Imago Mundi

Perspectives on Metaphor, Creativity, and Discourses

edited by
Mariangela Albano, Simona Maria Cocco,
Olga Denti, Eleonora Fois, Michela Giordano,
Paolo Orrù, Daniela Zizi



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Philosophers and linguists have historically devoted considerable attention to establishing the centrality of metaphor within the broader scope of human thought. This sustained intellectual engagement has unequivocally confirmed, over the centuries, the paramount importance of this notion for the definition of the concepts, archetypes, and models that permeate daily existence. Metaphors function within everyday language not merely to satisfy a stylistic pretext or mitigate lexical inopia, but to translate a series of creative processes that inherently transcend the threshold of the strictly logical-inferential process.
In this specific sense, the foundational step of this volume consists of formally acknowledging the inherent linguistic and cognitive dimensions of metaphor, compelling further reflection upon three dynamically interrelated elements: creativity, lexicalisation, and discourse.

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Introduction

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This volume has been produced within the framework and with the support of the Project MED-GREEN. *Examining Models of Local Livelihood, Green Building, and Sustainable Mobility in Mediterranean Areas through Discursive Negotiation and Active Citizenship* (RICMIUR_CTC_2023, CUP F25F21002720001) (Albano, Serra & Stochino 2023).
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Imago Mundi: Perspectives on Metaphor, Creativity, and Discourses sets different approaches to metaphor side by side.

Philosophers and linguists have returned to metaphor for centuries because it is not a decorative extra. It is one of the main instruments by which human beings shape concepts, archetypes, and the models that organize daily life. In ordinary language, metaphors do not appear merely to add style or to patch lexical gaps. They carry thought beyond strict deduction. They translate creative processes that exceed what a purely logical-inferential procedure can deliver.

For that reason, we begin by recognizing metaphor as both linguistic and cognitive. From there, three tightly linked themes come into focus: creativity, lexicalization, and discourse.

Creativity is an uneasy word. It can suggest a demiurgic power - creation from nothing - and it has often been treated as a philosophical riddle. Plato (2007 [375 BCE]), for example, approached the problem by identifying four dynamic mechanisms - poiesis, mimesis, aesthesis, and catharsis - at work in creative production. Aristotle (1996 [350 BCE]; 2018 [350 BCE]), by contrast, treated creativity as a rational and rule-governed capacity, rooted in mental association. Across the centuries the concept has continued to shift: Vico (2025 [1725]) grounded it in the creative faculty; early German Romanticism (Schlegel 1798; Beiser 2003) and later critiques of Kant (2000 [1790]) developed the figure of creative genius; Emersonian transcendentalism (1982 [1841]) recast creation as a mode of intellectual and

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moral life; and Poincaré (2025 [1908]) offered influential accounts of invention in mathematics and science. In the twentieth century, psychologists and cognitive scientists - from early psychological approaches (Amabile 1983) and Rosch's prototypical models (1978) to contemporary American cognitive studies and modern neuropsychological perspectives (Runco 2003) - studied creativity as a set of operations that can be observed, described, and explained. The variety of these traditions is not a weakness. It shows that creativity sits at the intersection of linguistic form, conceptual structure, experience, and social practice.

That intersection is especially visible when we consider linguistic creation and the heuristic power of metaphor. Metaphor does work in terminology, lexicology, and pragmatics; it builds epistemic correspondences that range from the most familiar to the truly novel. At one end are conventional expressions that still feel alive - idioms and fixed phrases whose figurative motivation can be sensed (Burger *et al*. 1982; Burger *et al.* 2007). At the other end are new constructions, coined where a metaphorical projection is still inactive in the language and therefore appears as an inventive neologism. Between these poles are expressions whose metaphorical source has faded through delexicalization and habitual use. Studying how metaphors are understood and interpreted is therefore not just a matter of describing language; it also clarifies the experiential, intentional, and embodied dimensions of creativity.

Lexicalization brings another angle. Saussure described it as a kind of mechanical tendency that stabilizes language (Saussure 1967 [1916]).

Yet lexicalization does not merely freeze meaning; it also records the long history of meaning-making. Work in lexicology and phraseology has traced the semantic and cognitive pathways through which figurative constructions settle into usage: figurativeness and semantic structure (Gréciano 1982), conceptualization (Mejri 1997, 1998), prototype effects (Kleiber 1994), polysemy (Kleiber 1999), inference (Martin 1976), and the broader dynamics of meaning in context. Phraseology is a particularly revealing field here because it deals with complex, often polylexical forms whose degree of figurativity can vary widely. Metaphors can become literal by demetaphorization, and literal expressions can be re-metaphorized; Halliday's account of metaphorization and demetaphorization helps name these transitions (Halliday 1994: 348). If we follow these shifts patiently, we can see how metaphor participates in the crystallization of ideas into relatively stable lexical forms. Furthermore, the questioning of phraseology also mobilises other concepts such as conceptual metaphor, motivation and analogy (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 and 1999; Lakoff 1987; Turner 1987; Prandi 1987 and 1992; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Steen 1994; Hofstadter *et al*. 1995; Turner 1996; Gentner *et al*. 2001; Kövecses 2001 and 2002; Dobrovol'skij& Piirainen 2005; Steen *et al.* 2010; Turner 2014; Monneret 2014 and 2018; Rossi 2015 and 2021; Paissa *et al*. 2021).

Discourse supplies the third axis. Discourse is where complex units of language are continually formed, re-formed, and put to work (Fiala 1987: 30). The use of phraseological units depends on the speaker's room for expressive choice, and it is precisely at the level of discourse that we see phraseology functioning as more than a repository of fixed expressions (Bally 1951 [1909]; Benveniste 1966). It becomes a resource for cohesion, coherence, persuasion, and cultural memory. The present volume therefore concentrates on metaphorical phraseology as it circulates through different discourses - political, technical, specialized, advertising, media, lexicographical, artistic, and scientific. We attend both to the internal workings of a phraseological system, the *phraseosystem*, in González Rey's sense (2021), and to broader discursive configurations in which metaphors move across genres and communities, carrying knowledge, values, and frames of interpretation.

A guiding question runs through the volume: what, precisely, does metaphor do - linguistically and conceptually - when it becomes phraseology and when it enters discourse? The chapters offer answers from different traditions, but they converge on the same point:

metaphor is one of the principal sites where creativity, lexical stabilization, and discursive practice meet.

We have organized the book into three parts that reflect these axes: 1) Metaphors, Phraseology & Discourses; 2) Metaphors, Phraseology & Culture; and 3) Metaphors, Concepts & Cognition.

The first part examines the interplay between metaphor, phraseology, and discourse. Metaphor is not only a rhetorical device; it is a cognitive mechanism that shapes how we conceptualize experience, as conceptual metaphor theory has shown (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). When metaphors sediment into phraseology - idioms, fixed expressions, recurrent patterns - they become part of the shared resources through which a community speaks and thinks. At the same time, the discourse-based study of such sequences reveals how they sustain textual coherence and how they can function as persuasive instruments that convey ideological frames.

A cluster of five chapters focuses on contemporary discourses of sustainability and energy, where linguistic innovation and conceptual framing are particularly visible.

In this connection, Sayf Mohamed, in the article *Energy Metaphors: Cognitive Analysis of the Representation of the Energy Crisis in France*, analyses Emmanuel Macron's tweets about the energy crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine in 2022. By combining conceptual metaphor theory with critical metaphor analysis, the chapter shows how new conceptual metaphors are introduced to frame the crisis. A striking example is the metaphor "ENERGY SOBRIETY", which casts dependence on fossil fuels as a form of addiction. Such figurative choices support a narrative of resilience and solidarity that, in turn, legitimizes a policy orientation toward energy transition and renewables.

Similarly, the article, *Watts Up? A Multilingual, Terminological, and Semantic Analysis of Energy Community Discourses*, by Mariangela Albano, Simona Maria Cocco, Olga Denti, Michela Giordano, and Emma Lupano, reports findings from research at the University of Cagliari and was carried out within the EMC2 project.[1] The authors examine discourse about "energy" in the context of Renewable Energy Communities across five languages - Chinese, French, English, Italian, and Spanish - using a mixed method: quantitative corpus analysis (via Sketch Engine) and qualitative semantic–terminological analysis of web and social media texts. The chapter offers a detailed view of phraseological neology, conceptual metaphor, and lexical variability as energy communities develop new terminology and new conceptualizations.

The third chapter of this first section also focuses on the analysis of concepts related to sustainability. The author, Annamaria Ventura, offers a methodological analysis of Arabic neologisms within the semantic field of sustainability. The focus falls on the term "sustainability" and its Arabic rendering. Using textual corpora alongside Google Trends, Ventura analyses the phenomenon on morphological, etymological, semantic, and rhetorical levels. The case study of *ʾistidāma* - derived from the root *dwm* - shows how the Arabic term activates associations of duration, cyclicality, and persistence, and how its semantic field diverges in important ways from those of the European equivalents.

The fourth chapter, entitled *SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN: Cognitive Metaphors in Sustainability Discourse*, edited by Maria Antonietta Marongiu, is part of the series of articles highlighting the relationship between discourses, metaphors, and sustainability.

The article presents an analysis of sustainability reports produced by three European energy companies (2017–2022). These reports sit at the boundary between information and promotion, and Marongiu shows how metaphor helps them manage that hybridity. The

[1] This article has been written within the framework of the project *EMC*^{2}*. Energy in Multilingual and Multicultural Communication and Communities* (Denti *et al.* 2025).

chapter concentrates on "green," used primarily as a modifier, and argues that its recurrent use supports a dominant conceptual frame in which sustainability is equated with greenness.
The last article in the series on sustainability is *La "feminización de la pobreza energética": metáforas y colocaciones léxicas en la legislación de la Unión Europea en español (Eur-Lex)* by Simona Maria Cocco and Daniela Zizi. This study examines the metaphorical and lexical treatment of "energy poverty" in Spanish EU legislation, with a gender lens. Through corpus-linguistic methods, the authors identify a prevailing metaphor - "ENERGY POVERTY IS A DISEASE" - realized in collocations such as "alleviate" and "mitigate". They also track the emergence of the phrase "feminization of energy poverty," and they highlight the tension between stated policy aims and the extent to which gender is integrated into the conceptual framing.
The first part then broadens from sustainability to other public and institutional discourses, showing how metaphor and fixity operate in persuasion, framing, and cultural circulation.
The article *Métaphore et figement sur les paquets de tabac en France et en Espagne* written by María del Carmen Parra-Simón, shifts attention to a different discursive field, specifically the semiotic-advertising one applied to cigarette packages. The author offers an analysis of visual and textual metaphors found on French and Spanish tobacco packaging, treating them as forms of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic "fixation" that pose problems - and offer resources - for translation. Working with a bilingual photographic corpus of 53 cigarette packages, Parra-Simón shows how images draw on shared cultural imaginaries to stamp the message into memory. The shock effect of the visuals functions as an autonomous non-verbal utterance that reinforces (and sometimes exceeds) the accompanying text, with the explicit aim of provoking emotional response.
Following the previous article, Yassin Razkaoui examines rhetorical devices in French advertising discourse using a semio-linguistic approach. Metaphor is treated alongside oxymoron, personification, paradox, and metonymy as part of a broader rhetorical repertoire. Because advertising addresses heterogeneous audiences, its discourse is protean: it shifts tone and strategy to fit different segments, seeking maximal persuasive force. Razkaoui shows how such devices renew signifiers with contextually appropriate connotations and thereby intensify expressiveness.
In contrast, in chapter 8, *La novlangue, comme métaphore indexicale. Reconfigurations des usages dans la presse française*, Julie Abbou examines the concept of "novlangue", borrowed from Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to denote an ideological control of language, highlighting its use as a polysemous metaphor. Through a study of press usage from 1994 to 2024, Abbou traces how the term participates in political reconfigurations. The chapter proposes "indexical metaphor" as an analytic tool for understanding metaphors that do not merely describe but also index social positions, alignments, and meanings in public discourse.
Chapter 9, entitled *Les métaphores conceptuelles dans le discours politique marocain,* focuses on the analysis of metaphors in French-language Moroccan political discourse. Ahmed El Yaagoubi aims to identify the prevailing metaphorical conceptual domains, drawing on a corpus of speeches, statements, and platforms from political parties with diverse ideological affiliations. This study aims to investigate the ways in which political leaders employ metaphor both as a rhetorical device and as a cognitive tool. The theoretical approach, based on the frameworks of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), shows how the strategic use of metaphors serves to shape and influence public opinion.
Differently, Sara Manuela Cacioppo's *Les métaphores genrées dans les dictionnaires monolingues français en ligne*, examines gender metaphors in online monolingual French dictionaries. From a metalexicographic and cognitive perspective, she shows how apparently neutral lexicographic choices can reproduce stereotypes and sustain dominant ideology. The

analysis highlights how dictionary discourse can implicitly present sex as tied to particular modes of action and norms, thereby legitimizing socially established masculine and feminine identities.

Remaining within the field of discourse analysis, the article of Anna Godzich analyses aquatic metaphors (i.e. *rain*, *tsunami*) in Italian football journalism, viewing them as central "culturemes". Corpus analysis shows that such metaphors are not interchangeable: they have graded evaluative profiles and are chosen for distinct rhetorical effects. The chapter situates these patterns in broader Italian hydro-cultural imaginaries, showing how sports language both reflects and extends cultural narratives.

Metaphors, Phraseology & Culture represents the second part of this book, linking the concepts of metaphor and phraseology with that of culture, even though the intercultural and contrastive characteristics of phraseology represent the core focus of this volume. Metaphor, as observed in previous chapters, serves as a cognitive bridge connecting the individual thought to shared cultural structures. Phraseology, in particular, is the linguistic domain in which this interaction is most evident: idiomatic expressions and constructions are not mere stylistic choices, but lexical crystallizations of metaphors rooted in specific cultural patterns and worldviews.

The authors approach these research questions in different ways. Some of them focus on the translatability of metaphors and certain constructions, showing that the process of lexicalization prompts a critical reflection on the apparent similarities between source and target languages (Ladmiral 1998). According to Ladmiral (2016: 429-430), the translation of polyrematic expressions transcends mere linguistic transposition. The focus shifts from "language" to the specific utterance, that is, "what is said (or written) by a speaker or author". The essence of translation, therefore, lies not in the reproduction of the text itself, but rather in induction of equivalent effects in the target-language reader: effects of meaning, style, literature, poetry, and even comedy.

With this in mind, Orges Selmani, in her article, *American Politics and the Albanian Language an Ocean apart. Aspects of Translating Political Terminology*, examines political discourse from a contrastive English-Albanian perspective. Departing from the methodological approaches of her predecessors, the author employs a translation perspective that enables us to observe how political terminology, both Albanian and American, is intrinsically linked to the cultural and systemic context it represents. Translation, therefore, is not a mere linguistic transposition, but rather a complex act of mediation that requires careful management of the vast cultural heritage underlying the source text.

Justyna Łukaszewicz's article also raises questions about translation and phraseological metaphors. Specifically, the article offers a contrastive analysis of the anthropomorphic metaphors found in Grazia Deledda's *Cenere* and its two 1906 Polish translations, aiming to understand the relationship between humans and their environment. Using Bocian's (2009) typology of translation strategies and Prandi's (2019) classification of metaphors, the research focuses specifically on "living, conflictual, or creative" metaphors related to Sardinian its interior landscape. The comparative investigation revealed divergent translation choices: Zyndram-Kościałkowska (1906a) favors a reduction or elimination of the figurative element; while Dzieduszycka (1906b) favors a literal approach to preserve the metaphorical image.

The importance of phraseological translation is examined in Flavia Pompeo's article, which tracks the conceptual history behind Italian expressions such as *toccare in sorte a* ("to fall to someone by lot/fate"), linking them to Latin constructions (including *sorte* in the ablative). By following the earliest attestations and their developments, the chapter identifies two conceptual metaphors that help explain how chance and allotment are conceptualized.

On the heels of the previous article, Violeta Shaba also presents a study of idioms in Albanian and English. To do so, the author examines idioms characterized by strong mental imagery, which facilitates understanding the motivational link between literal and actual meaning.
Shaba shows how semantically equivalent expressions can differ at the lexical level, reflecting cultural specificity, even while they also display universal traits. The analysis highlights imagery, cognitive mechanisms (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), and types of semantic motivation as described by Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005).
Anna Pompei and David Nicoletti's article, *Estensioni semantiche e metafora: il caso di 'prendere' nelle costruzioni a verbo supporto*, moves in the same direction. Specifically, the authors explore the polysemy of verbs expressing the concept of "prendere", with particular attention to supporting verb constructions (e.g., *prendere una decisione*). Based on Italian, the study includes contrastive observations on Romance languages and English, revealing cross-linguistic conceptual divergences (e.g., FR: *prendre une douche* vs. IT: *fare una doccia*). The analysis of the metaphorical pathways leading to grammaticalization reveals a semantics of the verb "prendere" that is more complex than a simple converse of "dare". The aim is to explore the semantic adaptation of the verb to express different grammatical functions.
The remaining chapters in this part take a broader cultural and ideological view of metaphorical and metonymic change.
Alessio Pisci, for example, in *Metaphors and Metonymies as 'Avatars' of Western Domination: The Case of English Loanwords from Indic Languages*, analyses the integration of lexical loanwords from Indic languages into English, distinguishing between terms that retain their original meaning and those that develop metaphorical or metonymic meanings. The central argument, based on the studies of Durkin (2009) and Sweetser (1991), posits that lexical semantic changes are not random, but reflect specific cognitive and ideological patterns. The article focuses on loanwords denoting cultural and religious referents (e.g., avatar, mantra, guru), whose meanings in English have been systematically secularized and "degraded". Similarly, "profane" loanwords (e.g., shampoo, khaki) develop metonymic meanings that associate the process/raw material (source language) with the finished product (English). The author argues that this systematic devaluation of the original concepts and the process/product association reflect and perpetuate the supremacist stance of the colonizer.
Similarly, Francesca Panajo, in *La metáfora en la construcción de los dominios semánticos nahuas: un estudio difrástico*, shows how metaphor, similarly to metonymy, constitutes one of the fundamental trajectories for analysing the semantic formation of Nahuatl diphrasms. The proposed analysis departs from traditional studies that postulated a false equivalence between metaphor and diphrasms, highlighting instead the structural interdependence between language and culture. Specifically, in the context of Nahuatl, a polysynthetic, agglutinative, and predominantly oral language, the structure and use of diphrastic expressions not only reflect but actively shape the cognitive parameters of speakers. This innovative approach broadens the understanding of diphrasms, illuminating the dynamic interactions between language, thought, and society in the Mesoamerican world.
The last article concerning culture and metaphors is *Philosophical Metaphors: Plato's Allegory of the Cave and its Cultural Impact* authored by Ilana Shiloh, which delves into philosophical discourse. Specifically, the author examines, through Cognitive Semantics, Plato's allegory of the cave, recognized as one of the most influential metaphors in Western thought. The article explores Plato's choice to employ this metaphor, inferring its justification from Lakoff and Johnson's theory of the embodied mind (1980), according to which even abstract concepts are predominantly metaphorically structured. Drawing on the embodied-mind approach associated with Lakoff and Johnson, she argues that the allegory's power stems not only from argument but from its grounding in bodily schema - especially

containment - rendered vivid through the image of the cave. The metaphor endures because it resonates with universal experience.

The last part of this volume, *Metaphors, Concepts & Cognition*, examines the relationship between metaphor and human cognition. Concepts are not objective and disembodied entities, but emerge from the interaction between our bodily experience and the surrounding environment. In this regard, metaphor becomes a tool that allows us to understand complex notions, such as time, power or emotions, through physical and perceptual experiences, showing the inseparable link between figurative language, conceptual structuring, and cognitive processes.

The first article in this part focuses on the multimodality represented by the use of metaphorical gestures for pedagogical purposes in French as a Foreign Language classrooms. To this end, Can Denizci collected data from natural contexts of French as a Foreign Language teaching, involving three Turkish teachers. Preliminary analyses reveal that metaphorical gestures support the transmission of information by conceptualizing abstract verbal referents. A second category of gestures, including emblematic ones, shows the management of didactic interactions related to specific linguistic points or assessment.

