary for the NL-corpus. This second stage of analysis led to the identification of 99 metaphorical contexts in the FR-corpus (20,1%) and 73 in the NL-corpus (15%).⁸

	FR-corpus		NL-corpus	
	N	%	N	%
<i>Metaphorical contexts</i>	99	20.1%	73	14.8%
<i>Non-metaphorical contexts</i>	393	79.9%	422	85.2%
Total	492	100%	495	100%

Table 2: Metaphorical and non-metaphorical contexts in the FR-corpus and NL-corpus

The difficulty of deciding on the metaphorical character of some lexical units can be illustrated by examples (8) and (9). In example (8), the construction of Belgian federalism is referred to as an “usine à gaz” (literally a ‘gas storage plant’) to denote its complicated structure and lack of efficiency. This inefficiency would, according to citizen K6, partly be explained by mechanisms defined as “wafelijzerpolitiek” (lit. ‘waffle-iron policy’), referring to a mechanism implying that expenses which are initially predestined to one of the federal entities are compensated by other expenses in favour of another federal entity in order to maintain the political balance between the federal entities.

(8) Fr. “Qu’est-ce qui a disparu depuis et qui fait qu’on est obligés de détricoter et de monter une façade qu’on a appelé fédéralisme ? Ça

⁷ Both dictionaries differ from the dictionaries traditionally used in MIP analyses in that they are historical rather than corpus-based dictionaries. Steen et al. (2010: 130-132) point to potential complications arising from the use of historical dictionaries, especially the *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal*, for MIP-based analyses. However, considering the absence of corpus-based dictionaries for Dutch and French, and considering that the *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal* and *Le Petit Robert de la langue française* both function as reference dictionaries in their respective communities, they can be regarded as the “best option available” (Steen et al. 2010: 130) respectively for Dutch and French..

⁸ A Pearson Chi-square test performed on the raw frequencies suggests that these differences are significant ($\chi^2 = 4.953$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$). However, since we do not have specific hypotheses regarding possible cultural differences in metaphor usage, we don’t want to draw any conclusion nor to make any claim from this observation. It should however be interesting to address this question more specifically in future research.

s'est vraiment pour moi la question de fond et quand on ne répond pas à celle-là, on va continuer à monter une *usine à gaz* et on ne saura pas en fait pas très bien où on veut aller." (PBF, B8, 249-250)

En. 'What has disappeared that makes that we have to unravel and to build a façade that we call federalism? This is really for me the question substantive question and if we do not answer it, we are going to continue to set a *kludge* (lit. 'gas storage plant') and we will not know in fact where we want to go'

(9) Du. "Ik denk dat als men het woord *wafelijzerpolitiek* ook zei als wij al een projectportefeuille op ons werk hebben waar een Europese subsidie moet verdeeld worden." (PBF, K6, 910-916).

En. 'I think that if we also said the word '*wafelijzerpolitiek*' (lit. 'waffle-iron policy') if we already had a portfolio at our office where a European subvention should be divided.'

While both compound words appeal to vivid images, respectively an inefficient factory and a waffle iron, which could easily be related to some conceptual metaphors like the STATE IS A MACHINE and in this case, a machine that is not working properly, they have been lexicalized as independent units in Dutch, whose basic meanings (and in fact only meaning) corresponds to the contextual meanings identified in these contexts. Accordingly, these units have to be considered as non-metaphorical expressions.

3.3 Metaphor categorization

In the final stage of the analysis, and in line with Steen's (2008) three-dimensional discourse analytical framework, we tried to determine for each identified metaphor to what extent it was direct, novel and deliberate and we encoded the source domain to which the metaphorically used expression belonged. As suggested in section 2, categorizing the identified metaphors into this analytical framework is not always an easy enterprise. In order to treat the different metaphorical contexts as coherently as possible, we respected the following procedure.

At the *linguistic* level, a metaphor was marked as direct or indirect

depending on whether the cross-domain mapping between the source and target domains was explicitly expressed or not. Accordingly, as stated above, the metaphors in (3), (4) and (5) are instances of direct metaphors, while the metaphor in (1) is an example of indirect metaphor.

At the *conceptual* level, a metaphor was counted as conventional if the meaning of the metaphorically used expression was listed among the conventional definitions of the expression in the reference dictionaries. If not, the metaphor was regarded as a novel metaphor (compare the examples (3), and (5) above with example (1)). When considering the interactions between the first two levels of analysis, we observe that a large majority of direct metaphors appear to express new mappings at the conceptual level, considering that 85,3% of the identified direct metaphors were coded as novel metaphors. However, this link was not automatic as illustrated by the examples (10) and (11). In (10), the lexical unit *façade* ('frontage', 'façade') is used metaphorically. While this metaphor has been made explicit, it refers to a conventional sense of the word denoting the notion of outward appearance. The same analysis applies to the word *huwelijk* ('marriage') in example (11) that conventionally denotes the union between two entities.

(10) Fr. "Qu'est-ce qui a disparu depuis et qui fait qu'on est obligés de détricoter et de *monter une façade* qu'on a appelé fédéralisme?" (PBF, B8, 301)

En. 'What has disappeared since then and which makes to we have to unknit and to *build a frontage called* federalism.'

(11) Du. "het is vergelijken met dat *huwelijk*, he. De Belgische staat is een *gearrangeerd en geforceerd huwelijk* geweest." (PBN, L2, 2263-2266)

En. 'it's comparing to that *marriage*, right? The Belgian state has been an *arranged and forced marriage*.'

When looking at indirect metaphors, we observe that 92,8% of them point to conventional mappings between conceptual domains. Still, some examples of indirect metaphors expressing new mappings at the conceptual level can be found in our data (in 7,2% of the cases), confirming the idea that the link between indirect metaphors and conventional ones should not be taken for granted. See for instance example (12) in which the verb *co-habiter*

(‘to live together’) is used to describe the relations between the two main entities of Belgian federalism.

(12) Fr. “parce que je ne sais pas comment *cohabitent* la région flamande et la région wallonne avec le fédéralisme” (PBF, B6, 145-148)

En. ‘because I don’t know how the Flemish region and the Walloon region *are living together* under federalism’

While the categorization of metaphors at the linguistic and conceptual levels relies on objective criteria, the distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate at the *communicative* level is potentially more dependent on the researchers’ reconstruction of the speaker’s intentions. To be as objective and coherent as possible, we decided that because they explicitly point to the speaker’s intentions of presenting one conceptual domain in terms of another, or because they involve original mappings between two domains, direct metaphors and new metaphors are better inclined to be considered as deliberate metaphors. In our analysis, they were regarded as deliberate metaphors by verifying to what extent they matched the definition by Steen (2008), e.g. to what extent we could easily identify their function in communication, be it a clarifying function aiming at presenting someone’s own conceptualization of abstract entities or relations (such as in examples (2) to (5) above) or a rhetoric function aiming at convincing one’s conversation partner (such as in example (13)).

(13) Fr. “c’est comme dans un *ménage*, on ne règle jamais les solutions une fois pour toutes.” (PBF, B8, 1630-1636)

En. ‘it’s like in a *couple*, you can’t get all problems solved once and for all.’

In our data, 97% of the direct metaphors and 92,3% of the novel metaphors have accordingly been analysed as deliberate metaphors. Though it is unusual that direct and novel metaphors are not deliberate as well, for a very limited number of cases, we came to the conclusion that a direct and or a

novel metaphor did not match the definition of deliberate metaphors by Steen (2008). Consider for instance example (14).

(14) Fr. “Déjà sur le mot, en Belgique, fédéralisme, on pense quand même, en gros, à (...) *déglingue* de l’État unitaire qu’on connaissait” (PBF, B8, 291-293)

En. ‘already when thinking about the word, in Belgium, federalism, we still think, roughly, of (...) the *breaking down* of the unitary state we knew’

In this example, this citizen is claiming that the word *federalism* can be quite commonly associated with the notion of breaking down the former unitary state. This is expressed by the French noun *déglingue*. This noun is derived from the verb *dégligner*, whose basic meaning informally denotes dismantled machines or by extension machines that are not working (properly) anymore. Since the contextual meaning of the word differs from its basic meaning, it can be considered as a metaphorically used word. Using this word to refer to more abstract entities does not turn out to be a conventional usage according to the reference dictionary. It can therefore be regarded as an instance of novel metaphor. We moreover considered this metaphor to be direct because of the presence of the verb ‘think of’, which according to us explicitly points to the cross-domain mapping. At the communicative level, however, we would like to claim that the use of this metaphor is the result of a spontaneous association, rather than an explicit attempt of the speaker to have the addressee reconsider the target domain from the perspective of the source domain. This is the reason why we decided to treat this metaphor as an instance of non-deliberate metaphor.

In the case of indirect metaphors and of conventional metaphors, we firstly proceeded in a similar fashion and assessed to what extent they matched the definition of deliberate metaphors by Steen (2008). In a few cases, indirect and/or conventional metaphors appear to be deliberate on the basis of this criterion. In example (15) for instance, Belgian federalism is presented as not being well-born. This metaphor, indirectly and conventionally referring to the birth of political systems, has been considered as a deliberate metaphor

because of the speaker's emphasis on this notion, confirmed by the repetition of words referring to the birth of Belgian federalism and by the following clause providing an argument for the claim that Belgium was not well-born.

Fr. "le fédéralisme belge est une réalité politique qui est beaucoup plus récente, et pour moi elle est *née* en fait au delà des années 60, sur deux... au fait elle est *mal née* enfin ce fédéralisme est *mal né* plutôt. Il est *né* du côté flamand avec la rancune, la rancœur, et du côté francophone la peur." (PBF, D1, 2634-2637)

En. 'Belgian federalism is a much more recent political reality and according to me, it was in fact *born* after the 60's. Actually it was *bad born*, I mean this federalism was *bad born*. On the Flemish side, it was *born* from resentment, bitterness, and on the French-speaking side, from fear.'