Alice Guerrieri's article also fits into the context of multimodality. It focuses on understanding metaphorical language in art, a *locus* in which metaphors can be monomodal or multimodal, combining visual, verbal, acoustic, and haptic elements. These metaphors have an aesthetic purpose and, when well-conceived, activate sensory and motor experiences in the observer, generating a resonance effect. The decoding process, which requires contemplation and cognitive effort, transforms into cognitive enrichment and aesthetic pleasure, strengthening the socio-cultural imagination. The analysis of the work *Verso il traguardo* exemplifies the conceptual metaphor "HEALING IS A HORSE RACE", showing how visual and auditory cues (e.g., the sound of a horse racing) stimulate the interpreter on both a motor and emotional level. This paper analysed the multifaceted nature and expressive potential of metaphorical language, both verbal and visual, highlighting how an effective metaphor can trigger imaginative experiences and immediate motor simulations in the user.

Similarly, Arianna Careddu's article, *A Visual Pathway towards Metaphorical Approaches to Sustainability Advocacy*, shows how visual metaphors can foster sustainability communication, moving audiences from inertia to meaningful action. The author examines the impact of popular conceptual frames (e.g., "THE EARTH IS A PATIENT") on attention and motivation, discussing the ethical implications and the dichotomy between urgency and compassion fatigue. The article concludes by arguing that visual metaphors with positive frames offer a more effective and sustainable path to shaping perceptions of environmental challenges.

Following the trio focusing on metaphor and multimodality, two additional articles explore metaphors in psychological discourse. Irene Cosa and Francesca Ervas, in *Le funzioni della metafora nell'ingiustizia epistemica nel disturbo narcisistico di personalità*, highlight that the use of metaphor in health communication, especially for mental disorders, remains highly debated due to its potential negative consequences and the risk of epistemic injustice. The authors explore whether and how the functions of metaphor (naming, framing, and perspective shifting) in the narratives of individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) can modulate this injustice. A pilot study examines the conceptual metaphor "VANITY AS A PERSON" and its role in how speakers with NPD are perceived.

Similarly, Lucienne Huby's article, *Implicazioni dei deficit di memoria sulla comprensione delle metafore nella schizofrenia*, highlights the difficulties in understanding metaphors in people with schizophrenia, who tend to interpret them literally. This difficulty hurdle is closely linked to memory deficits that hinder the processing of figurative language. The

author presents the potential contribution of the BRDL Computational Memory Model to unravel the specific mnemonic mechanisms involved.
The last article, "Dynamische Sprache". *The Epistemological Role of Metaphor in the Creation of Quantum Mechanics Concepts*, focuses on the heuristic power of metaphor in the creation of new concepts. Therefore, Patrizia Piredda, draws on Wittgenstein's concepts of "perspicuous representation" (1986) and Heisenberg's "dynamic language" (2019), argues that metaphor serves as a dynamic means of highlighting internal connections. The discussion culminates in an analysis of metaphors selected from the works of Niels Bohr to show their effectiveness in representing and naming quantum mechanical phenomena.
The chapters outlined in this introduction represent only a partial overview of a volume distinguished by its comprehensive scope, articulating both descriptions pertaining to specific languages and generalizations applicable across a plurality of linguistic contexts.
The volume's value rests on three strengths: the variety of linguistic materials examined, the range of theoretical commitments brought to bear, and the methodological challenge posed by the enduring tension between metaphor's creative force and its stabilizing, constitutive fixity. Across these contributions, metaphor, phraseology, and discourse converge on a common task: to understand metaphor as a conceptual tool that can cross epistemological and linguistic boundaries - and, in doing so, coin new concepts and open new worlds.

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Mariangela Albano is associate professor in French Linguistics at the University of Cagliari. Her research focuses primarily on the epistemology of cognitive approaches and on cognitive linguistics applied to the analysis of phraseology and metaphors, and to the teaching and learning of French as a Foreign Language. From this perspective, she has studied both the grammars of constructions and the cognitive mechanisms involved in the processing and translation of phraseology (French, German, Italian, Turkish). Her research also relates to the history of French language didactics.

I
Metaphors, Phraseology & Discourses

Chapter 1.
Energy Metaphors: Cognitive Analysis of the Representation of the Energy Crisis in France

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Abstract
Since the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, the energy crisis in France has worsened, this is revealed in the tweets posted by the French President Emmanuel Macron. This study looks at how the French President's representation of the energy crisis is constructed by means of conceptual metaphors. To this aim, the analysis integrates the Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Charteris Black's critical metaphor analysis (2004) to analyse conceptual metaphors representing the energy crisis in France. The results reveal a network of metaphors which portray the crisis as a JOURNEY or a WAR, and the transition to sustainable energy as CORRIDOR or SOBREITY plan. By constructing a narrative of resilience, national pride, and European solidarity, Macron's metaphorical language serves not only to persuade but also to justify structural policy shifts, including the move toward renewable energy and reduced dependency on Russian gas. The findings also reveal that certain novel metaphors have migrated from presidential communication to broader European discourse, illustrating the performative power of political language in shaping both public understanding and supranational energy strategies.

Keywords: crisis, energy, France, metaphors, novel metaphors, X.

1. Introduction

In the course of the past decade, social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) have gained popularity as major tools used by politicians and public figures to disseminate ideas and communicate with a global audience. In general, social media have become an increasingly important sphere of political campaigning (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley 2016; Jensen 2017), offering politicians a plethora of digital tools and affordances to reach out to diverse audiences. Although platforms such as X would theoretically offer the opportunity for political leaders to engage in dialogue with their supporters, research indicates that this is a marginal phenomenon, as politicians rarely react to retweets and comments by their followers (Jensen 2017; Perez Curiel 2020). X constitutes a channel through which politicians' political messages may go

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viral through their reproduction (through retweets) by their followers, on one side, and dissemination by journalists and the media, on the other (Jungherr 2016). This is particularly relevant in times of crises. A successful crisis resolution requires not only the establishment of policies and the effective use of existing resources, but also the creation of compelling narratives about «what is happening and what is at stake» (Hart & Tindall 2009: 22). One constant observation in a crisis is that it will elicit sentiments of uncertainty, dread, fury, and concerns about accountability. In such cases, a reconstruction process is required as everyone attempts to comprehend how such events occurred.

During the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Macron showed remarkable activity on X, tweeting on average twice every day, with up to 18 tweets per day during February and March, the month leading up to his re-election. Because of the platform-specific limitations, namely X's character restriction, it is necessary to employ language in a strategic manner in order to successfully transmit messages and attract the attention of the audience. As a result, political tweets are prepared with great care in order to resound with the audience, elicit feelings, and exert an impact on public opinion. The linguistic choices found in the tweets can be an essential element in the process of constructing and legitimising political objectives. Conceptual metaphors are effective linguistic devices in political communication, metaphors, according to Semino (2017) can function as legitimising tools, allowing for the representation of abstract concepts and the shaping of public attitudes. To justify a military action, for instance, a political leader would use the WAR metaphor in his/her discourse to represent the conflict as necessary against an adversary. This would be done in order to justify the use of military force. Through the employment of conceptual metaphors in his tweets throughout this crucial moment, Macron was able to frame the crisis in a manner that was congruent with his political objective and enhanced his image as a leader. The purpose of this research is to investigate how Macron's use of these metaphors played a legitimising function. We therefore analyse the metaphorical language that the French President used to convince the French public opinion and rally support for his actions during a moment of international crisis by studying particular examples of Macron's tweets.

2. Metaphors in political discourse

The extensive research conducted on the link between politics and conceptual language has suggested that politics and language are fundamentally related (Chilton 2003; Lakoff 1990; Zhou 2016). It has been noticed that the use of figures of speech can make political speeches more appealing to their audience and more effective in disseminating suggested political perspectives (Zhou 2016). More crucially, as language aspects, tales and metaphors are regarded as rapid and strong leadership tools for communicating complicated concepts in memorable ways (Harris & Barnes 2006), especially in times of uncertainty or upheaval (Auvinen *et al*. 2013; Cleverly-Thompson 2018). Conceptual metaphors, as proposed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980), are cognitive tools that enable individuals to understand abstract concepts by mapping them onto more concrete domains. Conceptual metaphors are widely used by politicians in the context of political communication. The purpose of these metaphors is to frame and express complicated concepts in a manner that is approachable to the general public and compelling to them. Metaphors allow political leaders to elicit images, emotions, and connections that impact how problems are viewed and understood by the public. Metaphors enable individuals to communicate and reflect uponcomplicated or abstract information in terms of simpler, more tangible information (Gibbs 1994; Pinker 2007; Thibodeau &

Boroditsky 2011). Their presence is notably obvious in public conversation, namely in political communication (Otieno *et al*. 2016).

Metaphors not only strengthen the message, but they also capture people's attention and tie what they already know (culture, history, etc.) to the ideology of a political party or person. According to Dittmer (1977), politicians use metaphors to make political events and interactions appear less complicated and more tangible to residents and voters. Research on metaphors used in political speech reveals the existence of several conceptual metaphors regularly utilised by politicians. Terms such as 'sustainable development' and 'ecological awareness' for future generations are increasingly discussed and are gaining adherents. The society demands products that do not compromise the environment. The term 'green company', then, has been adopted to be synonymous with the company that is committed to the environment. In a way, this influences people's perception of the world.

In many ways, the perception that SUSTAINABILITY IS LIFE was created, that is, a metaphor around a culture aimed at preservation and conservation for future generations, as well as everything that has become a consequence of this in terms of products and by-products. In this sense, discourse on sustainable energies in the media began to emerge in order to gain prominence, with particular focus on its environmental impacts. This was due to climate change and scarcity of natural resources, which in turn caused the demand for mitigation and the search for renewable energy and more sustainable solutions. In this regard, much is discussed about sustainable development, which is recognised as the process of meeting needs without harming future generations (Nilashi *et al*. 2019).

Metaphorical expressions, which will be the main, though not exclusive, focus of our study, have been widely used to talk about the crises in general. One metaphorical conceptualisation has been in vogue in terms of conceptualising the COVID pandemic or political revolutions. Another intriguing aspect of the relationship between political tweets and conceptual metaphors is the use of metaphors as legitimising tools. When politicians employ metaphors in their communication, they not only describe issues but also evaluate and justify their policies and actions. By framing political agendas through metaphors, politicians may infuse their projects with symbolic significance, emotional impact, and ethical legitimacy. This process of metaphorical legitimation entails crafting narratives that frame policies as essential, urgent, and ethically warranted, so securing public endorsement and validating political choices. Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, we will focus on President Emmanuel Macron's tweets on the energy crisis, with a view to reflecting on two major questions:

> a) How do conceptual metaphors in Emmanuel Macron's tweets construct a narrative of collective resilience and justify policy responses to the energy crisis?
> b) To what extent have novel metaphors influenced the public discourse and alignment of European energy policies?

3. Methodology

The data for analysis consist of tweets (excluding retweets) posted on the official X account of President Emmanuel Macron. We chose to focus on Macron's tweets on X, with 9.3 million followers, as X has been one of the French president's main channels of communication with the public and mobilisation for his political cause (Perez Curiel 2020). This medium offers unique opportunities due to their immediacy, their global reach, and their specific affordances in terms of multimodal (verbal, visual and sonic) features. A particularly useful aspect of this social media has been that they allow for articulating a personal brand and agenda, without the

involvement of journalists and the mainstream media (Sakki & Pettersson 2016; Laaksonen *et al*. 2020).
Research has shown that X constitutes an ideal arena for the dissemination of propaganda and news (Perez Curiel 2020), and that it is characterised by forceful, emotional language, rendering it an environment that nurtures political polarisation (Andersson *et al*. 2021).
The methodology for extracting and analysing conceptual metaphors from tweets concerning the energy crisis in France, as posted by French President Emmanuel Macron in 2022, involves a systematic approach to uncovering the underlying metaphorical representations and analysing their potential impact on public discourse and policy making. For this purpose, we have chosen to focus on the 2-year period of 2022-2023 because it covers the midpoint in the energy crisis in France. Out of a total of 3217 tweets posted by President Macron from January 2022 to December 2023, a corpus of 918 tweets was selected with the help of an X API scraper tool.[1] The tool uses search words related to 'energy' in English and French to identify relevant tweets. The average length of tweets is 22 words with tweeting frequency of 2 tweets per day as can be illustrated below in Table 1.

Total number of tweets	Number of tweets selected for analysis	Tweets containing energy related metaphors	Total number of words	Total number of characters
3217	918	470	10016	61287

Tab. 1: Corpus Analytics.

This corpus specifically addresses the energy crisis and government initiatives on energy consumption and sustainability. Although Macron generally posts identical content in French and English, tweets in other languages were translated for consistency. Tweets fell under multiple categories.
The original data-set downloaded contained six identifying variables that included the date of the tweet, the twitter handle of the tweeter, the name of the tweeter, the body of the tweet, the type of tweet (*e.g.,* new, reply, retweet) and the retweet count. The data was cleaned leaving two of the six identifying variables, the date of the tweet and the body of the tweet for analysis. Tweets from Macron's X account were imported into Sketch Engine[2] which enables the user to import and code textual data, search for combinations of words in the text or patterns in the coding, and import from or export data to other quantitative analysis software as can be seen in Fig. 1.
In order to extract the tweets containing metaphors, the Metaphor Identification Procedure VU (MIPVU) by Steen *et al*. (2010) was used. The Metaphor Identification Procedure identifies metaphor-related words through four steps: understanding the text, identifying lexical units, comparing each unit's contextual meaning with its more basic, concrete meaning, and marking it as metaphorical if a contrast exists. This method helps detect metaphors systematically in discourse analysis.

[1] API refers to the process of extracting data from an application programming interface (API).
[2] A corpus manager and text analysis software used to search large text collections according to complex and linguistically motivated queries.



Fig. 1: Screenshot of *Sketch Engine* concordance of energy related metaphors.

Eventually, 470 tweets contained conceptual metaphors and were considered for analysis. To ensure reliability, the tweets were coded independently and each tweet was analysed in isolation from previous tweets. These tweets serve as the primary data source for the analysis; they are annotated for conceptual metaphors according to Charteris-Black's conceptual metaphor theory (2004). This technique consists of identifying linguistic expressions that suggest metaphorical connections between our theme of study of the energy crisis, and source domains used to represent the crisis (Bandera 2006). A first quantitative analysis was carried out in order to determine the most frequent source domains of these metaphors.

Through a detailed conceptual metaphor identification process, target domains (*e.g.* WAR) and source domains (*e.g.* ENERGY CRISIS) are pinpointed within the tweets to reveal the metaphorical connections. Applying Charteris-Black's 3-stage procedure, the collected metaphors are first identified and grouped into categories, interpreted in terms of their mapped domains and finally explained with reference to their context. This analysis delves into how these metaphorical representations shape the understanding of the energy crisis and government actions, considering their cognitive implications, emotional resonances, and persuasive effects on the audience.

This study can help explain how different conceptual metaphors from different source domains, such as those portraying the crisis as a JOURNEY and WAR, work simultaneously to construct a nuanced evaluation of the energy crisis and how the French government presented its policies. Insights into the persuasive power of metaphorical language in shaping public opinion can be gained by evaluating how these metaphors influence the perceived urgency, importance, and legitimacy of the government's energy sobriety plan.

4. Metaphors of the energy crisis

In the examination of President Emmanuel Macron's tweets on the energy crisis, the conceptual analysis reveals a variety of source domains used as can be seen below.

Source Domains	Number	Percentage (%)
Conventional metaphors		
ENERGY CRISISIS A JOURNEY	191	
CLIMATE CHANGE IS WAR	107	
CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN ENEMY	18	
OTHERS (PLANT / CONTAINER)	07	
Novel metaphors		
FUEL SOBRIETY	34	
ENERGY CORRIDOR	14	
ENERGY TRANSITION IS A SACRIFICE	8	
RUSSIAN GAS IS A THREAT	2	
TOTAL	470	100%

Tab. 2: Conceptual metaphors identified.

As the most frequent metaphors identified in the corpus, the JOURNEY and WAR metaphors were representative of the crisis. These metaphors, along with novel metaphorical representations like FUEL SOBRIETY and the ENERGY CORRIDOR, provide a compelling cognitive and rhetorical strategy, prompting the public to perceive the energy transition as an essential national goal and a collective endeavour. These metaphors present the crisis in a broader context and align Macron's political plans with a feeling of purpose, urgency, and ethical conviction, which helps construct an emotionally impactful narrative that portrays his energy plan as essential for the country's sustainable future. As the most frequent in Macron's tweets, The JOURNEY metaphor frames the energy transition as the only pathway to energy sovereignty as illustrated below.

> C'est une étape clé vers la transition energetique Mondiale (This is a key step toward the global energy transition) 22/06/2023.
>
> Cela a ouvert la voie à notre souveraineté énergétique (This has paved the way to our energy sovereignty) 26/01/2022.
>
> …conduire la France sur la voie de la transition écologique (lead France towards the path of ecological transition) 29/12/2023.

This metaphor functions by correlating fundamental aspects of a physical journey such as progress, destination, obstacles and objectives, with the intricate process of upgrading the French people's energy consumption habits. Within this metaphorical conceptualisation, the destination of the JOURNEY refers to a state of energy independence and sustainability, an objective that could only be achieved through speed and persistent progress as illustrated in examples below. By describing the energy transition as a JOURNEY, Macron suggests that although the path is challenging, it is distinctly outlined, so that the nation can head safely towards its objective.

> Nous devons accélérer et aller deux fois plus vite dans le domaine des énergies renouvelables (Weneed to accelerate and go twice as fast on renewable energies) 23/09/2022.
>
> Il faut relancer nos économies et accélérer la transition écologique quelles que soient les difficultés (revive our economies and accelerate the ecological transition no matter the hardships) 29/12/2023.

The JOURNEY metaphor also conveys a sense of urgency in addressing the energy crisis. This conceptualisation implies that time is running out and swift, decisive action is necessary to avert disaster. This representation considers challenges such as high energy expenses, climatic effects, and resource depletion as transient obstacles to be overcome, rather than insuperable dangers. The JOURNEY metaphor conveys endurance, highlighting that despite hurdles, collaborative work will ultimately result in a more secure and sustainable future.
In addition to the JOURNEY metaphor, Macron frequently employs the WAR metaphor, depicting the energy crisis and climate issues as battles and existential threats which need urgent and resolute action as illustrated below. By framing climate change as an adversarial force, Macron aligns his policies with notions of defence and resistance, depicting the energy transition as an active as struggle against an imminent threat.

> La bataille pour le climat et la biodiversité s'accélère (the battle for climate and biodiversity is accelerating) 06/12/2022.
>
> C'est en tant qu'Européens, toujours, que nous pouvons lutter contre la hausse du prix de nos énergies (it is as Europeans, always, thatwe can fight against the rise in the price of our energies) 06/10/2022.
>
> La lutte pour le climat est indissociable de la lutte pour la biodiversité (the battle for the climate is inseparable from the fight for biodiversity) 07/11/2023.
>
> Le changement climatique est l'ennemi, l'énergie nucléaire est notre alliée (Climate change is the enemy, nuclear energy is our ally) 12/03/2022.

Climate crisis is described as a war to fight and to combat, it shows that climate crisis is a real threat to our world which everyone should take action to fight. Macron also links climate change to employment and the need for joint effort as Europeans to fight back the high prices. Therefore, he frames the energy crisis as a conflict or as truggle. This perspective emphasises the adversarial nature of the crisis and the need for collective action to overcome it. This conceptualisation also highlights the importance of finding equilibrium between different energy sources, environmental concerns, and economic needs.
The WAR metaphor emphasises the gravity of the problem while invoking a feeling of moral obligation and community accountability, implying that inaction would result in a defeat in a struggle that might have been overcome via unified efforts. This conceptualisation is especially persuasive in its appeal for group mobilisation and sacrifice. In his tweets, Macron frequently depicts climate change and fossil fuel dependency as enemies that directly threaten French sovereignty and security. In this manner, he constructs a feeling of solidarity, imploring individuals to participate in the war and accept certain austerity measures such as increased energy costs or lifestyle modifications. This framing converts policy endeavours into defensive tactics, portraying renewable energy projects, European collaborations, and green policies as 'weapons' in a larger struggle for stability. Therefore, the WAR metaphor adds to the intensity the intensity of Macron's message, generating public pressure for action by framing the energy crisis as an unavoidable battle which necessitates immediate and public reaction.

5. Novel Metaphors: Reimagining Energy Dependency

In addition to conventional metaphors, Macron uses novel representations that enrich the discourse on the energy crisis. The concept of FUEL SOBRIETY metaphorically likens

France's reliance on fossil fuels to a hazardous addiction that needs surmounting. Macron compares the dependence on fossil fuels and Russian gas to a state of addiction, evoking concepts of self-discipline and recovery. The use is not only metaphorical but it even became a government plan as seen below.