In a second stage of the analysis, we closely looked at the immediate context of the metaphorically used expression, e.g. in the same conversation turn, to search for other lexical units belonging to the same source domain as the metaphorically used expression. If we found at least one different unit matching this criterion, we considered the indirect and/or conventional metaphor as a deliberate metaphor. In (16) for instance, the noun *mécanisme* ('mechanism') has been considered as an instance of deliberate metaphor. While this use is indirect, and conventional, the fact that it has been preceded by the verb *fonctionner* ('to work'), is according to us a sufficient argument to consider the use of this noun as deliberate, globally referring to the Belgian political system as a machine.

- (15) Fr. " Est-ce qu'on dit que c'est fédéralisme comme idée de ce qu'il va rester en commun au niveau belge et qui est une structure permettant de faire *fonctionner* des entités séparées mais sous un chapeau commun, avec des *mécanismes* préétablis ou ... ? " (PBF, B8, 716-719)

En. "Do we talk about federalism as the idea of what is going to remain common at the Belgian level and which is a structure

making it possible to let distinct entities *work*, but under a common denominator, with pre-established *mechanisms* or ... ?

Following these steps, 10,9 % of the indirect metaphors and 9% of the conventional metaphors have been identified as deliberate metaphors.

3.4 Metaphor counting

A last methodological remark concerns the guidelines we followed to count the metaphorical units in our data. Since we are primarily interested in how citizens talk about Belgian federalism and not so much in the overall percentage of metaphorical units in our corpora, we adopted a different counting method than the one advocated by the MIP procedure (Pragglejazz Group 2007), by considering metaphorical contexts as basic units rather than the lexical units themselves. Example (17) illustrates our counting method:

- (16) Fr. “Et alors, j’ai encore une dernière chose, c’est que... je crois que c’est vous qui avez dit... qu’on règle cela une fois pour toute, mais à cela, je n’y crois pas du tout, je pense que c’est pas réaliste... c’est comme dans un *ménage*, on ne règle jamais les solutions une fois pour toutes. On *se marie*, ou *en vit ensemble*, peut importe, à 20 ans, puis on a des enfants, puis les enfants deviennent grands, puis le bonhomme fait sa crise de la quarantaine, puis on se dit que tout compte fait, on se dit que c’était quand même pas si mal et puis rien, et puis entre, temps, madame est ménopausée et puis... (...) puis..... Puis elle a perdu son job, puis les enfants se sont mariés, voilà que la maison est trop grande... les situations évoluent et je ne pense pas qu’on va rêver d’avoir une situation immuable. J’arrête les figures et les fables”. (PBF, B8, 1968-1977).

En. ‘And then, I still have one last comment, it’s that ... I think it’s you who who said ... that we should solve this once and for all, but I don’t believe in this at all, I think it’s not realistic... it’s like in a *couple*, you can’t get all problems solved once and for all. You *get married*, or you’re *living together*, whatever, at twenty, then you get kids, then the kids grow old, the husband goes through his midlife crisis, but then

you realize it wasn't that bad after all, and then nothing, and then in the meantime, his wife gets menopause and then... (...) and then she loses her job, then the kids got married, and then is the house too big... Situations evolve and I don't think we will dream of having a stable situation. I'm stopping with images and fables.'

This passage is really interesting since this participant practically (and deliberately as he himself admits it in the last sentence) produces a lot of family metaphors to talk about Belgian federalism. From a MIP perspective, from the third sentence (starting with 'You get married') on, every single word could be considered as an independent metaphorical unit (except for the last two sentences). However, from a communicative perspective, this extensive comparison functions as an argument to support the claim that one should not believe that the problems Belgian federalism is faced with can be solved once and for all. Like in a couple, we have to accept that situations may evolve with time and that new challenges may come ahead. Of particular interest for the political interpretation of our data is that this citizen is explicitly comparing Belgian federalism to a couple with ups and downs. That is the reason why we counted this whole passage as one metaphor, though it would probably be more accurate to talk about *metaphorical contexts* than about metaphors. Similar examples were treated accordingly. We think this way of counting metaphorical contexts allows us to avoid any bias in favour of a particular type of metaphor (considering all the metaphorical units of this passage would obviously lead to an overrepresentation of deliberate metaphors) or any source domain (in this case the family domain).

The analyses of the two corpora have been performed independently by both authors. Problematic cases were further discussed to come to an agreement. The results of this quantitative analysis are presented in the following section.

4. Results

Table 3 summarizes the results of our quantitative study. Our data suggest that the majority of the metaphorical contexts identified, relate to indirect, conventional and non-deliberate metaphors. Accurate quantitative comparisons with previous studies (such as Krenmayr 2011) are difficult

considering our diverging metaphor counting method and the fact that we did not consider the metaphorical nature of every single word from our corpus. However, the proportion of direct (21,2%), novel (26,3%) and deliberate metaphors in citizen discourse a priori appears to be fairly high, suggesting that metaphors belong to the citizens' standard discourse strategies when they are prompted to talk about complex political issues, in this case their perception of Belgian federalism.

	FR-corpus		NL-corpus		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Direct vs. indirect?						
- Direct metaphors	21	21.2%	13	17.8 %	34	19.8%
- Indirect metaphors	78	78.8%	60	82.2 %	138	80.2%
Total	99	100%	73	100%	172	100%
Novel vs. conventional?						
- Novel metaphors	26	26.3%	13	17.8%	39	22.7%
- Conventional metaphors	73	73.7%	60	82.2%	133	77.3%
Total	99	100%	73	100%	172	100%
Deliberate vs. non-deliberate?						
- Deliberate metaphors	32	32.3%	16	21.9%	48	27.9%
- Non-deliberate metaphors	67	67.7%	57	78.1%	124	72.1%
Total	99	100%	73	100%	172	100%

Table 3: Distribution of metaphor types in the FR-corpus and NL-corpus

It is further interesting to notice that these observations are similar in both corpora, roughly showing comparable frequencies of the use of the different metaphor types, though the French-speaking citizens tended on average to produce more novel and direct metaphors than the Dutch-speaking citizens. A Pearson Chi-square test performed on the raw frequencies however suggests that these differences are not significant (novel vs. conventional metaphors: $\chi^2 = 1.713$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.19$; deliberate vs. non-deliberate metaphors: $\chi^2 = 2.261$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.13$). These results tend to confirm the idea that citizen discourse lends itself to the use of direct, novel and deliberate metaphors, regardless of linguistic differences between citizen groups.

In the next sections we will focus on the use of deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors by the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking citizens. We

will more particularly consider the relevant source domains on which they are respectively built.

Because our study primarily aims at assessing to what extent the distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors provides insightful information to the political interpretation of the data, we will present the results of our quantitative analysis globally without making any further distinction between both citizen groups. We will however discuss some subtle differences when these appear to be relevant.

4.1 Conceptual domains

Source domain	Non-deliberate metaphors			Deliberate metaphors			Total
	Fr.-speaking	Du.-speaking	Total	Fr.-speaking	Du.-speaking	Total	
construction	13	33	46	2	0	2	48
personification	14	8	22	2	3	5	27
machine	15	5	20	2	0	2	22
journey	15	4	19	1	2	3	22
family	2	0	2	10	4	14	16
disease	0	0	0	5	2	7	7
company	0	3	3	1	3	4	7
entity	1	3	4	0	1	2	5
instrument	1	0	1	3	1	4	5
container	4	1	5	0	0	0	5
food	1	0	1	3	0	3	4
theatre	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
laboratory	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
clothes	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Total	67	57	124	32	16	48	172

Table 4: Distribution of deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors across the conceptual domains in the FR-corpus and NL-corpus

The most relevant conceptual domains⁹ emerging from the citizen data are summarized in Table 4. These results show that when speaking

⁹ Following Cameron (2007: 205), suggesting that “researchers adopting a discourse approach to metaphor have to accept that it is not possible to come up with a limited set of

metaphorically of Belgian federalism, the citizens frequently use construction metaphors, personifications, machine-metaphors, family metaphors, and to a lesser extent company and disease metaphors. However, when considering the difference between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors across the conceptual domains, it interestingly turns out that the most frequent conceptual domains on which the metaphors used by the citizens are based (respectively the machine, journey and construction domains) consist of a large set of non-deliberate metaphors and a small set of deliberate metaphors, while some other less frequent conceptual domains (like the family, the company or the disease domains, and to a smaller extent the instrument and food domains), show the reversed tendency, including a large set of deliberate metaphors and of a small set of non-deliberate metaphors, as illustrated by Figure 1. These results suggest that making the distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors in analysing discourse data makes it possible to identify interesting differences in the way citizens consciously describe their perception of Belgian federalism.

categories into which each linguistic metaphor can be reliably placed” and that “A principled flexibility to the grouping of linguistic metaphors appears to be the most suitable approach with discourse data”, we relied on a bottom-up approach to identify the relevant domains, placing the emerging metaphors in larger conceptual categories that appeared to be consistent with our research goals.