> La sobriété énergétique est notre seule voie de développement (Energy sobriety is our only path towards development) 05/09/2022.
>
> Il s'agit d'économiser l'énergie que nous pouvons économiser: c'est la sobriété énergétique (It is about saving the energythat we can save: it is energy sobriety) 05/09/2022.

The ADDICTION metaphor draws from the source domain of substance abuse to conceptualise energy dependency. This mapping evokes a powerful emotional and moral framing, transforming what might otherwise be seen as a technical or geopolitical issue into a personal and urgent human struggle. In this metaphorical framework, fossil fuels and Russian gas function as the addictive substances which are harmful, hard to quit, and ultimately unsustainable. The idea of "staying sober" aligns with the shift to green energy, suggesting a clean, responsible, and healthy lifestyle, both at the personal and societal level.

Avoiding Russian gas is presented in the same light as avoiding alcohol: a necessary step for recovery, discipline, and regaining autonomy. Implicit in this metaphor is the notion of a rehabilitation process, a difficult but essential transition, requiring effort, willpower, and support. It also positions Russia as a dangerous dealer or enabler, a source of toxic dependence, further charged by the political context of war and energy blackmail. The metaphor does more than simplify, it morally evaluates the situation. Just as addiction is considered a condition of weakness, recklessness, or even shame, dependence on Russian gas is portrayed not only as economically risky but ethically flawed.

Framing energy transition as a journey to sobriety introduces a narrative arc: from illness to awareness to recovery, suggesting that switching to renewable energy is not only smart policy but a redemptive, almost virtuous act. This metaphor subtly promotes moderation, encouraging consumers to refrain from fossil fuels and move towards alternate energy sources. The sobriety concept asserts that, similar to individuals attempting to overcome personal addictions, society must liberate itself from the unsustainable reliance on fossil fuels (Lang *et al*. 2017). Consequently, green energy presents itself as the prudent choice that prioritises long-term stability above immediate gratification.

The notion of 'energy corridors' has also been used in Macron's tweets, representing the transition to renewable energy as a connected pathway to sustainability. Additionally, The ENERGY CORRIDOR metaphor has been frequently promoted in Macron's tweets.

> Nous avons décidé d'un accord pour construire un corridor des énergies vertes entre l'Espagne, le Portugal et la France (We have decided on an agreement to build a green energy corridor between Spain, Portugal and France) 20/10/2022.

This novel metaphor employs an imagery of structured passage that is built or created specifically as strategic solution to a challenge, illustrating renewable energy initiatives as traveller on a path via which France and other European nations may progress. This conceptualisation highlights the strategic aspects of the energy transition plan, revealing that European policies with regards to energy consumption are in need of collective efforts in order to reach a more sustainable future. By labelling green energy programs as 'corridors', Macron underscores the methodical and deliberate nature of his agenda, suggesting that the path to sustainability is both achievable and essential to a coordinated and global strategy. In this

metaphor, the shift toward green energy is not simply a policy choice or a set of technological innovations, it is imagined as a physical journey along a path that must be followed. The term "corridor" evokes directionality, structure, and purposeful motion. It implies that there is a beginning and an end, with steps in between that must be traversed. The corridor metaphor also suggests that the route is already carved out or in the process of being constructed, reinforcing the notion that the green transition is both planned and achievable.

Within this metaphorical structure, nuclear and renewable energy plants in France are represented as the components or stations along this corridor. Rather than being discrete, unconnected solutions, these plants are part of an integrated path forward, embedded within a larger strategic framework. The metaphor thus frames green energy infrastructure not as scattered innovations but as linked elements in a coordinated journey. The corridor also implies security, as in a protected passage, which aligns with the broader discourse on energy autonomy and resilience in the face of geopolitical threats. Just as a corridor facilitates movement within a building without obstruction, a green energy corridor facilitates progress toward decarbonisation without the detour of fossil fuel dependency. Moreover, this metaphor offers a future-oriented vision: it invites policymakers and the public to look ahead, to see energy transition as something that is not only necessary but navigable. It transforms the abstract idea of climate strategy into a concrete spatial and procedural undertaking. Eventually, this metaphor has been adopted by Portuguese and Spanish politicians and media as an alternative policy against the energy crisis.

Other not so frequent metaphors have been found in the corpus, namely the CRISIS AS A SACRIFICE, as can be seen in the following example.

> Nous vivons la fin de l'abondance, j'appelle au sens du sacrifice des Français (We are experiencing the end of abundance, I appeal to the French people's sense of sacrifice) 24/08/2022.

In Macron's discourse, this metaphor emerges subtly through references to the need for the French people to make efforts and reduce consumption. These are not described as imposed burdens, but as voluntary contributions to a larger mission. This rhetorical strategy reframes inconvenience as virtue and aligns with broader narratives of wartime resilience. It positions citizens not as passive victims of a crisis, but as active participants in a national sacrifice, thereby mobilising patriotic and communal sentiments.

Closely connected to this is the metaphor ENERGY AS A VALUABLE COMMODITY. Although not so frequent in the corpus, it conceptualises energy not simply as a utilitarian good, but as a scarce and precious resource that must be protected, saved, and managed wisely, as can be seen in the following example:

> La meilleure énergie c'est celle qu'on ne consomme pas, Nous devons préserver notre énergie comme un bien rare (The best energyis the one we don't consume. We must preserve our energy as a rare commodity) 23/09/2023.

In this frame, energy is not infinite or freely accessible; rather, it functions like money, gold, or another form of wealth. Macron's repeated emphasis on 'energy savings'and 'efficiency' reinforces this metaphor. The shift in discourse from limitless consumption to frugality reflects a neoliberal logic, where energy is commodified and subject to market-like constraints. Citizens are cast not only as users but as economic actors who must regulate their energy spending, much like financial management.

Macron's use of conceptual metaphors in his tweets, particularly the novel metaphors, has strategically shaped both public discourse and European energy policies during the energy crisis exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. The FUEL SOBRIETY metaphor, drawing from the domain

of addiction, recasts dependence on fossil fuels and Russian gas as a form of harmful substance abuse, promoting the idea that turning to renewable energy is a kin to reclaiming health and dignity. This framing resonated strongly in public and media discourse, with the metaphor appearing in European news coverage and shaping public understanding of the need for energy autonomy. By linking sobriety to moral courage and collective resilience, Macron's rhetoric encouraged solidarity and framed the transition to clean energy as both a personal and national duty.

Similarly, the GREEN ENERGY CORRIDOR metaphor, rooted in spatial and infrastructural imagery, portrays the development of nuclear and renewable installations as part of a coordinated European pathway. It reflects and reinforces transnational cooperation especially among France, Spain, and Portugal, in building interconnectors and reducing dependency on Russian energy. This metaphor supported the political momentum for cross-border energy exchange, aligning well with broader EU objectives of integration and sustainability.

These metaphors, once confined to presidential tweets, have transitioned into the policy sphere, especially through Macron's "energy sovereignty" plan, which rebranded energy transition not merely as a climate initiative but as a geopolitical and strategic necessity. This shift replaced older climate change metaphors with ones grounded in security, autonomy, and war, where climate change and fossil fuels are framed as adversaries.

As for the conventional metaphors, the JOURNEY metaphor further underpins this strategy by presenting the transition as a collective mission that demands perseverance and sacrifice which are concepts reinforced by Macron's praise for public resilience in the face of rising prices and lifestyle adjustments.

In sum, Macron's metaphorical framing has had a performative impact: it not only shaped public sentiment but also guided and justified policy shifts at both national and European levels. These metaphors construct a compelling narrative of solidarity, urgency, and shared purpose, enabling alignment between France's domestic agenda and EU energy policy in response to the war in Ukraine. They demonstrate the political power of metaphor to legitimise structural changes, mobilize support, and recast a crisis as an opportunity for transformation.

6. Conclusion

In interpreting the findings of the metaphor analysis within the broader context of political discourse and communication strategies, the study aims to shed light on how the identified conceptual metaphors contribute to legitimising government actions, framing the energy crisis, and engaging the public in discussions about energy sustainability. Ultimately, by reflecting on the implications of the identified conceptual metaphors for political communication and public engagement, the study provides valuable recommendations for future research on the role of metaphors in political discourse and their potential impact on policy perceptions and public attitudes towards energy-related issues.

In conclusion, Macron's strategic use of this combination of conventional and novel metaphors in his tweets serves as a persuasive tool to market his energy sobriety plan, framing the policy agenda in a compelling narrative that resonates with the values and aspirations of the French people.

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Chapter 2.
Watts Up? A Multilingual, Terminological, and Semantic Analysis of Energy Community Discourses

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Abstract

This paper describes a research project that analyses the role of Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) as novel models of participatory energy governance and their potential to activate virtuous social processes at the local level. The investigation specifically focuses on the concept of "energy", examining how RECs are represented across diverse geographical areas: Sardinia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain. The methodology combines quantitative corpus analysis (using the software Sketch Engine) with qualitative semantic-terminological analysis of web pages and social media. The objective is to study the role of terminological neologisms, intercultural variations, and ecolinguistics (including conceptual metaphors) related to sustainability in the different languages (Chinese, French, English, Italian, and Spanish).
The findings offer insights into the lexical variability of environmental concepts, identifying emerging patterns within REC terminology that reflect broader societal shifts toward sustainable practices.

Keywords: renewable energy communities (RECS), terminology, conceptual metaphor, neology, discourses.

1. Introduction

This paper presents an analysis of terms in Chinese, French, English, and Spanish related to sustainability and energy, utilising a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative corpus analysis (Sinclair 1991), via the software *Sketch Engine*, with qualitative semantic-terminological analysis (Temmerman 2000; Rossi 2015; Humbley 2018), semantic-cognitive analysis (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 and 1999; Lakoff & Turner 1989), and phraseological analysis (Moon 1998; Gross G. 1996; Anscombre & Mejri 2011; González Rey 2021), paying

[1] All authors participated equally in the conceptualisation, drafting and writing of the article: Albano is responsible for the French data and analysis, Denti and Giordano for the English ones, Cocco for the Spanish data and Lupano for the Chinese ones.

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particular attention to polylexical sequences such as nominal syntagmas and lexical collocations.

The study focuses on a corpus of 20 terms per language, drawn from written corpora created within the scope of the EMC2 project: *Energy in Multilingual and Multicultural Communication and Communities*.[2]

To this end, the present study aims to examine the web pages and social media of selected RECs, or Renewable Energy Communities. A Renewable Energy Community (REC, in Italian, French and Spanish CER) is a group of people (citizens, businesses, and/or local entities) who collaborate to produce, consume, and share renewable energy within a defined geographical area, such as a town or a neighbourhood. Typically, a REC is organised around the production, storage, sharing, and consumption of renewable energy; it must be local to ensure the autonomy and efficiency of the project (Ghiani *et al*. 2022).

The energy community movement is rapidly expanding, with existing initiatives supported by stakeholders such as, in France, Enercoop (a historic supplier of 100% renewable electricity and a network of cooperatives); 2) Cler (an association network); 3) Énergie Partagée (an association that promotes solidarity energy projects). In the United Kingdom, we could observe, Burnham & Weston Energy CIC, Heart of England Community Energy, Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy, Gawcott Fields Community Solar, and Ferry Farm Community Solar. In Spain, we focused on Somcomunitats (CE multiplier); 2) Energía común (CE accelerator); 3) Energía Bonita (Canary Islands CE); 4) Barrio solar Ecodes (shared energy project); 5) Comunidad Energética Casco Histórico Ciudad de Toledo (first CE in the historic center of a World Heritage city).

In China, the central government has invested intensively and effectively in the renewables sector for two decades, primarily to mitigate domestic pollution. According to Wang & Kroeber (2025), among the many initiatives launched by local administrations in response to political directives and economic incentives, two types can — to a certain extent — be considered close to the concept of the REC: "renewable energy cooperatives", especially rural ones (农村能源合作社 *nongcun nengyuan hezuoshe*), and "rooftop distributed photovoltaics" (屋顶分布式光伏 *wuding fenbushi guangfu*), often within projects aimed at reducing poverty in rural areas (光伏 + 扶贫 *guangfu* + *fupin*). Unlike the REC phenomenon, however, these initiatives in China are always the result of top-down policies: to date, there appear to be no entities in the country that fully adhere to the European REC model as a bottom-up, self-managed entity. Nevertheless, these represent the energy community models most strongly supported by the Chinese government in recent years; therefore, the research presented here focused on them. The investigation aims to analyse the terms related to the representation and perception of energy within the communication concerning RECs.

The study is divided into two parts: (1) the first part briefly examines phraseology and the links between neology, agglutination, and analogy, and compares quantitative data; (2) the second part explores the relationships between terms and semantic motivation within the considered corpora.

[2] See Bando Pubblico per lo sviluppo di Proof of Concept (PoC) da parte di ricercatori volti a promuovere l'innovazione tecnologica e la transizione energetica - Spoke 7- Missione 4 - Istruzione e Ricerca - Componente 2 - Dalla Ricerca all'Impresa - Linea di investimento 1.5 – Creazione e Rafforzamento di "Ecosistemi dell'Innovazione per la Sostenibilità", costruzione di "Leader Territoriali di R&S" Ecosistema dell'Innovazione e.INS - Ecosystem of Innovation for Next generation Sardinia (ECS00000038), CUP: F53C22000430001, finanziato dall'Unione Europea – NextGenerationEU.

2. Mapping the Lexicon: Defining New Terminology

The present study focuses on multiword sequences that allow for an in-depth examination of the subject of phraseology, defined as the set of fixed lexical combinations in a given language (González Rey 2002: 33). More specifically, two groups of phraseological units were analysed: lexical collocations (Tutin 2013) and nominal phrases, which, according to the terminology proposed by González Rey (2021), can be considered phraseological phrases. The former are understood as sequences of fixed words placed in co-occurrence, in a binary structure and according to a differentiated semiotactic status (*Ibid.*: 117).
For this analysis, nominal lexical collocations were selected. From a semantic point of view, these are subdivided into compositional collocations, i.e., collocations «in which the base and the collocative are transparent» (*Ibid*.: 153), and semi-compositional collocations, «in which one of the two components is transparent while the other, generally the collocative, is figurative» (*Ibid*.).
It is also worth noting that compositional collocations are considered restricted phraseological units because «the base selects the collocative in a predictable way» (*Ibid*.). In contrast, semi-compositional collocations have a base that selects the collocative in an unpredictable way. Furthermore, these are recent terminological collocations characterised by the presence of a central collocator and one or more collocates (Gréciano 1997).
In a preliminary phase, the terms under consideration were examined through two linguistic mechanisms: agglutination, which fuses units into morpho-semantic blocks (Saussure 1967 [1916]: 242-243), and analogy, which homogenises linguistic structures through regularisation (Bally 1951 [1909]: 222, 226). Analogy, as a central cognitive process, fosters the creation of neonyms based on pre-existing phraseological patterns (Monneret 2004, 2014; Itkonen 2005; Langacker 2013: 24). This dynamic illustrates the systemic productivity of language, as neonymy relies on the mental availability of pre-existing phraseological structures that follow recurring patterns.
As can be seen from the following tables, the neologisms examined show a marked tendency to conform to specific construction patterns.
In French, the word “énergie” is often accompanied by collocatives such as “partagée”, “publique”, “éthique”, “territorial”, “citoyenne” and “renouvelable”, demonstrating a tendency to emphasise not only the territorial context but also the concept of community, common good, and sharing:

French polylexical units	**Type of construction**
carte de l’énergie citoyenne	NdeNA
centrale solaire	NA
circuit court de l’épargne	NAdeN
collectivités territoriales	NA
communauté énergétique renouvelable (CER)	NAA
énergie citoyenne	NA
énergie partagée	NA
énergie publique	NA
éolienne citoyenne	NA
gouvernance des installations	NdeN
habitants [et acteurs] de leur territoire	NdeN
installations citoyennes d’énergie renouvelable	NAdeNA
investissement des collectivités [et des citoyens]	NdeN
parc solaire	NA

French polylexical units	**Type of construction**
parc photovoltaïque	NA
projet citoyen	NA
projet d'énergie renouvelable citoyenne	NdeNAA
projet EnR citoyen	NNN
projets locaux de production d'énergie renouvelable	NAdeNdeNA
projets territoriaux	NA

Tab. 1: Construction types for terms (French).

The analysis of the empirical data highlights a significant predominance of specific recurring morphosyntactic structures. These configurations include, in particular, the constructions [Noun + Adjective], prepositional noun phrases, complex syntactic structures introduced by the preposition "de", and, to a lesser extent, the constructions [Noun + Noun].
Despite the limited size of the reference corpus, a preferential tendency emerges toward the patterns [Noun + Adjective] and [Noun + de + Noun], as well as, more generally, toward complex prepositional constructions based on the pivot "de". These patterns appear to be favoured, both in terms of attested frequency and productivity in the specialised domain under observation.
The propensity for the first structural typology, that is, [Noun + Adjective], appears to be attributable to a cognitive and typological preference for binary structures (Kilani-Schoch & Dressler 2005: 17, 89-92), for hierarchical configurations (Noailly 1990; Schwarze 2001), and, specifically in the context of contemporary French, for the determiner-determinant order (Benveniste 1966: 91; Pruvost & Sablayrolles 2003: 105; Mejri 2011). Regarding the construction [Noun + de + Noun], the data under examination attest to a frequent use of recursive prepositional phrases, intrinsically characterised by an inclusion hierarchy.
Furthermore, according to Goldberg's studies (1995, 2006), the first is a regular predicative or attributive compositional construction that shows a production pattern of the type [N adjective] → "[noun] has the property [adjective]". The second type is, instead, a genitive construction (e.g. "habitants [et acteurs] de leur territoire"), a thematic construction or event structure (e.g. "projet d'énergie renouvelable citoyenne").
In English, the terminologies examined follow a specific construction pattern. The word "energy", for example, has the most frequent, but not exclusive, left-hand collocative of the adjective, sometimes the noun, or a compound. As in French, the focus is on the territory and the community, emphasising the results of renewable energy policies and the improvement and implementation of projects for the local context, with expressions such as "local energy", "community energy", "home energy", "renewable energy", "solar energy", "green energy", "clean energy", "energy efficiency", and "energy performance". The table shows other frequent collocations of the keyword "energy" and their construction type:

English polylexical units	**Type of constructions**
local energy	AN
community energy	AN
home energy	NN
renewable energy	AN
solar energy	AN
energy costs	NN
energy usage	NN
energy projects	NN
energy economy	NN

English polylexical units	Type of constructions
energy conservation	NN
energy support	NN
energy consumption	NN
energy solutions	NN
energy crowd funds	NNN
local energy enterprise	ANN
local energy systems	ANN
local energy for local people	AN+for+AN
local energy from the sun	AN+from+N
not-for-profit energy company	Compound+NN
not-for-profit community energy enterprise	Compound+NNN

Tab. 2: Construction types for terms (English).

The word "energy" is often simultaneously pre-modified and post-modified to clearly define its connection to the territory and the community, emphasising its social purpose.
The use of the possessive adjective "our" («our energy») focuses on the ownership of a collectively produced good and consumed by the entire community. The idea of territory in English is expressed primarily through the adjective "local" and the adverb "locally" («locally generated», «locally owned»).
The product and revenue of this collective economy remain within the community: «the value of our energy economy being retained locally».
The data analysis also shows for English a clear prevalence of morphosyntactic structures attributable to the constructions [Adjective + Noun], but above all the nominal phrases [Noun + Noun] but also rather long [Noun + Noun + Noun + Noun], some prepositional nominal phrases, and more complex structures introduced by a compound and followed by [Adjective + Noun], or [Noun + Noun + Noun].
In Spanish too, the terminologies examined follow a specific construction pattern, with some variation. The word "energía", for instance, can present one or more adjectives as collocatives on the right, that refer both to the strictly technical aspect ("energía fotovoltaica", "energía excedentaria", "energía disponible") and to the positive impact on the territory and the community ("energía limpia", "energía sostenible", "energía verde"). In some cases, it is accompanied by two adjectives at once ("comunidad energetic renovable / energía verde local"):

Spanish polylexical units	Type of constructions
autoconsumo de energía	N+de+N
producción de energía	N+de+N
proyectos de autoconsumo	N+de+N
autoconsumo colectivo	NA
autoconsumo fotovoltaico	NA
comunidad ciudadana	NA
comunidad energética	NA
energía excedentaria	NA
energía comunitaria	NA
energía disponible	NA
energía limpia	NA
energía sostenible	NA
energía verde	NA
instalación fotovoltaica	NA
servicios fotovoltaicos	NA
comunidad energética renovable	NAA
energía eléctrica renovable	NAA

Spanish polylexical units	Type of constructions
energía verde local	NAA
parque fotovoltaico/parque solar	NA
huerto fotovoltaico/huerto solar	NA

Tab. 3: Construction types for terms (Spanish).

It is possible to observe the presence of [Noun + de + Noun] constructions, such as "autoconsumo de energía", "producción de energía", "proyectos de autoconsumo", and some [Noun + Adjective + Adjective] constructions, such as "comunidad energética removable", "energía eléctrica removable", "energía verde local". Although, as the table above shows, the most used morphosyntactic structure is [Noun + Adjective], often with the same noun having different collocatives, as in the case of "autoconsumo fotovoltaico", "autoconsumo colectivo"; or "comunidad energética", "comunidad ciudadana".

There are also some *dobletes*, i.e. two different NA constructions with the same meaning. In some cases, it is the adjective that remains unchanged, as in the case of "paneles fotovoltaicos" and "places fotovoltaicas". In others, it is the noun that remains unchanged, as in "huerto solar" and "huerto fotovoltaico". Both refer to a set of solar panels, but fewer in number than those found in large-scale installations, which are also referred to by an NA *dobletes* with the noun "parque: parque solar/parque fotovoltaico".

In the absence of proper RECs and, therefore, of REC websites, the Chinese case study is based on a corpus consisting of the entire website of one of the five national energy producers, State Power Investment Corporation Limited (SPIC). This company is very active in the field of renewables both within and outside China.

In this corpus, the terminology related to renewable energy is characterised by the recurrence of standard compositions, alongside a minority of alternative compositions. For instance, in the case of the term "electricity" (*dian* 电), the typical Chinese modifier-modified structure is realised with phrases consisting of the juxtaposition of a nominal or adjectival modifier with a nominal modified (see Table 4). These combinations, which are not immediately visible in the English translation, dominate the corpus compared to the less frequent [Verb + Noun] combinations.

The originally verbal value of many characters that are now used as adjectives or nouns implies that even characters that can be identified as nouns can have a verbal (or adjectival) function in the sentence, depending on their position. Thus, we can distinguish phrases such as "energy generation" and "switch", where the pair [Verb + Noun] can be interpreted as a predicate-object structure, from phrases such as "electric current", in which the verb (*liu* 流) performs the logical function of a verbal modifier of the noun it accompanies (*dian* 电), thus mirroring the structure of noun phrases [Noun + Noun]:

Chinese polylexical units	Literal Translation	Type of construction	English translation
绿电	Green + Electricity	AN	Green energy
电力	Electricity + strength	NN	Electric energy
电网	Electricity + network	NN	Electrical network
电站	Electricity + station	NN	Power plant
电池	Electricity + tub, container	NN	Battery

风电机	Wind + Electricity + Appliance	NNN	Wind farm
风电场	Wind + Electricity + Field	NNN	Wind farm
发电	Generate+electricity	VN	Energy generation
继电	Transmit + electricity	VN	Relay (switch)
流电	Flow + electricity	VN	Flowing electricity = Electric current

Tab. 4: Construction types for terms with 电 (Chinese).

The terminology found in relation to "energy" (*nengyuan* 能源, lit. 'energy source') reproduces the described pattern, albeit with greater variety of combinations (Table 5). They range from the pair [Noun+Noun] to that of [Adjective+Noun], or to more complex syntagmas structured by [Verb+Noun+Noun]. Regardless of their extension, these structures reproduce the typical modifier-modified pattern. Alternative constructions [Verb + Object] but also [Adjective + Classifier + Object] are nominalised within the text, as in the case of "integrated energies" (*zonghe nengyuan* 综合能源, lit. "integrate the [sources of] energies"), or with a logical attribute function such as "multi-energies" (*duo zhong nengyuan* 多种能源):

Chinese polylexical units	**Literal translation**	**Type of construction**	**English translation**
新能源	New + energy	AN	Renewable energy
清洁能源	Clean + energy	AN	Clean energy
能源公司	Energy + company	NN	Energy company
能源安全	Energy + security	NN	Energy security
能源体系	Energy + system	NN	Energy system
分布式能源	Divide + model + energy	VNN	Distributed energy
能源供应商	Energy + supply + activity	NVN	Energy supplier
综合能源	Integrate + energy	VN	Integrated energies
多种能源	Many + kind + energy	ACN	Multi-energy
能源保供	Energy + guarantee + supply	NVN	Guaranteed energy supply

Tab. 5: Construction types for terms with 能源 (Chinese).

3. Terminological neologisms and metaphors

The issue of neology and polylexical sequences is part of the theoretical framework of analogy and its structuring role at the conceptual level (Monneret 2014). Within the selected terminologies, it is possible to observe the categorising function of analogy, which is mobilised in any process of categorical construction. More specifically, the aim is to highlight how analogy allows for the establishment of conceptual bridges between a starting domain (source) and a target domain (target), generating semantic groupings based on relational

similarities. This function of analogy has been further explored within cognitive semantics, under the notion of "conceptual metaphor" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff & Turner 1989). According to this approach, metaphor constitutes a systematic projection between a source domain and a target domain, which produces a network of structural correspondences defined as "mapping". In this sense, analogy plays a fundamental role in the organisation of the lexicon, since it contributes significantly to the creation of new semantic categories.

As it was possible to find within the corpora examined, there are numerous conceptual metaphors relating to the sectors of sustainability, territory and energy.

A metaphorical and, at the same time, metonymic conceptual transfer, widespread within the French corpus, is the ontological metaphor ENERGY IS A CITIZEN through which attributes specific to human beings (in this case, legal status) are assigned to an inanimate object (i.e. energy, project). We can observe terms such as "CER", "énergie citoyenne", "éolienne citoyenne", "installations citoyennes d'énergie renouvelable", "projet citoyen", "projet d'énergie renouvelable citoyenne", "projet EnR citoyen". The products of REC are also humanised, as in "prestations locales", where the noun generally indicates the execution of an activity, the result of a behaviour, or a performance.

Investment in REC is anthropomorphised through the use of adjectives such as "ethical" in "finance éthique au service des territoires". This type of conceptual transfer allows us to reflect on 1) the concept of agency, which presents epistemological limitations, since energy lacks intentionality; 2) the fact that it helps structure an abstract and distant concept, such as energy, making it more comprehensible, alive, and integrated within a community of people. This conceptual bridge makes the idea of energy transition more acceptable.

Another type of ontological metaphor observed is ENERGY IS A CONCRETE OBJECT. This integrates the generic conceptual structures "entities are concrete things" and "entities have properties", which are expressed in different ways: "énergie partagée", "énergie publique".

The metaphor ENERGY IS NUTRITION is also used in "personnes alimentées en énergie" to highlight the essential and vital value of energy for human beings.

Even in English, technical language is enriched by the presence of metaphors that establish connections between abstract concepts and tangible, familiar experiences. As in French, metaphors originate in various semantic fields: environmental sciences, to describe the ecological and sustainable dimension of various terms; engineering, which helps explain the technical and operational information needed to define the functioning of technologies and processes; economics, which provides fundamental analytical and conceptual tools for estimating costs, benefits, and market dynamics; and the legal and political context, through which the rules that govern the dissemination and implementation of procedures are enunciated.

Among the most common metaphors is the use of POWER to indicate both electricity and the role of citizens and communities in power and control over the territory: "Protecting climate and nature with community power", "Power to the people", "bringing power to the people".

Another metaphor is the use of the journey metaphor (JOURNEY), THE ENERGY TRANSITION IS A JOURNEY: «Act on Energy supports householders on their energy journey offering a full home energy support service and impartial advice», «Small grants for energy-saving measures now to start your journey». Thus, "journey" as in energy transition refers to both solar energy production and emissions reduction, to support the individual, the environment, and education: «That's why we're looking to partner with schools to help them start their Net-Zero journey, from generating and saving energy to STEM learning», «support the net zero transition and help local households struggling with fuel poverty».

In the Spanish corpus as well, was observed the ontological metaphor THE ENERGY TRANSITION IS A TRAVEL (viaje): «Estaremos encantados de tenerte a bordo mientras seguimos el viaje hacia un mañana más verde», «el grupo de personas motivadas que ponen al servicio del bien común su tiempo personal para planificar y emprender un viaje del que todo el mundo pueda disfrutar»; «Dicho esto, sabemos que muchas de vosotras ya habéis emprendido vuestro propio viaje. La mayoría de las Comunidades Energéticas tienen cierto recorrido y no intervenimos en una hoja en blanco».
The REC are often described employing the metaphor A REC IS A CAR with words such as "motor" or "poner en marcha" (to start a vehicle): «La puesta en marcha de la planta de Santa Cruz de la Palma es mucho más que la simple generación de energía renovable» or «un grupo impulsor que detecta la necesidad de poner en marcha una comunidad energética y culmina con la creación de un grupo motor».
Another metaphor frequently used is A REC IS A PLANT often through polysemous terms that create a connection with the previous one, such as "plantear/planta" or "hoja" that indicates a "leaf" but is also used in the expression "hoja de ruta" to indicate a roadmap; or the verb "arrancar" that can mean "to start a car*"* or "to pull out plants", as in the following example «la Comunidad Energética es una organización viva y es importante que en todo momento se pueda plantear una hoja de ruta que incluya otras acciones y servicios que no se han implementado en el momento de arrancarla».
In the discourse that emerges in the Chinese corpus, some dominant conceptual metaphors can be identified. Renewable energy systems are anthropomorphised, as they provide comfort and support to people, especially in the most remote places, leading to new lifestyles:

> [T]he frontier wind farms give light to thousands of homes, [t]he isolated photovoltaic panels of the Altun Mountains illuminate the new lives of shepherds [*Bianjing feng dianchang shouhu wanjiadenghuo, Aerjinshan li wang guangfu dianliang mumin xin shenghuo* 边境风电场守护万家灯火, 阿尔金山离网光伏点亮牧民新生活].

As for the term "photovoltaic", it also becomes an attribute assigned to living beings in the corpus. This is the case of the "photovoltaic sheep" (*guangfu yang* 光伏羊), which refers to livestock raised in areas that combine the design of photovoltaic panels with the development of agricultural and pastoral activities. Central policies, in fact, promote the creation of systems capable of combining different types of renewable resources (sun, water, wind) or different economic activities (energy production, agriculture, fishing). This phenomenon is accompanied by the use of terminology that associates nouns using the mathematical addition symbol, "+", as in this passage:

> In recent years, the prefecture of Hainan has experimented with the «photovoltaic + ecology + agriculture and livestock» model, obtaining concrete results: photovoltaic energy slows down the desert, enriching the people under the panels. [*Jinnian lai, Hainanzhou tansuo 'guangfu + shengtai + nong muye, shixian guangfu zhi sha, ban xia fu min.* 近年来, 海南州探索 '光伏 + 生态 + 农牧业', 实现光伏治沙、板下富民].

The expression «under the panels, the people are getting rich» (*ban xia fu min* 板下富民), an original four-character idiomatic expression, can almost be given a neological value. The expression - which follows a typical Chinese structure that lends a general, proverbial tone to its content, thanks also to precise rhythmic rules (Link 2013; Conti 2020) - conveys a strongly positive image of photovoltaics in China, emphasising the tangible benefits that derive (almost visually) from the materiality of solar panels.

4. Conclusion

The results obtained, while not exhaustive, allow us to reflect on the degree of variability in the lexicalisation of environmental concepts in Chinese, French, English, Italian, and Spanish, highlighting differences at the terminological, semantic, and pragmatic levels. The analysis identifies emerging patterns in REC terminology and illustrates how these linguistic developments reflect broader social changes oriented toward sustainable practices. This research aims to contribute to both the theoretical understanding and practical applications of environmental communication, providing tools and suggesting relevant implications for lexicographers, policymakers, and environmental communicators, all of whom are committed to defining clear and consistent terminology in a rapidly evolving field such as sustainable energy.

Furthermore, the act of highlighting linguistic strategies useful for predicting the "linguistic and conceptual barriers" that characterise the different national discursive communities allows us to identify the sociological modes of inclusion and exclusion relating to discourses on sustainability, favouring the search for an understanding in an interaction which, according to the definition of Habermas (2022: 101), is qualified as "communicative action".

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Chapter 3.
Neologismi in lingua araba nell'ambito semantico *green*: il caso della resa di *sustainability*

Neologisms in Arabic in the context of *green* semantics: the case of the yield of *sustainability*

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Abstract

Il contributo presenta un metodo di ricerca e conseguente analisi di neologismi in lingua araba concernenti l'ambito semantico della sostenibilità e dell'economia verde. Il metodo di ricerca è basato sul trattamento di dati in *corpora*, affiancato da un metodo di analisi di termini *green* basato sull'esame dei livelli morfologico, etimologico, semantico e retorico. Il contributo presenta il caso studio della resa traduttiva in lingua araba del termine *sustainability* di cui si opera l'analisi morfologica ed etimologica con particolare attenzione all'interpretazione semantica e metaforica, nonché all'analisi pragmatica di frequenza. Il caso studio mostra che il termine arabo si discosta dal campo semantico del termine nelle lingue europee.

Keywords: sostenibilità, lingua araba, *corpora*, neologismi.

Abstract

This paper presents a research method and subsequent analysis of Arabic neologisms related to the semantic field of sustainability and the green economy. The research method is based on data processing in *corpora*, combined with a method for the analysis of green terms based on the examination of morphological, etymological, semantic, and rhetorical levels. The paper presents a case study of the Arabic translation of the term *sustainability*, which is examined through morphological and etymological analysis, with particular attention to semantic and metaphorical

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interpretation, as well as pragmatic frequency analysis. The case study shows that the Arabic term differs from the semantic field of the term in European languages.

Keywords: sustainability, Arabic language, *corpora*, neologisms.

> *Et dans la comparaison sémantique des langues, il faut montrer, précisément, de quelle façon la même réalité est analysée dans des langues différentes* (Coșeriu 1974: 69).

1. Metodologia

I termini concernenti l'ambito semantico della sostenibilità e dell'economia verde in lingua araba sono stati selezionati tramite lo spoglio di un insieme di fonti secondo diverse fasi operate in sequenza. In primo luogo, la ricerca si è concentrata sull'analisi di testate giornalistiche per svolgere un primo screening del linguaggio relativo alla sostenibilità e all'economia verde. La scelta delle testate online è operata sulla base della larga diffusione in tutti i paesi del Medio Oriente e del Nord Africa. Le maggiori testate scelte sono *Al-Jazeera.net* e *Al-Arabiya.net*, che risultano essere tra le più diffuse e, di conseguenza, adatte ad analisi quantitative (Alrababah 2019). L'analisi di questi due portali è stata operata tramite l'estrazione del contenuto testuale con lo strumento *Sketch Engine*. Questo software di *Database management system* ha permesso il bilanciamento del corpus (McEnery & Hardie 2011: 10-11) restringendo il primo screening alle due testate scelte. In questa fase sono stati individuati un insieme di termini da sottoporre a successiva verifica di frequenza. In una seconda fase i termini sono stati rianalizzati mediante ricerca nel corpus *arTenTen*. Tale corpus comprendeva 5,8 miliardi di parole (Belinkov *et al.* 2013) mentre recentemente il nuovo *Arabic Web corpus 2024 (arTenTen24)* ha raggiunto i 6,5 miliardi di parole con nuovo materiale che va da dicembre 2020 a marzo 2021 e da novembre 2023 a gennaio 2024. Il corpus *arTenTen* è stato scansionato (*crawled*) tramite *SpiderLing* (Suchomel & Pomikalek 2012) ed è stato successivamente rifinito, con l'eliminazione dei duplicati, tramite gli strumenti *JusText* e *Onion* (Pomikalek 2011). Le applicazioni di *arTenTen* comprendono in particolare la concordanza, la frequenza e la creazione di liste di parole.[1] Questa seconda fase della ricerca ha permesso di restringere il campo ad un lasso di tempo che va dal 2012 al 2024[2]. La terza fase si è concentrata sull'analisi di frequenza dei termini scelti tramite strumenti di concordanza del software *Sketch Engine*. Inoltre in una quarta fase si sono confrontati i dati di frequenza con i dati delle ricerche sul motore di ricerca tramite *Google Trends* (Jun *et al.* 2018), allo scopo di osservare oltre la frequenza dal punto di vista quantitativo, anche il *sentiment* e l'interesse nel mondo arabo per i temi della sostenibilità.
In un'ultima fase si opera la vera e propria analisi morfologica, etimologica, semantica e retorica dei termini. Il termine scelto viene dapprima distinto dal punto di vista morfologico individuando le categorie grammaticali a cui attiene. Viene poi esplorata la connessione con il suo ramo radicale arabo chiarendo la sua collocazione etimologica, affiancata laddove opportuno da un breve confronto con alcune varianti dialettali arabe. In questa fase si opera una ricerca su dizionari classici dal Novecento a oggi in serie storica per studiare l'evoluzione del termine. Si disamina poi la distribuzione del significato operando un confronto con il suo equivalente in lingue europee, in particolare inglese, francese, italiano e spagnolo. Si osserva

[1] Cfr. «Simple Concordance Query function [...] Frequency functions [...] Word List function [...] Word Sketch and Collocation Concordance functions [...] Bilingual Word Sketch function [...] Distributional Thesaurus function» (Arts *et al.* 2014: 358-363).

[2] Ovvero da *Arabic Web 2012 sample (arTenTen12)* fino al 2024.

infine il suo valore retorico, cercando di comprendere quale sia il valore metaforico del termine nella cultura araba.
Si riporta nel presente contributo il caso studio della resa traduttiva del termine *sustainability* in lingua araba. Il caso studio mostra un'applicazione del metodo di analisi descritto. La scelta del *case study* è motivata da una parte dalla significatività del termine 'sostenibilità' in ambito *green* e dall'altra dal fatto che il termine arabo fornisce un saggio particolarmente interessante a livello semantico e metaforico. Il termine arabo, infatti, presenta comportamenti morfologici e di significato diversi rispetto ai suoi equivalenti europei.

2. Caso studio

2.1. Analisi morfologica ed etimologica

Il termine ar. إستدامة *ʔistidāma*-[*t-un*] si riscontra anche con la grafia استدامة *istidāma* che, a livello grafematico, è un *ʔalif* con omissione di *hamza*.[3] Il termine è l'equivalente dell'ingl. *sustainability* e viene dalla radice *dwm* che, potremmo affermare, attiene al campo semantico della durevolezza, ma anche della ciclicità e della persistenza. La radice produce infatti termini come دائمًا *dayman* 'sempre' ed è collegata al verbo primitivo, ovvero verbo *muğarrad*, دام *dāma* 'durare, continuare; perdurare, prolungarsi, perpetuarsi; restare, rimanere; persistere, perseverare, ostinarsi' e assume anche occasionalmente, perlopiù sotto l'influenza dell'arabo egiziano,[4] gli stessi significati della II forma دوّم *dawwama* 'muoversi in circolo, girare, ruotare, roteare; volteggiare, librarsi; far girare, far roteare o ruotare qc.'. I concetti di 'perdurare' e di 'girare, muoversi in cerchio' appaiono dunque etimologicamente collegati nel radicale *dwm*.[5] Si osservino l'ar. classico دوام *dawām* 'continuità, eternità' e دَوَّامَة *dawwāma* 'circolo, cerchio', si confronti ad es. in arabo palestinese *dawwām* 'whirlpool, cycle' (Elihay 2004: 101-102) ed in arabo egiziano «*dawwaama* /n pl. -*aat*/ 1 whirlpool [...] 2 whirlwind» (Hinds & Badawi 1986: 314). Anche alla III forma il significato della radice rimane coerente con il concetto di persistenza, con داوم على *dāwama ʒala* 'persistere, perseverare, essere costante in qc., dedicarsi a qc.; continuare, proseguire, perseguire qc.'.[6]
Nello stesso radicale si riscontra *dawm* 'palma nana' o 'palma dum',[7] laddove il termine *dawm* nel suo valore di *maṣdar* di I forma significa 'continuità, successione ininterrotta; durevolezza,

[3] Questa distinzione di grafia, frequente in lingua araba, deve essere considerata nello spoglio dei *corpora* in quanto mentre a livello linguistico omettere la *hamza* non genera alcuna differenza semantica, non è dunque una grafia distintiva, a livello grafematico in informatica l'omissione della *hamza* diventa distintiva.