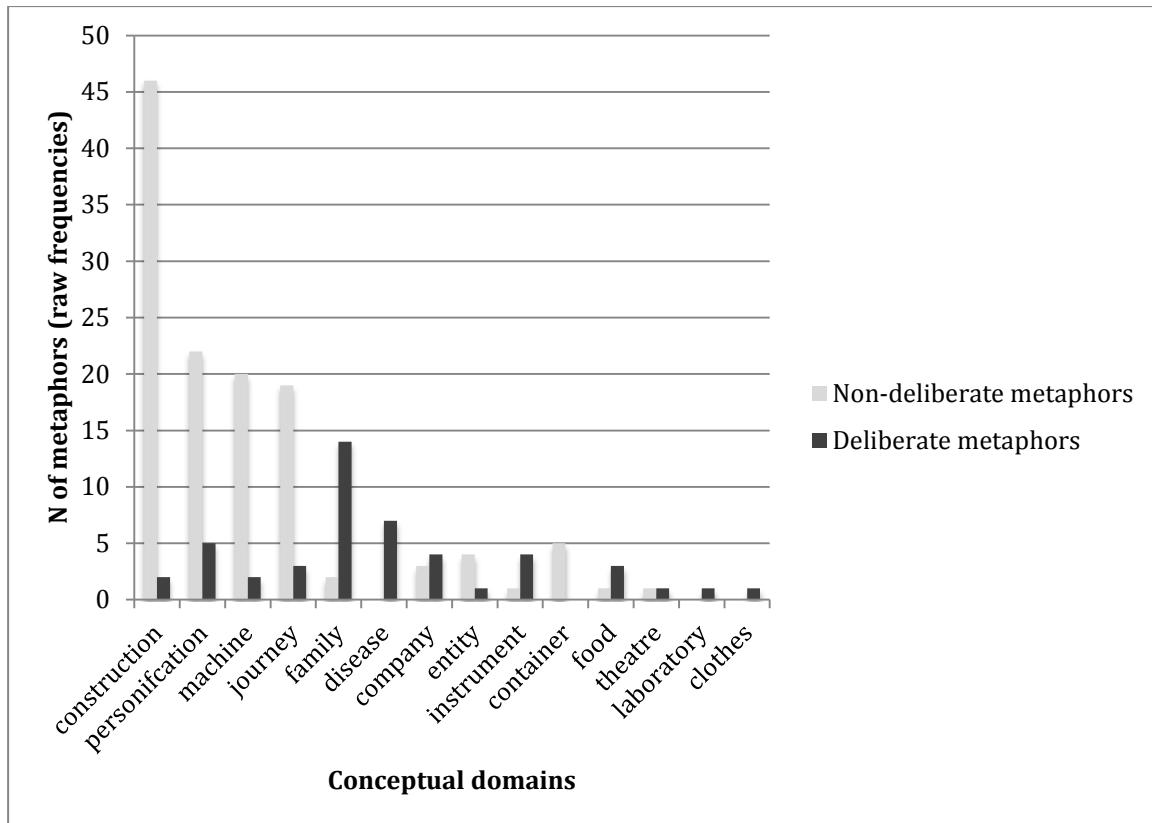


Figure 1: Distribution of deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors across the conceptual domains in the citizen corpora

4.2 Non-deliberate metaphors in citizen discourse

When considering the non-deliberate metaphors, the construction, machine and journey domains appear to be the most prevailing source domains in terms of which Belgian federalism is thought of, along with some cases of personifications. It is interesting to notice that all these conceptual domains have recurrently been found to structure political discourse in earlier studies on political metaphors (see Charteris-Black 2011, Lakoff 1996, 2004, Musolff 2004, to name just a few). In our study, these metaphorical domains often rely on the frequent occurrence of conventional metaphorical extensions of lexical units such as *structure*, *structuur* ('structure'; see examples 18 and 19), or *fonctionner* and *werken* ('to function', 'to work'; see examples 20 and 21) or on the conventional conceptualisation of political entities as persons (see example 22) or of (political) purposes as destinations (see example 23 and 24).

- (17) Fr. “un état fédéral, une *structure* fédérale, ça peut être très différent, ça peut être une *structure* fédérale forte ou une *structure* fédérale résiduaire.” (PBF, D8, 2336-2337)
En. ‘a federal state, a federal *structure*, it can be very different, it can be a strong federal *structure* or a residual federal *structure*.’
- (18) Du. “Die solidariteit moet je buiten de Belgische *structuur* zien.” (PBN, L6, 1522-1523)
En. ‘this solidarity must you see outside the Belgian *structure*’
- (19) Fr. “il faut distinguer le fédéralisme belge tel que nous le connaissons à l'heure actuelle, du fédéralisme tel qu'il a *fonctionné* dans les temps passé” (PBF, D5, 2469-2471)
En. ‘one has to make a distinction between Belgian federalism as we know it today, and federalism as it has *worked* in the past’
- (20) Du. “Maar ik denk dat je kunt concluderen dat het federalisme zoals het nu is dat het niet *werkt*” (PBN, N4, 3318-3319)
En. ‘But I think you can conclude that federalism as it is now, that it is not *working*.’
- (21) Fr. “et je pense que c’est ce qui est arrivé parce que quand la Flandre galérait en 1930, il était normal que la riche industrie sidérurgique wallonne *alimente* le pays” (PBF, B8, 556-557).
En. ‘and I think that’s what happened, because when Flanders was in trouble in 1930, it was normal that the rich Walloon steel industry *fed* the country.’
- (22) Du. “die discussie over de toekomst van het Belgisch federalisme, *waar we naartoe* moeten” (PBN, M, 1219-1220).
En. ‘This discussion over the future of Belgian federalism, *where* we have to *go to*’.
- (23) Fr. “Je crois qu'à partir du moment où le fédéralisme est évolutif, *il ira de crises en crises*. ” (PBF, D8, 2561)
En. ‘I think that considering federalism is progressive, *it will go from crises to crises*.’