[4] In arabo classico: «(Eg.) I دوّم و دام II» (Traini 1966: 387). In arabo egiziano si osserva in II forma «*dawwim* 1 /vt/ to whirl, cause to turn, spin or rotate rapidly. *ʔin-nawwa dawwimit il-qaarib* the high wind whirled the boat around. 2 /vi/ to whirl, spin, rotate rapidly. –vn *tadwiim*; ava/pva *midawwim*» (Hinds & Badawi 1986: 314).

[5] Sul collegamento tra eternità e circolarità sono state esplorate le due radici *dhr* e *dwr* individuandole come imparentate in Mion (2024: 907). Resta da comprendere se anche la radice *dwm* possa essere un ulteriore esito di un quadro etimologico complessivo legato alla circolarità del tempo nella cultura araba.

[6] Il significato classico di III forma è coerente in diversi dialetti, a titolo di esempio in arabo egiziano si riscontra «*daawim* /vi/ to continue, persevere. *bi-ndaawim ʒala r-rayy kull ʔusbuʒeen* we continue to irrigate every two weeks. –vn *midawma*; ava *midaawim*». [carattere *ʒ* ndr. e citazioni successive] (Hinds & Badawi 1986: 314).

[7] Il tipo di palma è in tassonomia *Chamaerops humilis* ed equivale all'ingl. *European fan palm* o *Mediterranean dwarf palm* (Guzmán *et al.* 2017). Con il termine *dawm* <دوم> associato nei *corpora* al termine tassonomico *Chamaerops humilis* si reperiscono le seguenti varianti: <الدوم المتوسطى>, <النخيل المتوسطي>, <النخيل المغربي>, <الدَّوْم المغربي>, <النخيل القزم>, <النخيل الزاحف>. Tuttavia il termine *dawm* è impiegato più correttamente per 'palma dum' della specie *Hyphaene thebaica L.* (Traini 1966: 387). Nei *corpora* l'occorrenza *dawm* associata a *Hyphaene thebaica* restituisce le varianti <شجرة المُقْل>.

durata, permanenza, persistenza; perseveranza, costanza; eternità'.[8] Il termine *dawm* indica quindi che la palma dum è un tipo di pianta metaforicamente perseverante ovvero durevole e resistente a climi anche inospitali o condizioni di siccità, essendo diffusa infatti in Nord Africa e nella Penisola Arabica anche in *wādī* e con poca acqua, così come la palma nana diffusa nel Mediterraneo occidentale (Moore 1963: 136).

Dal punto di vista morfologico, l'ar. *ʔistidāma* è un *maṣdar* di X forma al femminile, derivato dal verbo إستدام *ʔistadāma*, anche in grafia استدام, che significa 'durare, continuare; *-hu* far durare qc., rendere persistente qc.; proseguire, continuare qc.'. Il termine genera un participio attivo مستديم *mustadīm* con il significato di 'durevole, diuturno; permanente, stabile, ininterrotto, incessante, continuo' (Traini 1966: 387). Questo termine è particolarmente significativo perché, se cercato nei dizionari classici, non fornisce altro che le accezioni appena elencate, mentre verificandone l'uso reale odierno appare evidente l'impiego nuovo con la nuova accezione di 'sostenibile'. Nei dizionari degli anni Sessanta si osserva infatti l'assenza del significato di 'sostenibile', come nel dizionario Traini (1966). Negli anni Settanta il monumentale lavoro di Hans Wehr, dall'originale edizione in tedesco (Wehr 1952) e sino alla sua terza edizione inglese curata da J. Milton Cowan, ometteva invece totalmente i termini إستدام *ʔistadāma* e مستدام *mustadām*, citando curiosamente, sia nella versione tedesca che in quella inglese, solo مستديم *mustadīm* e traducendolo 'dauernd, beständig; ununterbrochen' (*Ibid.*: 419) e 'constant, continuous, continual, incessant, uninterrupted' (Wehr 1976: 303). Anche alla fine degli anni Ottanta il termine aveva ancora l'accezione di 'perenne' persino nel linguaggio agricolo dialettale egiziano preziosamente testimoniato dall'esempio «*zarɜ mistadiim* perennial crops» (Hinds & Badawi 1986: 314), citato sotto la voce *ʔistadaam*,[9] letteralmente 'coltivazione perenne', che oggi sarebbe inteso come 'sostenibile' essendosi rispecializzato nell'espressione زراعة مستدامة *zirāɜa mustadāma* 'agricoltura sostenibile'.[10] Infatti il concetto ingl. *perennial crops* è reso invece oggi in ar. moderno con محصول معمر *maḥṣūl muɜammar* 'coltura (lett. prodotto) perenne' o proprio con la radice *dwm* nell'espressione محصول دائم *maḥṣūl dāʔim* 'coltura permanente', espressioni che sarebbe invece errato tradurre con 'coltura sostenibile'.

È solamente nell'ultimo decennio che nel moderno *Oxford Arabic dictionary* (Arts 2014) appare per il verbo إستدام *ʔistadāma* il significato 'to sustain, to make (sth) last/continue; to continue, to go on' (*Ibid.*: 276). Non sembra casuale che Tressy Arts figuri tra gli autori che hanno promosso proprio la ricerca alla base del corpus *arTenTen* nello stesso anno (Arts *et al.* 2014). È grazie all'aggiornamento di queste recenti ricerche che finalmente appare nell'*Oxford Arabic dictionary* il sostantivo استدامة *istidāma*, occorrenza che riporta il neologismo con il significato 'sustainability'. Questo termine era interamente omesso da Renato Traini come occorrenza, così come da Hans Wehr, metodo che egli usava proprio quando il termine arabo è componibile su base morfologica ma non si è lessicalizzato ovvero non è entrato nell'uso come sostantivo. Parallelamente ad Arts, nello stesso anno 2014, in Italia, Eros Baldissera riportava ancora per استدامة *istidāma* 'durata, continuità, persistenza', per مستديم *mustadīm* 'durevole; permanente; stabile', mentre per مستدام *mustadām* appariva un timido 'sostenibile (*sviluppo*)' (Baldissera 2014: 231). Il dizionario *Oxford* arriva a citare la nuova accezione in مستدام *mustadām* 'sustainable', participio inquadrato dal dizionario come *adj.* aggettivo. Fornisce inoltre come composto l'attualissimo neologismo تنمية مستدامة *tanmiya mustadāma* 'sustainable

[8] *maṣdar* di I forma cfr. Traini (1966: 387).

[9] Il significato classico di X forma è coerente in arabo egiziano: «*ʔistadaam* /vi/ to continue, remain. *ʔil-maraḍ istadaam ɜala kida fahreen* the illness continued like this for about two months. […] vn *ʔistidaama*; ava *mistadiim*, *mustadiim*» (Hinds & Badawi 1986: 314).

[10] Concordanza KWIC *arTenTen*: « الزراعة التي تفشل في حماية وتحسين سبل العيش الريفية والرفاه الاجتماعي ليست زراعة مستدامة» [Crawl date 2024-01-15, maghress.com], it. 'L'agricoltura che non riesce a proteggere e migliorare i mezzi di sussistenza rurali e il benessere sociale non è un'agricoltura sostenibile'.

development', accanto a مستديم *mustadīm*, di nuovo in forma *adj.*, che traduce con 'permanent, continuous; durable, sustainable', fornendo il composto تنمية مستديمة *tanmiya mustadīma* 'sustainable development', alternativo al precedente. L'unico composto affiancato a quest'ultimo è عاهة مستديمة *ʒāha mustadīma* 'permanent disability' che sembra chiarisca ancora come il significato letterale dell'espressione تنمية مستديمة *tanmiya mustadīma* sia piuttosto 'sviluppo permanente' e solo a livello idiomatico assume in inglese il senso equivalente di *sustainable development*. Il termine استدامة *istidāma* e suoi derivati significa pertanto 'durevolezza, durevole, persistenza, permanente' ed è tradotto con 'sostenibilità, sostenibile' non perché significhi 'sostenere' ma solo come traduzione concettuale o come equivalente idiomatico.
A livello grammaticale si osservi inoltre che il *wazn* di X forma veicola un valore semantico di richiesta o di ricerca, ovvero porta l'idea di fare qualcosa intenzionalmente o di cercare di ottenere o eseguire una data azione. Ad esempio si confrontino la I forma عَلِمَ *ʒalima* 'sapere, conoscere' e la X forma استعلم *istaʒlama* 'cercare di sapere qc. da qn., chiedere informazioni, informarsi' con il senso di 'richiedere di sapere'. Pertanto *istidāma*, in quanto *maṣdar* del verbo di X forma *ʔistadāma* nel senso di 'far durare qc., rendere persistente qc.', ha in ultima analisi il senso iper-letterale di 'l'atto di far durare qualcosa' o 'l'atto di rendere persistente qualcosa'.

2.2. Analisi semantica e metaforica

Il termine *istidāma* è di notevole interesse dal punto di vista semantico in quanto si discosta dai suoi equivalenti nelle lingue europee. I termini inglese *sustainability*, francese *soutenabilité*, accanto al quale si noti anche *durabilité*, italiano *sostenibilità*, spagnolo *sostenibilidad* attengono tutti alla radice latina *sub-teneō* con riferimento al verbo latino *sustinēre* nel senso originario di 'reggere'. Per contro il termine arabo *istidāma* non attinge affatto al verbo 'sostenere', che nel senso etimologico europeo sarebbe in arabo سنّد *sannada* nel senso di 'sorreggere (un oggetto)', sarebbe دعم *daʒama* nel senso di 'supportare (aiutare)' e تحمّل *taḥammala* nel senso di 'sopportare (un problema/responsabilità)'. Il composto تحمّل بيئي *taḥammul bīʔiyy* non ha il significato di 'ecosostenibilità' proposto in Baldissera (2014: 500), bensì '(limite di) tolleranza ambientale' come emerge dalle occorrenze in *arTenTen* ad es. « بما أن الغطاء النباتي في المناطق الجافة يستجيب لأي زيادة في رطوبة التربة إذا كانت هذه الزيادة في حدود التحمل البيئي للأنواع النباتية», it. 'poiché la vegetazione nelle aree aride risponde a qualsiasi aumento dell'umidità del suolo se questo aumento rientra nei limiti di tolleranza ambientale delle specie vegetali'.

Se si considera in maniera sinottica l'analisi morfologica, semantica ed etimologica raccolta finora, si può ricostruire un quadro del valore metaforico della sostenibilità nella cultura araba. A livello metaforico, il termine *istidāma*, a differenza dei termini europei, è quindi piuttosto collegato ai concetti di: (1) *durabilità* ovvero di riproducibilità di un fenomeno nel corso del tempo; (2) *ciclicità*, muoversi in circolo, e richiama quindi per un arabofono indirettamente il concetto di riciclo ed economia circolare; (3) *perseveranza* ovvero permanenza e persistenza, come per le palme dum in climi aridi; (4) *rendere persistente*, ovvero non solo definire un qualcosa come durevole ma renderlo attivamente tale.
Il concetto arabo di 'sostenibilità' non richiama dunque a livello metaforico, come per le lingue europee, un qualcosa che la società possa riuscire metaforicamente a 'reggere', che suggerisce in Occidente l'opposto del concetto di 'crollare sotto qualcosa' ovvero essere sopraffatti dal sistema produttivo che ricade sull'ambiente. In Occidente dunque il senso latino di *sub tenēre* simboleggia il non crollare sotto un'industrializzazione guidata dal mantra della *crescita*

illimitata (consumismo), metafora che è invece in ultima analisi totalmente assente nella cultura araba. I paesi arabi non hanno sperimentato infatti le stesse fasi storiche, industriali ed economiche europee e pertanto la lingua araba porta il campo semantico verso un sistema che sia durevole, non caduco, ciclico e perseverante verso lo sviluppo, richiamando la necessità di soluzioni intese come permanenti e non estemporanee.

2.3. Analisi pragmatica di frequenza

La frequenza del termine استدامة nel corpus *arTenTen* restituisce un *Number of hits* di 38.869 accanto ad un *Number of hits per million tokens* di 5,12 che sale con i derivati morfologici di مستدام (maschile, femminile, determinato o indeterminato, casi di declinazione, etc.) per *Number of hits* a 412.723 e per *Number of hits per million tokens* a 54,36. L'analisi del corpus con *Ngram* restituisce il composto *3-gram* «أهداف التنمية المستدامة» con una frequenza di 6,411. Questo mostra la centralità dell'occorrenza degli 'obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile' ovvero i noti 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) dell'ONU adottati nel 2015.

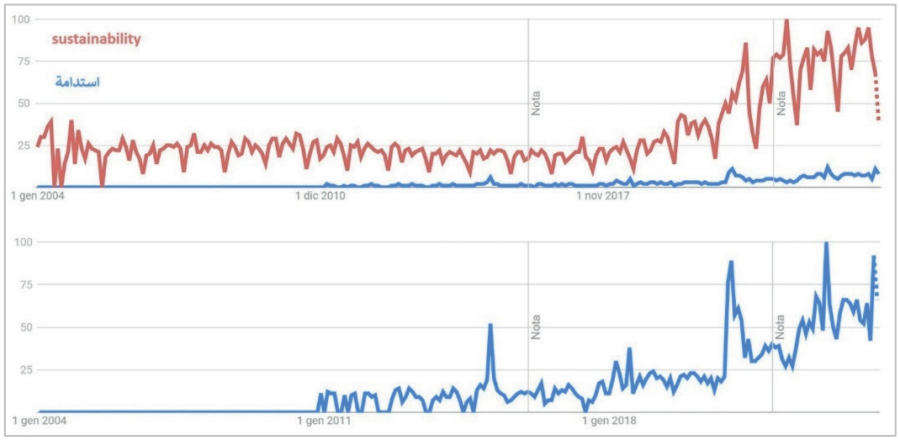


Fig. 1: Frequenza di استدامة dal 2004 al 2024 e ingrandita relativizzando la scala a 100.

L'andamento delle ricerche su *Google Trends* mostra un'assenza di ricerche dal 2004 a novembre del 2010 con un primo timido picco a dicembre del 2010. I tre maggiori picchi corrispondono a febbraio 2015, gennaio 2021, con valore massimo a maggio 2023. Non sembra casuale che il picco del 2015 corrisponda all'adozione dei SDGs e che il picco massimo preceda proprio la *2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference* nota come COP28 *Conference of the Parties* tenutasi a Dubai dal 30 novembre al 13 dicembre 2023. Sembra molto significativo osservare che il dato delle *query* associate al termine mostra al sesto posto «معنى استدامة» che vuol dire 'significato di *istidāma* (sostenibilità)', che mostra come il termine ancora nel 2023 non sia totalmente noto e acquisito. Nelle *query* dal primo al quinto posto, escludendo il termine in variante, ad es. determinato o indeterminato o con particelle, spicca al quarto posto « استدامة التوطين». Cercandone riscontro in *arTenTen* il composto è impiegato associato in maggioranza al concetto «تعزز استدامة توطين القطاع الخاص», it. 'rafforzare la sostenibilità della localizzazione del settore privato'. Il termine designa la 'sostenibilità della localizzazione', letteralmente 'insediamento', intesa come 'nazionalizzazione' o 'emiratizzazione' o 'saudizzazione'. I concetti si riferiscono al «وزارة الموارد البشرية والتوطين» *UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation* e relativa legislazione di emiratizzazione e alla politica del «النطاقات» di saudizzazione che definisce le aziende *High, Mid, Low Green* in base alla percentuale di

lavoratori sauditi nelle aziende e si inserisce nel quadro della *Saudi Vision 2030* implementata dal 2016.
Al secondo posto spicca la *query* «برنامج استدامة» 'programma di sostenibilità' che si riferisce ad un'iniziativa governativa in UAE che si presenta come « ويتجلى الهدف من برنامج إستدامة في إرساء إطار عمل جديد للاستدامة من شأنه توجيه منهجية العمل في التخطيط العمراني وتنظيمها مع السماح في الوقت نفسه بتبني المفاهيم الجديدة كلما دعت الحاجة إلى ذلك», it. 'L'obiettivo del Programma *Estidama* è quello di stabilire un nuovo quadro di sostenibilità che guiderà e regolerà la metodologia di lavoro nella pianificazione urbana, consentendo allo stesso tempo l'adozione di nuovi concetti ogni volta che se ne presenti la necessità.'[11]
Questi dati mostrano come l'andamento dell'interazione degli utenti con la 'sostenibilità' sia fortemente mediato dalle iniziative governative di nazionalizzazione e *real estate* o sovra-governative dell'ONU o UN.

3. Conclusione

A *livello morfologico ed etimologico*, come dimostrano i dati raccolti, il termine *istidāma* non risulta lessicalizzato come sostantivo prima del 2010, quando comincia il suo percorso di lessicalizzazione. Prima di questo periodo è impiegato in funzione di *maṣdar* senza riferimento alla 'sostenibilità'. Il termine *sustainability* è stato introdotto nelle lingue europee con la moderna accezione per la prima volta su larga scala nel Rapporto Brundtland (WCED 1987) alla fine degli anni Ottanta. In lingua araba invece, come emerge dall'analisi etimologica diacronica dei dizionari e dal confronto con i dati di frequenza, appare solo tardivamente su ampia scala intorno agli anni 2010.
A *livello semantico e metaforico* è emerso dall'analisi che il termine *istidāma* è concettualmente diverso dal termine *sustainability*: nella cultura araba lo sviluppo è definito come *permanente* e *ciclico* e richiama uno sviluppo che non decresce, all'opposto nella cultura occidentale lo sviluppo è definito come *sostenibile* e richiama uno sviluppo da sorreggere, contrario a crollare, che non aumenti eccessivamente. Si oppone così il concetto occidentale di un argine alla crescita illimitata *versus* un concetto arabo di una via di sviluppo ciclica e riproducibile nel tempo.
A *livello di analisi di frequenza nei corpora*, infine, emerge un uso ancora molto legato alle iniziative sovranazionali e governative volte soprattutto alla crescita, come nazionalizzazione ed espansione immobiliare. Questa tendenza conferma la mancanza in ambito arabo del legame occidentale tra sostenibilità e argine alla crescita illimitata.

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[11] دائرة البلديات والنقل, Department of Municipalities and Transport, UAE, https://pages.dmt.gov.ae/ar/Urban-Planning/Estidama-Program.

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Chapter 4.
SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN: Cognitive Metaphors in Sustainability Discourse

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Abstract

Sustainability reporting is expected to provide information on a company's performance, on the impact it has on sustainability matters, and on how it complies with environmental policies (Molino 2019). Yet, from a textual point of view, sustainability reports are considered a hybrid text genre (Yu 2023), in which promotional aspects and informative purposes are blurred (Breeze 2013). to generate social consensus among stakeholders.
Although less studied in sustainability reporting, metaphors can greatly contribute to the popularisation of environmental issues. Besides being powerful explanatory tools, metaphors forge our conceptual system. They are persuasive rhetorical devices that have proven to be fruitful in communicating environmental issues (Ungar 2008; Adam & Wahyuni 2020). Furthermore, they can act as a bridge between expert and public understanding, in a process of popularisation (Garzone 2020) of scientific and technical discourse.
Based on Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), this work explores how *green* can be the vehicle to build a conceptual metaphor, and how it contributes to forging discourse and to shaping pledges towards environmental sustainability in the sustainability reports of three European energy companies dated from 2017 to 2022. A quantitative and qualitative analysis following both CMT and the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach will explore the patterns of use of *green* in its co-text and context. An initial analysis of the data shows that *green* is used as a modifier of nouns related to environmental issues and renewable energy. These occurrences in the texts selected qualify the claim that the conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN underlies the use of *green* in the sustainability reports which make up the corpus under scrutiny.