4.3 Deliberate metaphors in citizen discourse

When turning to the analysis of deliberate metaphors, the family domain appears to be the most prevailing conceptual domain in terms of which the citizens perceive Belgian federalism. This tendency can be observed in both corpora, though the French-speaking citizens produced more metaphors related to this domain. These observations tend to confirm the saliency of familial relations for the way citizens commonly make sense of complex political processes, as has been suggested by Lakoff (1996).

When referring to the family domain, the citizens tend to compare it to a love-relationship between the two main federated entities (*BELGIAN FEDERALISM IS A COUPLE*), presenting them as being married or living together (see examples 4 and 17 above and examples 25 to 27 below).

- (24) Fr. “Si l’on compare avec un *ménage*, certains *ménages se marient avec contrat de mariage*, d’autres pas” (PBF, B1, 188-190)

En. ‘If we compare this to a *couple*, some *couples get married under a wedding contract*, others don’t...’

- (25) Fr. “parce que je ne sais pas comment *cohabitent* la région wallonne et la région flamande avec le fédéralisme etc.” (PBF, B6, 145-148)

En. ‘because I don’t know how the Flemish region and the Walloon region *are living together* under federalism’

- (26) Du. “Normale partijen die een staatshervorming willen enzovoort die willen eigenlijk hetzelfde als we zo zeggen een ernstige *LAT relatie* in dit land.” (PBN, M5, 3130-3131)

En. ‘Normal parties that want a state reform and so on, they want in fact the same as let’s say a serious *LAT relationship* in this country.’

This notion of love relationship between the different parts of the country seems to play a particularly significant role in the way citizens frame their understanding of the relations between the main federated entities of the country. More than a simple figure, this metaphor of the love relationship

makes it possible to reflect different visions on (the future of) Belgian federalism, and by so doing offers a particularly salient conceptual reference point for the citizens to express their own perception of it. This is clearly illustrated by the following fragment (presented as Table 5) in which two citizens express their diverging views on Belgian federalism in terms of a marriage metaphor.

Dutch-speaking citizens	English translation
<p>L2: "het is <u>vergelijken met</u> dat <i>huwelijk</i> he. De Belgische staat is een <i>gearrangeerd en geforceerd huwelijk</i> geweest." (2263-2266) (...)</p>	<p>L2: 'it's <u>comparing to</u> that <i>marriage</i>, right? The Belgian state has been an <i>arranged and forced marriage</i>.' (...)</p>
<p>L6: "het is inderdaad een <i>gearrangeerd huwelijk</i>_en het is <i>gearrangeerd</i> door de internationale gemeenschap" (2268-2269) (...)</p>	<p>L6: 'It is indeed an <i>arranged marriage</i> and it has been <i>arranged</i> by the international community.' (...)</p>
<p>L6 : "een <i>gearrangeerd huwelijk</i> kan ook ontbonden worden, zo moeilijk is dat allemaal niet. Het moet gewoon erkend worden door de internationale gemeenschap." (2279-2280)</p>	<p>L6: 'an <i>arranged marriage</i> can also be abrogated, it's not that difficult. It only has to be accepted by the international community'</p>
<p>L2 : "ja maar dat <i>is getrouwd voor goede en kwade dagen</i> en wij zijn nu in <i>kwade dagen</i>." (2281-2282)</p>	<p>L2: 'yes, but it has been <i>married for better or for worse</i> and we are now in <i>worse days</i>'</p>
<p>L6 : "maar bij een <i>gearrangeerd huwelijk</i> is het niet in <i>goede en kwade dagen</i> vrijwillig, maar is het verplicht in <i>kwade dagen</i>. (...) ik hoop toch dat we zover zijn <i>dat huwelijken niet meer verplicht zijn ofwel?</i> " (2283-2287)</p>	<p>L6: 'but in an <i>arranged marriage</i>, it's not voluntarily <i>for better or for worse</i>, but it's forced in <i>worse days</i>. I hope we have come to a situation where <i>marriages are no longer forced</i>, are we?'</p>
<p>L1 : "Neen, maar je kan dan toch karakter tonen, karakter tonen. " (2288)</p>	<p>L1: 'No, but you can still show character'</p>
<p>L6 : "Als ons dat ieder jaar 10 miljard euro kost, vind ik dat toch..." (2289)</p>	<p>L6: 'If it costs us 10 billion euro a year, I find that...'</p>

Table 5: Discussion structured around the marriage metaphor to depict Belgian federalism (taken from the corpus of Dutch-speaking citizens)

Apart from the marriage metaphor itself, this passage is also a perfect example of how the use of a given metaphor by a citizen can frame the reactions of other citizens. This specific function of metaphors in communication has been described by Steen (2008: 230) as the "creation of a

common ground of reference”, which he claims particularly occurs “when difficult or complex topics are to be dealt with between interlocutors.”