Keywords: Cognitive metaphors, sustainability, corporate discourse, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

The importance of sustainability for companies of all economic sectors is not merely a public-relations' trend, but a structural transformation to meet the environmental, social and

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economic needs of the present and to preserve the future of the next generations. The shift towards sustainability is the consequence of powerful external pressures and compelling internal business drivers regarding how companies operate, manage risk, and create value. The effects of climate change have become tangible financial risks for the companies, not just an environmental problem. Besides, in the last decades, several international frameworks and regulations have placed a stringent pressure on companies in all sectors (Jackson, Bartosch, Avetisyan, Kinderman & Steen Knudsen 2020). Beyond compliance, sustainability is a driver of business success from several points of view. Major institutional investors, asset managers, and banks now use ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) performance as a key criterion for investment decisions. They view strong sustainability performance as a proxy for good long-term management and lower risk. The annual non-financial disclosure reports (CSR or sustainability reports) are the primary vehicle for communicating a company's performance and strategy in sustainability performance, to demonstrate accountability for their impact on the environment and society, to make claims of transparency on performance, impact, and compliance, and to build trust with stakeholders (Molino 2019).

This work focuses on the use of metaphors, and more specifically on the use of *green* as a head-term to build metaphorical expressions to indicate sustainability in the sustainability reports of three European energy companies from 2017 to 2022. Although less frequently studied in sustainability reports, metaphors are key in corporate disclosure, and *green* often contributes to forging discourse on sustainability and environmental issues. Metaphors are analysed from the methodological perspective of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 2004), while the corpus-based quantitative and qualitative analyses of the occurrences in context conform to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach (Fairclough, Mulderring & Wodak 2011) and Garzone (2020) for her notion of popularisation of specialised knowledge in contemporary society.

Following the introduction, Section 1 introduces the theoretical background underlying this work. Section 2 presents the methodological approach adopted for the analysis; Section 3 describes the corpus gathered for the study. The quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed in Section 4. A final section draws the conclusions.

2. Metaphors in sustainability reports

Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the tradition of Lakoff & Johnson (1980) posits that a metaphor is a way of conceptualising one, usually abstract, thing in terms of another, generally more concrete, one. They are first a cognitive phenomenon, and only in a second step conceptual metaphors find their surface-level expression in language and other semiotic modes of communication. Besides being powerful explanatory tools, metaphors play a central role in the construction of social and political reality, they are effective framing devices (Lakoff 2004) in shaping perceptions and attitudes, promoting specific value-laden assumptions (Semino 2008). The immediacy of source and target conceptual domains to our everyday experiences enables metaphors to shape our beliefs and the way we think and see the world (Charteris-Black 2004).

In the metaphoric transfer, knowledge about a source domain is mapped onto a target domain. Elaborating further the conceptual metaphor framework, the research has investigated the ideational function of metaphors in discourse (Goatly 2007; Musolff 2004), addressing them as a way of representing the world from a particular viewpoint, used in discourse with the aim of persuading, if not manipulating, the audience to accept the speaker's position (Koller & Semino 2009). Accordingly, metaphors are persuasive rhetorical devices that, for instance,

have proven to be fruitful in communicating environmental issues (Ungar 2008; Adam & Wahyuni 2020). Alternatively, they can act as a bridge between expert and public understanding, in a process of popularisation of scientific and technical discourse (Garzone 2020). Studies on the use of metaphors in non-financial disclosure reports argue that companies with diverse cultural background represent their stance or emotional attitude through different metaphors when dealing with environmental issues, and that these metaphors reflect their cultural and environment-related values in business (Yu 2020; Hu, Zhang & Xu 2024). Other studies identified a more generalised representation of the progress in sustainability through genre-specific CSR metaphors such as JOURNEY, WAR, SPORTS AND GAMES, although used in different degree depending on the background culture of the company (Milne, Kearins & Whalton 2006; Sun, Jin, Yang & Zhao 2018).

3. Methodological Framework

This study investigates the metaphorical mapping of *green* in the sustainability reports of energy companies in a period when the issue of sustainability was strongly felt (2017-2022), and this lexeme was productive to frame sustainability even in the legal and institutional codifications. Generally, *green* is a particularly productive metaphor in literature and in everyday speech. Its interpretation as a metaphorical concept depends heavily on its context and on the cultural associations. Based on Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is assumed here that *green* is the vehicle contributing to forging discourse regarding specific features of sustainability, and to shaping pledges towards environmental sustainability as an effective framing device (Lakoff 2004). Accordingly, it partakes to shaping perceptions and attitudes, promoting specific value-laden assumptions regarding sustainability (Semino 2008).

A conceptual metaphor is subject to diachronic as well as synchronic variation, and «it involves all the natural dimensions of our experience, including aspects of our sense experiences: color, shape, texture, sound, etc.» (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 235-6). Among the productive imageries of *green* in literature and in everyday experience is that of growth and renewal. In specialised discourse, *green* has been used to project political and economic ideas. Originating from the human experience of nature, the metaphorical concept of *green* equates environmental awareness, eco-friendliness, and sustainable development. It is often present in environment - and sustainability -related documents combined in noun phrases such as in "green companies", "green products", "green energy", but also in compound nouns which introduce a negative concept as in "green washing" or "greenhouse effect", or in phrases where *green* is used as an action verb, as in "inner-city greening".

The question of how energy companies, especially big ones, endorse their commitment to environmental sustainability on their disclosure practices, which directly address their stakeholders and the public in general, is at the base of this research. This question is especially relevant in the energy sector, where companies are directly involved in environmental issues, and have been the source of environmental crises. Their ability to develop a credible public identity, capable of generating social consensus and trust among stakeholders, is key to their success. This work explores how the metaphorical mapping of *green* contributes to forging discourse on environmental sustainability, and how *green* as the vehicle of the conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN contributes to shaping pledges of commitment to environmental sustainability in the sustainability reports of the three multinational energy companies selected.

4. The corpus

The corpus under investigation in this study includes eighteen sustainability reports published in English on their international websites by three European energy companies: the Italian Enel,[1] the Danish Ørsted,[2] and the British Shell,[3] in the years from 2017 to 2022. Enel Group is a multinational integrated electricity and gas manufacturer and distributor based in Italy, government-funded, privatised in 1999. Presently ranked among the first hundred largest companies in the world by revenue, it is the largest European energy-distribution company, and it operates with subsidiaries in 31 countries across the world. In the last decade it has gradually committed parts of its productive lines to accelerate decarbonisation. Its energy comes from geothermal, hydropower, solar, biomass, wind, and nuclear resources. Ørsted is the largest electric-utilities and energy-storage solutions company in Denmark, and the world's largest developer of offshore windfarms, this specialisation has given the company a multinational profile. Strongly committed to a complete transition to green energy production, its energy has hydrogen, solar, biomass, and especially offshore-wind plants' origin. The British multinational Shell p.l.c. is considered the second largest investor-owned oil and gas company in the world, and among the first ten world's largest companies out of any industry. As Shell Group, it is presently investing in the transition to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, and in low-carbon fuels for transport, although it was ranked among the largest corporate greenhouse emissions producers until 2015.
The reports, once cleaned, were uploaded on the corpus manager Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2014). As Table 1 shows, the corpus counts eighteen documents, 1,131,904 tokens (like in Tab. 1), and about 909,206 words (like in Tab. 1). The type/token (TTR) ratio of 80.3% suggests a high degree of lexical variety in the corpus. To allow comparability, the documents of the three companies were also assembled as separate sub-corpora which count six documents each. Table 2 provides basic data of the individual sub-corpora: Enel_SR sub-corpus makes 55.42% of the corpus (like in Tab. 2), while Shell-SR sub-corpus makes 32.52%, and Ørsted_SR sub-corpus is only 12.06% of the corpus (like in Tab. 2). Ørsted is a smaller company with respect to the other two, and this might explain the smaller length of the documents. Given the difference in size between the three sub-corpora, the qualitative data coming from them are normalised to 10,000 when needed:

Corpus figures	Raw counts
Tokens	1,131,904
Words	~909,206
Documents	18
TTR	80.3%

Tab. 1: Basic counts of the EØS_GREEN corpus.

[1] See www.enel.com.
[2] See www.orsted.com
[3] See www.shell.com

Name	Tokens	Words	%
Enel_SR	627,256	~503,845	55.42
Ørsted_SR	136,504	~109,647	12.06
Shell_SR	368,144	~295,713	32.52
EØS_GREEN	1,131,904	~909,205	100.00

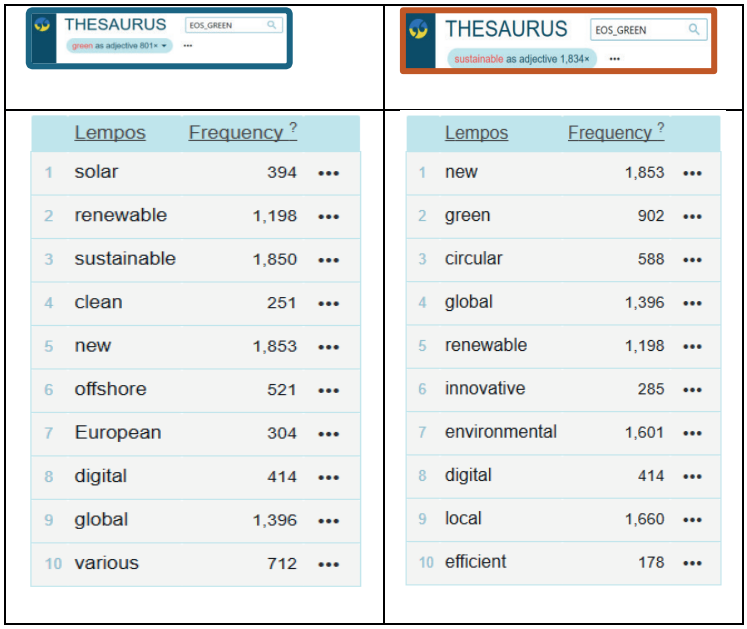
Tab. 2: Basic counts of the sub-corpora.

5. Data analysis

The procedure followed for data analysis has undergone two phases; in the first stage, as in Semino, Demjén, Demmen *et al*. (2015), and in Semino (2017), the corpus-based concordancing tools were used to search vocabulary associated to an identified source domain (SUSTAINABLE) and a target domain (GREEN). The second stage has consisted in the analysis from the CDA perspective (Fairclough *et al.* 2011) of each occurrence searched in its co-text, to see whether they were used metaphorically, and to identify any potential patterns.

5.1. Quantitative data analysis

In the first stage of data analysis *green* was considered as the target domain. A wordlist search of *green* as lemma gave 1,225 occurrences. The corpus manager's thesaurus was inquired to find words which kept similar collocations, and were similar in meaning to *green* and to *sustainable*, which was regarded as the source domain. This first search gave 902 occurrences of *green* as an adjective, and 33 occurrences of it as a noun. The left column of the following table (Table 3) shows the list of the first ten adjectives used as synonyms of *green* or belonging to the same semantic field. The first most frequent four are, respectively, *new* (raw frequency: 1,853), *sustainable* (r.f: 1,850), *global* (r.f.: 1,396), and *renewable* (r.f.: 1,198), with only the second and the fourth one belonging to the same semantic field. On the other hand, the thesaurus search for *sustainable* gave 1,850 occurrences; the right column of Table 3 lists the first ten adjectives used as synonyms. The one with the highest frequency is *new* (r.f.: 1,853), followed by *local* (r.f.: 1,560), *environmental* (r.f.: 1,601), and *global* (r.f.: 1,396). *Green* is the sixth in the list, after *renewable* (r.f.: 1,198), with a raw frequency of 902 occurrences. The comparison between the two lists reveals the presence of common areas, but also of significant differences. Although the figures appearing in the tables are the raw frequency of the words themselves across the corpus, not necessarily their frequency in relation to the searched term, it is clear that *green* appears among the top ten associated terms to *sustainable*, while *sustainable*, although occurring with a double frequency in the corpus, does not occur among the top ten terms associated to *green*. These results suggest an asymmetrical relationship between the two items, with *green* being semantically contained within the field of *sustainable* and not the opposite. In fact, the importance of *green* in the search for associations to *sustainable* may already confirm that the conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN plays a clear role in the corpus. On the other hand, the absence of *sustainable* among the top ten associations for *green* indicates a broader semantic field for the former, not entirely conveyed by the terms most associated with the later.



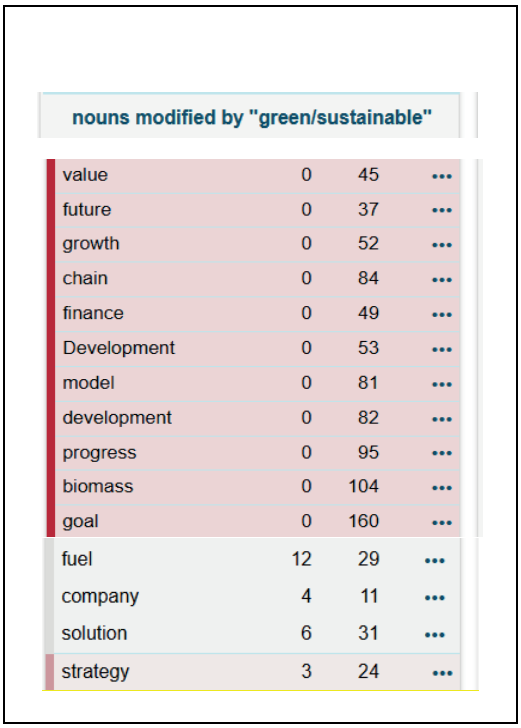
	Lempos	Frequency ?
1	solar	394
2	renewable	1,198
3	sustainable	1,850
4	clean	251
5	new	1,853
6	offshore	521
7	European	304
8	digital	414
9	global	1,396
10	various	712

	Lempos	Frequency ?
1	new	1,853
2	green	902
3	circular	588
4	global	1,396
5	renewable	1,198
6	innovative	285
7	environmental	1,601
8	digital	414
9	local	1,660
10	efficient	178

Tab. 3: Results of the thesaurus enquiry for "green" and "sustainable" in the EØS_GREEN corpus.

A comparison by contrasting collocations between the lemmas *green* and *sustainable* was carried out with the *Sketch Engine* word-sketch-difference tool. The results, shown in Table 4, indicate that *green* is used much more frequently than *sustainable* as a modifier for the nouns: *energy* (256 vs. 31), *bond* (90 vs. 3), and *transformation* (55 vs. 2), to make the key concepts of *green energy*, *green bond*, and *green transformation*. Instead, *sustainable* is the major modifier for nouns with a low occurrence with *green*: *strategy* (24 vs. 3), and *solution* (31 vs. 6), suggesting that *sustainable strategy* and *sustainable solution* are more common phrases than their *green* equivalents. *Sustainable* is also the preferred modifier of *fuel* (29 vs. 12) and *company* (11 vs. 4), and it is the modifier for nouns which do not occur with *green*: *goal* (r.f.: 160), *development* (r.f.: 135), *progress* (r.f.: 95), *growth* (r.f.: 52), *value* (r.f.: 45), and *future* (r.f.: 37). These first findings indicate the strong presence of common metaphorical representations of field-characterising topics in the corpus, given the text genre and the field of specialty of the companies, such as *green-energy*, *green-finance* (bonds), and *green-transformation*. On the other hand, the term *sustainable* is preferred when discussing *strategic direction*, *progress*, *solutions*, and *development*, indicating that *sustainable* is used to describe long-term business and strategic planning.

nouns modified by "green/sustainable"		
bond	90	3
transformation	55	2
hydrogen	43	4
electricity	17	2
energy	256	31
transition	20	4
build-out	31	10
technology	13	4



nouns modified by "green/sustainable"			
value	0	45	•••
future	0	37	•••
growth	0	52	•••
chain	0	84	•••
finance	0	49	•••
Development	0	53	•••
model	0	81	•••
development	0	82	•••
progress	0	95	•••
biomass	0	104	•••
goal	0	160	•••
fuel	12	29	•••
company	4	11	•••
solution	6	31	•••
strategy	3	24	•••

Tab. 4: Contrasting collocations of the lemmas "green" (first column) and "sustainable" (second column).

The search of *green* and *sustainable* with the word-sketch tool, to understand their grammatical relations and collocational behaviour, confirmed the findings of the previous search, showing that *green* is used as a modifier to introduce tactical and concrete implementations and resources related to the ecological transition (*e.g.*, "*green energy"*, "*green finance", "green energy transition"*). The search for *sustainable* also confirmed the previous findings, indicating that *sustainable* is used to frame long-term, abstract and strategic planning, and desired outcomes (*e.g.*, "*sustainable development*").

A search of the lemma *green* in the sub-corpora gave an extremely uneven and highly specific use of it, as shown in Table 5. *Green* has a raw frequency of 392 occurrences in the sub-corpus Enel_SR, with an approximate value of 6.25 when normalised to 10,000; of 800 in the sub-corpus Ørsted_SR, with an approximate normalised value of 58.61; and of 33, with an approximate normalised value of 0.90, in the sub-corpus Shell_SR. This lemma has a heavy concentration in the Ørsted_SR sub-corpus, although it has the relative lowest weight in the corpus. This reflects the distinctive corporate communication strategies and sectoral focus of Ørsted, a company highly concentrated on renewable energy.

Sub-corpus	Total tokens	Raw Frequency of "*green"*	Normalised Frequency (per 10,000 tokens)
Enel_SR	627,256	392	6.25
Ørsted_SR	136,504	800	58.61
Shell_SR	368,144	33	0.90

Tab. 5: Relative distribution of "green" as lemma in the sub-corpora.

The search of the lemma *green* with the word-sketch tool in the three sub-corpora confirmed the patterns identified in the normalised frequency analysis, that the three companies strategically use the term *green* differently, as Table 6 reveals. *Green* is mainly used as modifier of the nouns *bond* (r.f.: 77) and *hydrogen* (r.f.: 28) in Enel_SR, and of *hydrogen* (r.f.: 15) in Shell_SR, while it is used with the highest raw frequency as a modifier of *energy* (r.f.: 254), then of *transformation* (r.f.: 55), *build-out* (r.f.: 31), *transition* (r.f.: 19), and *project* (r.f.: 16). Enel uses green in association to financial instruments (*green bonds*), possibly to attract sustainable investment. The recurring presence of *green hydrogen* both in Enel and in Shell sub-corpora possibly indicates the companies' strong interest in the production of hydrogen as an emerging technology for renewable energy production. The collocations in the Ørsted sub-corpus are strongly focused on concrete and practical aspects of the energy transition. *Green* seems to be the primary modifier for this company's activities and actions, strongly focused on the "*green transition"*.

ENEL_SR		ØRSTED_SR		SHELL_SR	
nouns modified by "green"		**nouns modified by "green"**		**nouns modified by "green"**	
bond	77	energy	254	hydrogen	15
hydrogen	28	transformation	55	electrolyser	2
proceed	8	build-out	31	production	2
report	7	transition	19	project	2
emission	6	project	16	turtle	1
area	5	electricity	15	electricity	1
issuance	4	power	15	infrastructure	1
generation	4	bond	13	system	1
technology	3	fuel	12		
space	2	share	11		

Tab. 6: Immediate collocations of the lemma "green" in the three sub-corpora.

5.2. Qualitative data analysis

The second stage of the study consisted in the manual search and analysis of the occurrences of the investigated terms in their co-text from the CDA perspective (Fairclough *et al.* 2011). The analysis of the extracted samples was meant to understand whether they were used metaphorically, and if so, to identify potential patterns.

As the quantitative analysis indicated, *green* occurs with the highest frequency as a modifier of *energy* both in the whole corpus and in the Ørsted_SRsub-corpus. In Example1, from Ørsted 2020 sustainability report, *green* also occurs as a modifier of *power generation* and of *electrification*, all nouns belonging to the same lexical field, and directly related to energy infrastructure and implementation. *Green* is here a strategic selection that condenses and popularises a complex, multilayered concept including sustainability, low-carbon, renewable, and environmentally sound, into a single, easily understandable, yet ideologically loaded term.

Besides, the presence in the paragraph of the contrast between *fossil fuels* and *green energy*, and the use of modal verbs such as *must* in "we must change", and *need* in "we need to create" or "We need to significantly increase" to create this contrast, gives a sense of urgency for action and determination towards the transition to all the sustainable values represented by the *green* imagery. Furthermore, the use of *green* to convey the conceptual metaphor

SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN simplifies and almost trivialises the complex economic, technical, and social challenges of the energy transition. The shift to *green energy* becomes a matter of a *switch*, effectively disguising all potential problematic issues at stake.

> Example (1)
> From power and heat generation systems to cooling, transport, and industrial processes, every technology we use must change its energy source from fossil fuels to renewable energy. To reach net-zero emissions, we need to create a world that runs entirely on *green energy*. And the action needed is clear: We need to significantly increase the build-out of *green power generation*, accelerate the phase-out of fossil-fuelled power generation, increase *green electrification* in sectors currently running on fossil fuels, and continue to increase energy efficiency in all parts of society [Ørsted_SR_2020].