Another frequent conceptual domain for deliberate metaphors is the disease domain (*BELGIAN FEDERALISM IS A DISEASE*). When presenting Belgian federalism as a disease, the citizens tend to emphasize that Belgium is an illness (see 28 and 29), an infectious excrescence (30), or suggest that the political crisis the country went through in 2007 and the will for more independence by some Flemish nationalists was the result of the egocentrism typical of rich people (31). These disease metaphors are much more represented in the corpus of French-speaking citizens than in the corpus of Dutch-speaking citizens (5 vs. 2 instances).

(27) Du. “...en dat dat is de ziekte van het federalisme. Ik heb dat niet voor niks daarstraks een noodzakelijk kwaad genoemd.” (PBN, M1, 3069-3070)

En. ‘and that’s the *disease of federalism*. It’s not for nothing if I just named it a necessary *evil*’ (PBN, M1, 3070-3071)

(28) Du. “Welke bevoegdheden op het nationale niveau, welke bevoegdheden op het regionale niveau? Het wordt helemaal een pest bij wijze van spreken” (PBN, M, 2533-2534)

En. ‘which responsibilities at the national level? Which responsibilities at the regional level? It is becoming a *plague* so to speak’

(29) Fr. “On a été créer un espèce de *furoncle* qui s’appelait Belgique...” (PBF, B8, 1097-1098)

En. ‘they created some kind of *boil* called Belgium...’

(30) Fr. “le fédéralisme est au départ le résultat d’un égoïsme et d’une maladie de riches.” (PBF, B8, 134-136)

En. ‘federalism is the result of egocentrism and a *rich people disease*’

A last conceptual domain frequently used to produce metaphors about Belgian federalism is the company domain (*BELGIAN FEDERALISM IS A*

COMPANY). Metaphors based on this source domain turn out to be more frequently used by the Dutch-speaking citizens than by the French-speaking citizens. With this metaphor, the citizens tend to express their comprehension of how a state is working in general, and more specifically how politicians are *running* the country. These examples also illustrate the growing importance of the economic paradigm in our understanding of political processes, as suggested by Koller (2009).

- (31) Du. “hoe werkt een staat, een beetje zoals een *bedrijfsleider* over zijn *bedrijf*”. (PBN, K4, 1232-1233)
En. ‘how does a state work, a bit like a *ceo* with his *company*...
- (32) Du. “als je vergelijkt met een bedrijf, een bedrijf laat je ook niet leiden door de werkman of de kuisvrouw bij wijze van spreken” (PBN, L3, 2327-2329)
En. ‘if you compare with a *company*, you don’t let a *company* be run by a workman or a cleaning lady, so to speak.’

5. Discussion

Our findings suggest that the citizens use various conceptual domains to make sense of Belgian federalism. Indeed, citizens do produce a lot of metaphors when prompted to talk about Belgian federalism in the context of focus group discussions. This demonstrates that the role of metaphors is not limited to the production side of political discourse but that the citizens actually think of political processes in metaphorical terms as well. This first observation confirms Bougher’s (2012) hypothesis that we can gain valuable political insights from the analysis of citizen corpora. A closer look at the variety of conceptual domains used points to the conceptual domains that have traditionally been shown to underlie political discourse (be it elite or media discourse). The construction domain, the family domain, the machine domain, the journey domain or personifications emerge from the citizen discussions confirming their importance not only for the way we talk about politics but also for the way we think about politics. However, in our data, these domains are massively represented by non-deliberate metaphors often reflecting conventional ways to talk about politics, with the significant

exception of the family domain. This brings the discussion to the core of the research question: what is the contribution of deliberate metaphors to the study of political discourses?

Our study aimed at analysing citizen discourse in order to assess to what extent the citizens use – deliberate – metaphors to describe complex political relations and processes. To analyse metaphorical expressions in our citizen corpora, we applied a method combining a slightly diverging version of the MIP procedure and Steen's (2008) three-dimensional model of metaphor analysis in communication to political discourse. Our results suggest that this method, based on the distinction between direct and indirect metaphors at the linguistic level, between novel and conventional metaphors at the conceptual level and between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors at the communicative level, is particularly effective to the study of metaphors in citizen political discourses, and this in at least two respects.

On the one hand, our data show a high proportion of deliberate metaphors, suggesting that, as in elite discourses, citizens do rely on conscious comparisons between conceptual domains in order to explain their opinion and possibly make their case more convincingly. On the other hand, making the distinction between non-deliberate and deliberate metaphors more specifically allowed us to suggest various degrees of saliency of conceptual domains in terms of which the citizens make sense of abstract political processes. While the conceptual domains recurring the most frequently in the metaphors produced by the citizens (e.g. construction domain, personifications, machine domain, journey domain) mainly rely on a large proportion of non-deliberate metaphors often (but not always) reflecting conventional metaphorical extensions of lexical units, other domains (such as the family domain) are characterized by a reversed tendency, showing more deliberate metaphors than non-deliberate ones.

But one could still wonder whether deliberate metaphors are “really deliberate”, to quote Gibbs (2011). Indeed, to assess the (non-)deliberate nature of a metaphor is always a linguistic process of *a posteriori* re-contextualization. In other words, linguistically we can only rely on an indirect procedure. On this very issue, political science can bring interesting cross-fertilization. All the participants have been surveyed before and after the focus groups. While there was not much difference between the pre- and post-questionnaire, there

were many more differences between the participants, especially in regard with their opinion about Belgium and its future. What is striking is that participants who have diverging opinions on this issue use different metaphors of the same conceptual domains. Furthermore, they do not differ in the conceptual domains that, as we have shown, resort to most often non-deliberate metaphors but rather within the family domain, which is the one where deliberate metaphors were mostly identified. Indeed, citizens who believe in the unity of Belgium (Belgians, beside their different language, are all the same and should live together) use the metaphor of a marriage of love, while citizens who hold a regionalist or even separatist vision of Belgium (Flemings and Walloons should live in two different countries, or at least in two very distinct entities) put forward the metaphor of the forced marriage, which therefore should be broken up. In between, we have also identified citizens who see Belgium as the union of two people (that is they are different but should have a common future) resort often to the vision of Belgium as a marriage of reason, or others who wish that Belgium remains one single country while still granting much freedom to her two main communities and who, to express this specific vision, rely on a living-apart-together (LAT) relationship metaphor (Perrez/Reuchamps submitted).

A political science approach complements thus well the linguistic approach of deliberate metaphors. Indeed, the former confirms what the latter has shown: the use of some metaphors is deliberate and matches or at least reflects one's political opinion. This demonstrates that the various conceptual domains are not different ways of saying the same thing. Choosing a particular source domain to depict Belgian federalism does have conceptual consequences. For instance, while speaking of Belgium in terms of a complicated structure or a deficient machine emphasizes the way the different layers of Belgian federalism have been put together and how these different political levels relate to one another, comparing Belgium to a love relationship more specifically highlights the human aspects of the federal state, alluding to the links existing between the members of the two main communities. Identifying deliberate metaphors in such context is thus a good tool to capture the saliency of a particular conceptual domain as a way to express one's political views. In this regard, the different manners to express the notion of a love relationship have been shown to function as conceptual reference point

on which the citizens could rely to express their diverging views of Belgian federalism and its future.

Finally, another interesting insight emerging from the analysis of the conceptual domains used by the citizens to produce metaphors is the similarity between the citizen groups under study. Except for a few minor differences, both the French-speaking and the Dutch-speaking citizens tend, on the one hand, to use the same proportion of direct, indirect, novel, conventional, deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors, and, on the other hand, to resort to the same conceptual domains to make sense of Belgian federalism. This does not mean that they have the same vision on its functions and further developments, but that the conceptual domains in terms of which they make sense of it, show a high degree of overlap. What is more, the fact that we found a similar diversity of deliberate metaphors within each language group is an additional hint that deliberate metaphors are indeed – politically – deliberate, and not a mere linguistic consequence.

6. Further work

On the methodological side, by applying Steen's (2008) three-dimensional model of metaphor analysis in communication, this article has to some extent contributed to further explicate the relationships existing between direct, indirect, novel, conventional, deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors on the basis of actual discourse data and to provide further thoughts on the identification of deliberate metaphors. This methodological approach has appeared to lead to interesting political insights. We would suggest this method should be extended to the analysis of other forms of political communication, including elite discourse and media discourse on political issues. For instance, applying Steen's (2008) framework to elite discourse might allow us to distinguish the metaphors the political leaders consciously use with the rhetorical goals of framing their audience's understanding of political issues, from more conventional political metaphors relying on semantic extensions of polysemous lexical units.

A second research avenue for the study of metaphors in political discourse is to consider how these metaphors circulate between the different political actors, by tracing them down in various kinds of political discourses. More specifically, one could wonder to what extent these metaphors follow a

linear top-down direction, going from the sphere of political elite, possibly via the media, to the citizens' minds, but also on what grounds some political actors choose their metaphors, and to what extent common citizen or media metaphors play a role on the selection of the metaphors that the leaders produce in a given political context. Hereby, it would be worth broadening the scope of what is classically considered as political discourse by paying attention to the whole range of communication mediums making up this broad category (consider for instance personal websites of political leaders, Twitter accounts, manifestos, public speeches and debates for the elite discourse, editorials, press articles, interviews for media discourse on political issues or focus group discussions, everyday conversations or internet forums for the citizen perspective). Taking these various genres of political communication into account might also lead to the identification of differences in metaphor usage.

Finally, future research on political metaphors should also tackle the question of how metaphors impact upon citizens. As Bougher (2012: 157) posits, metaphors offer "a cognitive mechanism that explains how citizens make sense of the political world by drawing from their non-political knowledge and experiences." Metaphors therefore do not only reflect the perceived reality, but they also function as cues through which citizens come to understand political positions, and through which they shape their political behaviours. Further analysing how metaphors impact upon citizens can efficiently contribute to an overall understanding of what role and functions metaphors play in political discourse, and more globally in our everyday political interactions.

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