In Example 2, from Ørsted 2022 sustainability report, the climate crisis is framed through the use of the metaphor RACE in "*race* against time*"* recurring twice, through the use of the modals *need* in "We *need* to build it now.", and *must* in "we *must* build", and with the use of *green* in "*green energy"*, which represents everything that is a solution to "*global heating"*. The discourse heavily relies on the sense of urgency built with the RACE metaphor and with the time frame in "yet another year" to mention "the devastating and increasingly evident impacts of global heating". This discourse pattern, combined with the underlying conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN, transforms the company's actions into time-critical solutions. The company presents itself as the agent of the green transition, which can "build *green energy* right" and positions "*green energy*" as the exclusive vehicle for achieving the ultimate goal of environmental sustainability.

> Example (2)
> *Green energy* is the most impactful solution for fighting global heating, and in our race against time, we need to build it now. Yet, to ensure we deliver a low-emission energy system that contributes to a just and thriving planet, we must also build *green energy* right. We are in a race against time, 2022 was yet another year marked by the devastating and increasingly evident impacts of global heating [Ørsted_SR_2022].

Example 3, from Enel sub-corpus, provides another strong case for the use of *green* as the vehicle term for the conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN to frame external technical outputs (products and systems) defined as "profound societal challenges" and "customers' energy needs" that the company is willing to address or ready to fulfil. Linguistically, *green* is the first modifier of, respectively, "*energy systems"* in the noun structure "*green,* independent and economically viable *energy systems*", and of "*energy solutions"* in "*green,* innovative and efficient *energy solutions*". *Green* is used here to refer to technical outputs, while *sustainable* is used to modify nouns related to internal corporate responsibility and the social domain ("*sustainable working life*", focusing on employees and safety). By labelling their energy systems and solutions as *green* and *sustainable*, Enel is framing the company's core-business as aligned with ecologically sound, low-emission technology, as well as with social equity and respectful labour practices. In this way, they provide stakeholders with a complete view of the company's corporate responsibility and can also appeal to ethically minded investors.

Example (3)
We address profound societal challenges by developing *green, independent and economically viable energy systems*that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We fulfil our customers' energy needs through *green, innovative and efficient energy solutions*. We are committed to a *sustainable working life* and keep a constant focus on being a great and safe place to work with motivated and satisfied employees [Enel_SR_2017].

In the following two excerpts (Example 4 and 5) still from Enel sub-corpus, *green* is used to frame the company's involvement with the European political and strategic agendas, rather than to describe a technical product. In Example 4, Enel claims an active role in the EU policy framework "*Green Deal*", and in the "*global green recovery*". In Example 5, in "accelerating the *green transition*", *green* describes the nature of the transition that Enel and 150 business managers urged EU leaders to accelerate as a means of enhancing energy security. By collocating *green* with powerful EU initiatives, Enel builds a solid identity of the company as trustworthy and influential EU partner in the advocacy for sustainability.

Example (4)
In March 2020, Enel started to hold the Presidency of Solar Power Europe. During 2020, Enel had an active role in the Emerging Markets Workstream, in particular in the draft of Solar Power's position paper "The role of solar in the *Green Deal Diplomacy*", the EU Strategy with Africa and the global *green recovery*. The European Association for Storage of Energy (EASE) is the leading member- supported association representing organizations active across the entire energy storage value chain [Enel_SR_2020].

Example (5)
For example, the Enel Group, together with over 150 business leaders, has signed an open letter by CLG Europe to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to invite the EU to strengthen energy security by accelerating the *green transition* through the REPowerEU plan. In addition, Enel has participated in lobbying activities in support of the 100 gCO2/kWh threshold – published in the Delegated Acts of the European Taxonomy – which allows an activity to be defined as environmentally sustainable if its CO2 emissions are below this threshold. Enel not only supports compliance with this threshold, but also asks to specify how this threshold should be reduced over time until it reaches zero by 2050 [Enel_SR_2022].

In the following Example 6, from Shell 2022 sustainability report, *green* and *sustainable* semantically link the company's internal commitments to external, industry-wide standards, confirming what emerged in the quantitative analysis for both Shell and Enel, and aligning with Enel's previous examples. The determiner *sustainable* is used to describe internal assets, in relation to governance and social responsibility, such as the working environment. Yet here Shell's claim of sustainability is discursively built through a third-party's validation, the "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)", which is "a leading *green building* rating system", where "*green building*" is an articulated concept established by a legitimising external party. Again, *green* is here the vehicle term to bring into play the cognitive metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN without running the risk of being accused of making unsupported environmental claims.

Example (6)
More than 45% of our offices and laboratories in our real estate portfolio have been certified as sustainable by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), a leading *green building* rating system [Shell_SR_2022].

The following excerpt (Example 7) shows again Shell's caution in building discourse in environmental terms, particularly based on *green*, as its very low normalised frequency in the sub-corpus indicated. In this specific example, *green* is used as modifier of a technical term: "green infrastructure", and contextualised in a discourse on water management, where Shell wants to show its contribution to the solution of a problem in a local community. In this discourse pattern, *green* is embedded within a list of other technical, practical solutions which weaken its metaphorical weight, making of it a literal descriptor of a specific technicality. Shell's wary approach, possibly oriented to avoid accusations of greenwashing, emerges more clearly in the second part of the extract, where risk assessment and management for the company's activities are addressed in terms of transparency and compliance with regulations. This discourse pattern contributes to the image of Shall as a responsible and reliable operator.

> Example (7)
> Shell is a member of the Water Nexus consortium in the Netherlands, a collaboration between universities, government bodies and industry. The consortium supports research on innovative approaches to secure water supply essential for domestic, industrial and agricultural use, such as *green infrastructure* and the use of saline water instead of fresh water. We assess and carefully manage the risks of potential soil and groundwater contamination. We conduct scientific research on the behaviour and potential risks of contamination from petroleum activities and share our findings with government agencies, researchers and other stakeholders to support the development of environmental guidelines [Shell_SR_2018].

6. Conclusions

This study has looked at the use of *green* as vehicle for the conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN in energy companies' sustainability reports. The corpus-based quantitative and qualitative analyses confirmed the active role it has in the construction of discourse patterns in the documents studied, especially in Ørsted sub-corpus, the company more committed to the sustainable transition in energy production. Labelling environmental initiatives as *green* fosters positive connotations, accentuating the merits of adopting environmentally conscious behaviour, and ultimately strengthening the ethical profile of the involved corporation in the eyes of stakeholders. In Ørsted sub-corpus it is a distinctive corporate communication feature to display the company's commitment to concrete and practical aspects of the energy transition. The quantitative analysis of the corpus under investigation revealed that *green* occurs mostly as modifier of field-characterising nouns, given the companies' specialisation and strategic planning, to frame concrete implementations and resources related to the ecological transition. The qualitative analysis of the single occurrences of *green* revealed that the strategic use of this modifier to build discourse patterns activating the conceptual metaphor SUSTAINABILITY IS GREEN can trigger a process of popularisation of complex, articulated concepts. The discursive simplification of multi layered economic and technical procedures, and social challenges of the energy transition could be read as a strategy of persuasion lacking transparency.

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Chapter 5.
La «feminización de la pobreza energética»: metáforas y colocaciones léxicas en la legislación de la Unión Europea en español (Eur-Lex)[1]

The "Feminisation of Energy Poverty": Metaphors and Lexical Collocations in European Union Legislation in Spanish (Eur-Lex)

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Resumen

Este estudio analiza la construcción léxica y metafórica del concepto de «pobreza energética» en la legislación de la Unión Europea, adoptando una perspectiva crítica de género. Centrándose en un corpus *ad hoc* de directivas y enmiendas de la UE publicadas en español en EurLex, el análisis emplea metodologías cuantitativas y cualitativas, utilizando herramientas de lingüística de corpus como *Sketch Engine* y el procedimiento de identificación de metáforas (MIPVU). La investigación identifica «pobreza energética» como una colocación terminológica clave y revela su metáfora conceptual dominante: LA POBREZA ENERGÉTICA ES UNA ENFERMEDAD. Esto se evidencia mediante la coaparición sistemática con verbos como *aliviar*, *sufrir* y *mitigar*, y sintagmas nominales como *grupos vulnerables* y *efectos adversos*. El análisis explora, además, la dimensión de género del fenómeno, destacando la colocación emergente «feminización de la pobreza energética», que aparece predominantemente en propuestas de enmiendas con enfoque de género. Los hallazgos sugieren que, si bien el encuadre metafórico

[1] Las autoras han colaborado en la concepción y redacción de todo el artículo, aunque Simona Maria Cocco es responsable de los apartados 3 y 5 y Daniela Zizi es responsable de los apartados 1 y 2. Ambas comparten la autoría del apartado 4.

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subraya eficazmente la urgencia y los impactos negativos de la privación energética, la integración limitada de enmiendas sensibles al género en los textos legislativos finales revela una brecha entre la intención discursiva y la implementación política.

Palabras clave: discurso legal de la UE, EurLex, colocaciones léxicas, metáforas, mujeres, transición energética.

Abstract

This study examines the lexical and metaphorical construction of the concept of «energy poverty» within the European Union legislation, adopting a critical gender perspective. Focusing on a self-compiled corpus of EU directives and amendments in Spanish in EurLex, the analysis employs both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, utilizing corpus linguistics tools such as *Sketch Engine* and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIPVU). The research identifies «energy poverty» (pobreza energética) as a key terminological collocation and reveals its dominant conceptual metaphor: ENERGY POVERTY IS A DISEASE. This is evidenced through systematic co-occurrence with verbs such as *aliviar*, *sufrir* and *mitigar*, and nominal phrases like *grupos vulnerables* and *efectos adversos*. The analysis further explores the gendered dimension of this phenomenon, highlighting the emergent collocation «feminization of energy poverty» (*feminización de la pobreza energética*), which appears predominantly in gender-focused amendment proposals. The findings suggest that while metaphorical framing effectively underscores the urgency and negative impacts of energy deprivation, the limited integration of gender-sensitive amendments into final legislative texts reveals a gap between discursive intention and policy implementation.

Keywords: EU legal discourse, EurLex, lexical colocations, metaphors, women, energy transition.

1. Introducción

Tradicionalmente se creía que la metáfora no tenía cabida en el lenguaje jurídico. Este concepto erróneo se basaba en la idea de que el lenguaje jurídico es rígido y, como tal, carece de cualquier elemento que pueda influir en su precisión, como el lenguaje figurado (Božović 2024: 405; Gražytė y Maskaliūnienė 2009: 71). Pero desde los estudios de Lakoff y Johnson (1980) sobre la metáfora conceptual en general, se ha producido un cambio de enfoque también en ámbito legal y muchos investigadores se han dedicado al estudio de las metáforas en este lenguaje de especialidad, demostrando que la postura tradicional no estaba respaldada por pruebas empíricas, llegando incluso a demostrar la importancia fundamental del pensamiento metafórico en la realidad jurídica (Božović 2024: 405, Božović 2022, Larsson 2017, Kucharska 2016, Berger 2009).

De hecho, hace casi veinte años que Smith (2007), propuso una categorización sobre diversos tipos de metáforas encontradas en la escritura jurídica: 1) metáforas empleadas en principios judiciales; 2) metáforas usadas en el proceso de razonamiento legal en temas específicos; 3) metáforas aplicadas por autores legales; 4) metáforas inherentes al lenguaje jurídico. Otro ámbito de estudio se dedica a la traducción de la metáfora en el discurso jurídico, sobre todo en el contexto de la Unión Europea (Božović 2022, Mcauliffe 2012), ya que la mayoría de su normativa se produce en francés o inglés para luego ser traducida en las otras lenguas oficiales.

El presente estudio se propone analizar colocaciones léxicas y metáforas en un corpus de Directivas europeas sobre energía renovable. Se aplica una perspectiva de género, ya que esta puede ser decisiva para potenciar las políticas energéticas europeas, tal y como se evidencia en el estudio *Gender and Energy: the Effects of the Energy Transition on Women*, realizado en 2024 por el *Centro Común de Investigación de la Comisión Europea* (Murauskaite-Bull *et al.*) en colaboración con *75inQ*, fundación holandesa especializada en diversidad en la transición energética (Comisión Europea 2020). Este informe patentiza la necesidad urgente de reducir la actual y creciente brecha de género por lo que atañe al acceso a la energía renovable. Asimismo,

señala la importancia de políticas inclusivas para evitar la pobreza energética femenina y garantizar la representatividad y la participación activa de las mujeres en todos los niveles: como clientas, como responsables en la toma de decisiones políticas, así como trabajadoras en el sector de la energía renovable.

Se destaca, al mismo tiempo, la existencia de un creciente conjunto de buenas prácticas e iniciativas para una transición energética inclusiva y justa a nivel internacional y europeo. Por ejemplo, en el documento de la Comisión Europea (2020: 16) *Una Unión de la igualdad: Estrategia para la Igualdad de Género 2020-2025* hay un párrafo dedicado expresamente al tema de la igualdad de género en la transición energética: 4. *Integración de la perspectiva de género y la perspectiva interseccional en las políticas de la UE,* en el cual se afirma que "Todos los grandes retos que afronta hoy la UE - incluidas las transiciones verde y digital y el cambio demográfico - tienen una dimensión de género". La *Comisión de Derechos de las Mujeres e Igualdad de Género* vigila la aplicación de la perspectiva de género en los documentos de la Unión y, si fuera necesario, propone enmiendas. En el caso que aquí interesa, dicha Comisión propuso a la *Comisión de Industria, Investigación y Energía* algunas enmiendas sobre la propuesta de *Directiva del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo relativa a la eficiencia energética (versión refundida)* COM(2021)0558 - C9-0330/2021 - 2021/0203(COD), documento que se ha incluido en un corpus de Directivas de la Unión Europea sobre energía, creado *ad hoc* para este estudio.

Dado que, el lenguaje desempeña un papel fundamental para garantizar el camino hacia la equidad de género, uno de los objetivos que persigue el presente estudio será evaluar cómo en el corpus seleccionado se aplica una perspectiva de género, con especial atención a la forma de representar a la mujer en las directivas europeas sobre energía, centrándose en colocaciones léxicas y metáforas.

La estructura del estudio es la siguiente: después de la presente Introducción (1), en el párrafo 2 se procede a la presentación del Corpus; en el apartado 3 se describe la metodología empleada; en el apartado 4 se exponen los resultados del análisis sobre las metáforas identificadas y sobre palabras clave relativas al papel de la mujer y sus colocaciones; en el párrafo 5 se presentan las conclusiones.

2. Corpus

El corpus se ha creado *ad hoc* a partir de documentos sacados de EurLex (https://eur-lex.europa.eu), pasarela online al Derecho de la UE que proporciona el acceso oficial a los documentos jurídicos de la Unión. Incluye cuatro Directivas de la UE sobre energía y la citada propuesta de enmiendas:

1) CELEX32018L2001, Directiva (UE) 2018/2001 relativa al fomento de la energía de fuentes renovables; [fecha: 11/12/18, palabras: 68.014, tokens 83.950];

2) CELEX32019L0944, sobre normas comunes para el mercado interior de la electricidad y por la que se modifica la Directiva 2012/27/UE (versión refundida); [fecha: 05/06/2019; palabras: 48.533, tokens 56.109];

3) CELEX32023L791, Directiva (EU) 2023/1791 relativa a la eficiencia energética y por la que se modifica el Reglamento (UE)2023/955 (versión refundida); [fecha: 13/09/23; palabras: 67.437, tokens 80.095];

4) OJ_L_202302413 Directiva (UE) 2023/2413 por la que se modifican la Directiva (UE) 2018/2001, el Reglamento (UE) 2018/1999 y la Directiva 98/70/CE en lo que respecta a la promoción de la energía procedente de fuentes renovables y se deroga la Directiva (UE) 2015/652 del Consejo; [fecha: 18/10/23; palabras: 53.239, tokens: 62.607];

5) FEMM_AD(2022)703261, propuesta de enmiendas a la Directiva del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, relativa a la eficiencia energética (versión refundida) COM(2021)0558C9 - 0330/2021 -2021/0203(COD); [fecha: 22/05/22; palabras: 15.927, tokens: 18.191].

La dimensión total del corpus es de 253.580 palabras y 350.952 tokens.

3. Metodología

Para el análisis del corpus, hemos seguido el modelo propuesto por Božović (2024) en su estudio *Metaphors we Judge by: a Corpus Based Study of Metaphor Use in English Legal Discourse*, en el que se abordan las metáforas en el discurso legal de las sentencias de la Corte de Justicia Europea en inglés y sus traducciones al montenegrino.
El uso del software *Sketch Engine* ha permitido emplear un enfoque tanto cualitativo como cuantitativo. A partir del análisis de la lista de frecuencia y aplicando la función *N-gram* se han evidenciado algunas unidades poliléxicas del dominio de la energía, para averiguar sus usos metafóricos y mapear los posibles dominios de origen ya que, según varios estudios basados en corpus, las colocaciones representan sustancialmente significados metafóricos (Deignan 2005; Cameron y Deignan 2006, Stefanowitsch 2006, Berber Sardinha 2010). Además, se ha utilizado la herramienta *Word Sketch* para observar el comportamiento de algunos términos clave en el corpus. Luego, para la identificación de las metáforas insertas en el corpus, se ha empleado el método MIPVU (*Metaphor Identification Procedure* VU University Amsterdam), desarrollado por Steen *et al*. (2010) como actualización del MIP (*Metaphor Identification Procedure*), diseñado por Pragglejaz Group (2007). El MIPVU se ha adaptado y dividido en cuatro pasos: 1) lectura y comprensión general; 2) identificación de las unidades léxicas; 3) análisis de su significado teniendo en cuenta: a) su relación con el contexto anterior y posterior; b) búsqueda de los términos en diccionarios de referencia para evaluar si tienen un significado más fundamental en otros contextos que podría ser más claro o específico; c) determinar si tienen un significado básico que contrasta con su significado contextual; 4) clasificar como metáforas si el significado contextual se aparta del significado más básico. Para la presentación de los resultados se ha utilizado la función de *Muestra visualización* de *Sketch Engine* que revela la distribución en gráficos a través de círculos cuyo tamaño depende de la frecuencia de la colocación y de la puntuación de las coocurrencias del término seleccionado.

4. Análisis

Por lo que se refiere a las unidades poliléxicas del ámbito de la energía, el análisis de las listas de frecuencia y de los *N-grams* ha permitido detectar en español 38 composiciones del tipo N+A con el adjetivo *energético/a*. En la Tabla 1 se presentan las primeras 14 en orden de frecuencia y el número de casos se muestra entre paréntesis:

Tab 1. *N-grams*	
Eficiencia energética (477)	Combinación energética (25)
Pobreza energética (110)	Transición energética (16)
Contenido energético (74)	Eficiencia Energética (13)
Auditorías energéticas (60)	Infraestructura energética (13)
Servicios energéticos (54)	Producto energético (12)
Sistema energético (49)	Vector energético (9)
Rendimento energético (42)	Suministro energético (9)

Tab. 1: Unidades poliléxicas con *energético/a.*

Entre estas composiciones, nos hemos focalizado en la segunda de ellas en orden de frecuencia, es decir, el sintagma nominal (N+A) *pobreza energética*. Desde un punto de vista semántico sería una colocación composicional, ya que la base y el colocativo son transparentes (González Rey 2002: 157).

La herramienta *Word Sketch* nos ha permitido observar su comportamiento gramatical y colocacional en el corpus a partir del sustantivo *pobreza*. En el caso de los sustantivos, la función *Word sketch* organiza los resultados en categorías, denominadas relaciones gramaticales, tales como "modificadores de N", "verbos con N como sujeto", "verbos con N como objeto", "N y/o" y "frases preposicionales".

El análisis cuantitativo del corpus permite destacar una alta frecuencia de la combinación del sustantivo *pobreza* con el adjetivo *energética*. De hecho, el sustantivo aparece en el corpus 218 veces y tiene en 216 de estas un solo modificador, el adjetivo *energético/a*, como evidencia la siguiente figura (Fig. 1):



Fig. 1: *Word sketch* de *pobreza.*

Otro de los objetivos del análisis cuantitativo era comprobar si la unidad poléxica se puede considerar una colocación, averiguando su presencia en un corpus más grande y general, es decir, el corpus de referencia *Spanish Web 2023* (*esTenTen23*, 28.652.392.686 palabras), disponible en *Sketch Engine*. En él el sustantivo *pobreza* aparece 1.106.130 veces, y el tercer modificador por frecuencia es precisamente el adjetivo *energético/a* que está presente en 15.583 casos. Esto demuestra la fijación de la forma y su difusión, parámetros que confirman que se trata de una colocación léxica. Para aplicar el MIPVU a los contextos en los que aparece la

colocación, se ha indagado sobre el significado básico del término «pobreza» en el Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (DRAE):

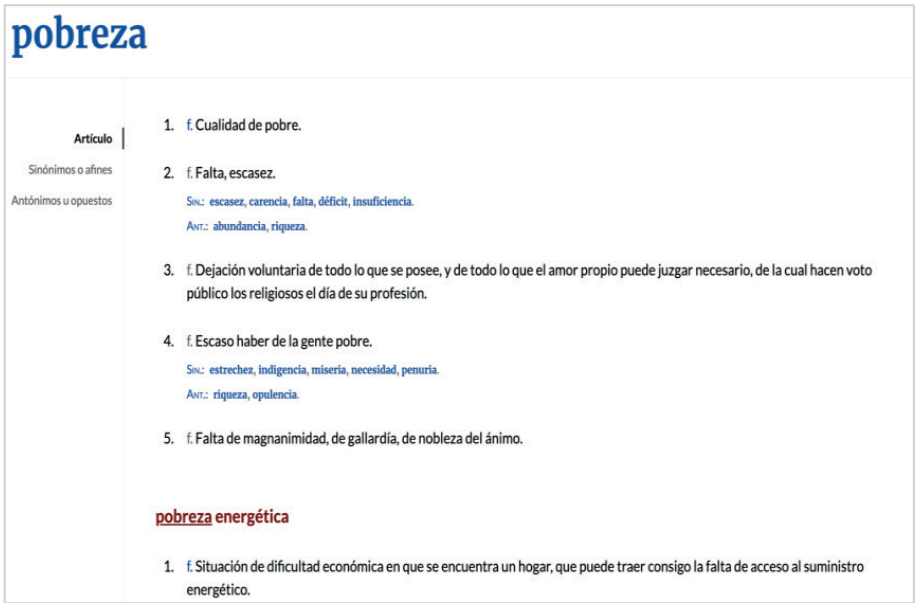
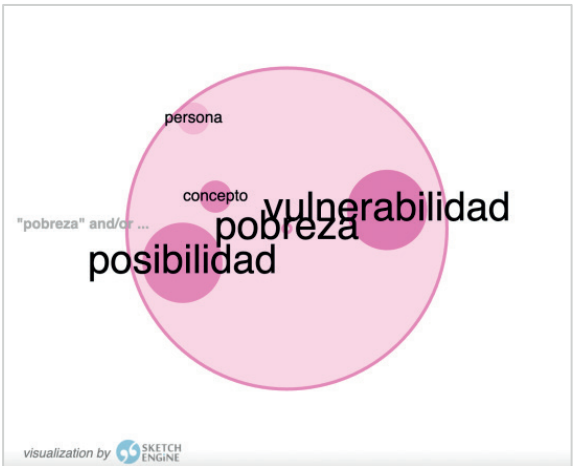


Fig. 2: *Pobreza* en el DRAE.

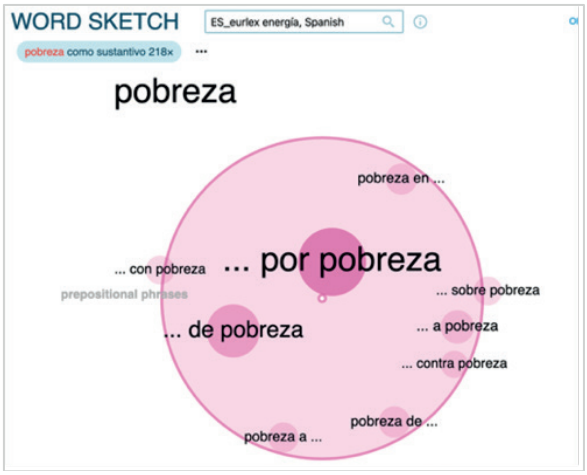
Como se puede observar, en el diccionario se registran cinco acepciones del término, la primera de las cuales es «Cualidad de pobre» y la segunda «Falta, escasez». También se registra la unidad fraseológica «pobreza energética», que se desvía del significado básico al ser una situación de dificultad económica específica, relacionada con la dificultad de acceso al suministro energético. Esto también confirma la naturaleza de colocación de esta unidad fraseológica.

En cuanto a la relación y/o "pobreza and/or" en el corpus hay cuatro sustantivos que coocurren con *pobreza*, como se ve en el Gráfico 1: 1) *vulnerabilidad*: *pobreza energética y la vulnerabilidad del consumidor;* 2) *posibilidad*: *relación con la pobreza energética y esta posibilidad;*3) *concepto*: *en situación de pobreza energética y los conceptos de cliente*; 4) *persona*: *afectadas por la pobreza energética y las personas que viven en*, como muestra el gráfico 1:



Gráf.1: relación y/o con el sustantivo *pobreza.*

En relación con los sintagmas preposicionales, se registran las siguientes formas: una con la preposición *de* que sigue el sintagma (NA + de), y otra con la preposición *de* que lo precede (de + NA). A estos se añaden las preposiciones *contra*, *a*, *en*, *sobre*, *con* que preceden o siguen el sintagma (N + de + NA): 1) *"pobreza" de*: a) arrendatario: *reduzcan la pobreza energética de los arrendatarios de manera sostenible*; 2) *de "pobreza"*: a) situación: *hogares en situación de pobreza energética;* b) *feminización*: *luchar contra la feminización de la pobreza energética*; c) *mitigación*: *mitigación de la pobreza energética*; d) *riesgo*: *riesgo de pobreza*; e) riesgo: *riesgo de pobreza energética* f) *contexto*: *también en el contexto más amplio de la pobreza en general*; g) *materia*: *datos pertinentes en materia de pobreza energética* (Gráf. 2):



Gráf. 2: Sintagmas preposicionales con *pobreza.*

En la imagen siguiente los resultados completos del *Word sketch* sobre el sintagma *pobreza energética*:

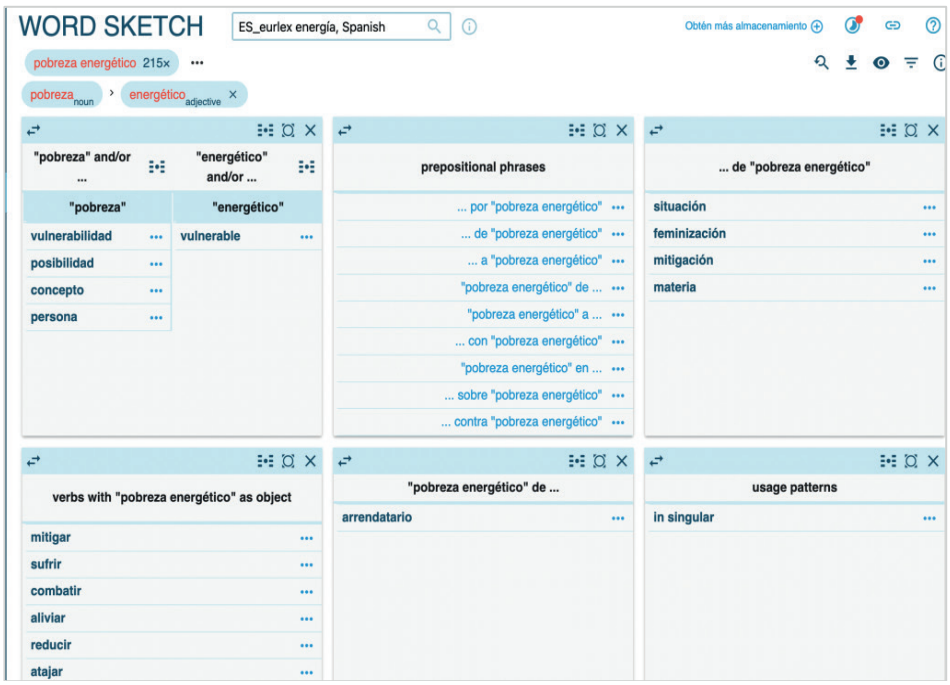
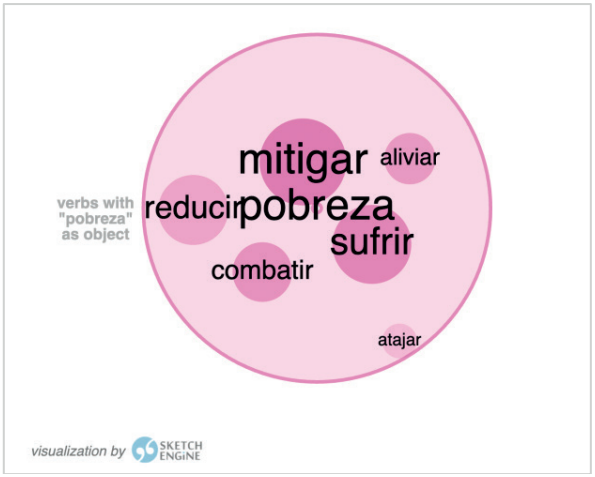


Fig. 3: *Word Sketch* de *pobreza energética.*

Por lo que respecta al sintagma nominal completo, el *Word sketch* evidencia que no hay verbos que lo tengan como sujeto, mientras que seis lo tienen como objeto (*mitigar, sufrir, combatir, aliviar, reducir, atajar*), como se puede ver en el Gráfico 3:



Gráf. 3: verbos que tienen *pobreza* como objeto.

Al analizar los ejemplos en su contexto se han hipotetizado dos dominios fuente principales:

> 1) LA POBREZA ENERGÉTICA ES UNA ENFERMEDAD: debido a la coaparición con los verbos *mitigar* (16)*, sufrir* (4)*, aliviar* (1)*, reducir* (10);
>
> 2) LA POBREZA ENERGÉTICA ES UN ENEMIGO: debido a la coocurrencia con los verbos *combatir* (7) y *atajar* (2).

En realidad, el segundo puede ser absorbido por el primero, a través de la metáfora LA ENFERMEDAD ES UN ENEMIGO A DERROTAR.
A continuación, se muestran algunos ejemplos significativos del primer dominio:

> Los Estados miembros velarán por que las autoridades regionales y locales establezcan medidas específicas de eficiencia energética en sus herramientas de planificación incluidas cuando proceda, las agencias de energía, y al público, incluidos en particular los grupos vulnerables que corren riesgo de sufrir pobreza energética o son más vulnerables a sus efectos. Los Estados miembros velarán asimismo por que las autoridades competentes, al diseñar y aplicar las medidas de eficiencia energética, adopten medidas para atenuar los impactos negativos significativos, directos o indirectos, de dichas medidas en los hogares en situación de pobreza energética, los hogares de renta baja o los grupos vulnerables.

En este extracto, la metáfora de la pobreza energética como enfermedad es subrayada no solo por el uso del verbo *sufrir,* sino también por la personificación de los Estados Miembros, que *velarán* como padres preocupados de los efectos de la enfermedad sobre *grupos vulnerables*, y por la necesidad de *aplicar medidas*, como si formasen parte de un tratamiento médico o terapéutico. También en el pasaje siguiente se aprecia la metáfora de la enfermedad con el uso del verbo *suministrar*:

> Los Estados miembros adoptarán las medidas adecuadas, tales como prestaciones en el marco de regímenes de seguridad social para garantizar el necesario suministro a los clientes vulnerables o el apoyo a mejoras de la eficiencia energética, con el fin de atajar la pobreza energética donde se haya constatado.

Además, resulta relevante el siguiente ejemplo de la única aparición del verbo *aliviar*:

> Los Estados miembros pueden adoptar medidas para aliviar la pobreza energética únicamente por medio de las medidas de actuación alternativas. Los Estados miembros deben velar por que ninguna otra medida de actuación de su combinación de políticas tenga efectos adversos para las personas afectadas por la pobreza energética, los clientes vulnerables, los usuarios finales y, en su caso, las personas que viven en viviendas sociales.

Como se puede apreciar, conjuntamente a las ya mencionadas *medidas* y al verbo *velar* se encuentran las expresiones *tener efectos adversos* y *personas afectadas*, siempre del campo semántico de la enfermedad. En el pasaje siguiente se definen los enfermos, o sea, las personas vulnerables con riesgo de ser afectadas por la *pobreza energética* y por sus *efectos adversos*:

> En este contexto, debe prestarse especial atención a aquellos grupos que corran mayor riesgo de verse afectados por la pobreza energética o que sean más vulnerables a los efectos adversos derivados de esta, como las mujeres, las personas con discapacidad, las personas de edad avanzada, los niños y las personas de origen racial o étnico minoritario.
> Esto incluye a las mujeres en toda su diversidad, las personas de edad avanzada, las personas LGBTIQ+, los migrantes y las personas de orígenes sociales, raciales o étnicos diversos.

En el grupo de personas vulnerables se incluye a las mujeres y, en realidad, el concepto de *pobreza energética* en el corpus está estrechamente relacionado con la cuestión de género, como se destaca en los ejemplos siguientes:

> La aplicación de medidas de mejora de la eficiencia energética también debe ser una prioridad para mitigar la pobreza energética y sus consecuencias asociadas al género.

> Las mujeres en toda su diversidad, en particular las madres solteras, las que sufren discriminaciones interseccionales y las que superan la edad de jubilación, tienen más probabilidades que los hombres de vivir en situación de pobreza energética en algún momento de su vida, lo que limita su acceso a los servicios de energías renovables y obstaculiza su participación en la transición energética.

> La transición ecológica, incluida la transición limpia, afecta de manera diferente a mujeres y hombres, en concreto debido a las brechas de género en lo que respecta al salario y a las pensiones, y puede tener un impacto particular en algunos grupos desfavorecidos, como las personas con discapacidad […] las mujeres en toda su diversidad, en particular las madres.

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La fuerte relación entre género y *pobreza energética* se cristaliza en la expresión *feminización de la pobreza energética*, gracias a la cual se quiere subrayar cómo las mujeres son las que más pueden quedarse atrás y convertirse en las víctimas principales de la pobreza energética:

> Los Estados miembros deben velar por que se elaboren medidas específicas y se disponga de fondos específicos para apoyar a las mujeres en toda su diversidad, luchar contra la feminización de la pobreza energética e incluir a todas las personas en la transición ecológica.

> Estos indicadores y datos deben utilizarse para […] presentar directrices claras sobre la lucha contra la feminización de la pobreza energética y la integración del género en la transición energética.

Las tres ocurrencias de esta expresión se encuentran en el mismo documento del corpus, o sea, la propuesta de enmiendas (ES_5) de la *Comisión de Derechos de las Mujeres e Igualdad de Género*. De hecho, es en este documento donde se encuentran la mayoría de las referencias al género y al papel de la mujer en la transición energética, así como 64 de las 66 apariciones de la palabra *mujer*. A continuación, se muestran algunos ejemplos en los cuales se subraya el papel estratégico que la mujer puede desempeñar en la transición energética:

> Siempre debe promoverse y fomentarse la participación equitativa de las mujeres y las niñas, con sus capacidades, conocimientos y perspectivas únicos como […] poderosos agentes del cambio.

> En particular, cabe destacar que las mujeres tienen un papel estratégico que desempeñar en el desarrollo de modelos de consumo y producción sostenibles y racionales desde una perspectiva ecológica, y que su empoderamiento supone un refuerzo de la competitividad europea, habida cuenta del potencial de recursos sin explotar entre las mujeres para impulsar la economía europea.

> La presente Directiva debe contribuir a reducir la brecha de género en el sector de la energía, integrar a las mujeres en el mercado laboral de las tecnologías emergentes, promover el espíritu empresarial de las mujeres, aumentar las posibilidades de generar las capacidades y competencias que exige la transición ecológica y digital, y dirigir a un mayor número de mujeres y niñas hacia las carreras CTIAM, y en particular las del ámbito de la ingeniería

El análisis de los ejemplos muestra como, por un lado, se representa a la mujer como persona vulnerable y como principal víctima de la pobreza energética, mientras que, por otro lado, se enfatizan *sus capacidades*, *sus conocimientos* y *perspectivas únicas*, *su papel estratégico*, *su espíritu empresarial*, la importancia de su participación activa a la transición energética, que representa una ocasión de empoderamiento y éxito.

5. Conclusiones

El análisis ha confirmado la hipótesis sobre la naturaleza metafórica de la colocación *pobreza energética* en el corpus y ha permitido mapear su campo fuente principal, o sea, LA POBREZA ENERGÉTICA ES UNA ENFERMEDAD, a través de los verbos empleados, como *aliviar, sufrir, mitigar, velar, afectar,* entre otros, y a través de la elección de sustantivos y sintagmas nominales pertenecientes a este campo semántico, como *medidas*, *personas/grupos/clientes/mujeres vulnerables*, *efectos adversos*, etc.
Con este uso metafórico, el concepto tradicional de pobreza se extiende a las dificultades de acceso a la energía renovable, es decir, a la falta de recursos concretos para necesidades básicas, como alimentos o ropa. La dificultad de tener acceso a servicios energéticos adecuados tiene impactos físicos y mentales muy reales, afectando a grupos vulnerables como niños, ancianos, personas con discapacidad y, especialmente, mujeres. Pero con las debidas medidas y acciones concretas de ayuda por parte de la Unión Europea gracias a sus directivas y fondos dedicados, la mujer puede convertirse en un recurso poderoso hacia el cambio y hacia el éxito de la transición energética.
Cabe destacar que, a pesar de la inicialmente citada declaración de intenciones sobre la necesidad de aplicar la perspectiva de género en todos los documentos de la Unión, la mayoría de las propuestas de enmiendas en esa dirección no se incluyeron en el documento final de 2023

sobre energía, signo evidente de que queda mucho por hacer para llegar a una verdadera equidad de género también en este sector.

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Chapter 6.
Métaphore et figement sur les paquets de tabac en France et en Espagne

Metaphor and Fixity on Tobacco Packets in France and Spain

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Résumé
La directive européenne 2014/40/UE impose de recouvrir 65 % de la surface des paquets de cigarettes avec des avertissements stratégiques contre le tabagisme. L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'analyser les métaphores visuelles et le figement présents sur les paquets de tabac en France et en Espagne conformément à la législation européenne. Ces métaphores illustrent et renforcent le contenu sémantique des textes. Pour réaliser cette analyse comparative franco-espagnole, nous disposons d'un corpus photographique de 53 paquets de tabac différents, dont 26 en espagnol et 27 en français. Les photographies ont été prises en 2024 et proviennent respectivement de bureaux de tabac situés à Alicante et à Paris. À partir d'un corpus bilingue textuel et visuel, nous analysons la syntaxe et les nuances sémantiques, ainsi que le degré de figement des textes et des métaphores visuelles.

Mots-clés : Paquets de tabac, législation européenne, métaphore, figement.

Abstract
The European directive 2014/40/EU requires covering 65% of the surface of tobacco packs with strategic warnings against smoking. The main objective of this study is to analyze the visual metaphors and fixity present on tobacco packages in France and Spain according to European laws. These metaphors illustrate and reinforce the semantic content of the texts. To carry out this French-Spanish comparative analysis, we investigate a photographic corpus of 53 different tobacco packs, 26 in Spanish and 27 in French. The photographs were taken in 2024 and come from tobacconists in Alicante and Paris, respectively. Based on a bilingual textual and visual corpus, we analyze the syntax, semantic nuances, the degree of fixity of the texts, and visual metaphors.

Keywords: Tobacco packets, European laws, metaphor, fixity.

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1. Introduction

Depuis 2014, la directive 2014/40/EU du Parlement Européen et du Conseil du 3 avril 2014, qui abroge celle de 2001/37/CE sur les produits du tabac exige, dans son article 10, la présence d'avertissements relatifs à la santé sur le tabac et ses produits dérivés, qui « recouvrent 65% de la surface extérieure avant et arrière de l'unité de conditionnement et de tout emballage extérieur » (2014/40/EU : 29). Ainsi, les paquets de tabac sont devenus des supports de communication textuelle et visuelle stratégiques visant à convaincre et à persuader (Hounyovi 2021) dans la lutte mondiale contre le tabagisme. Les images choquantes et les messages percutants qui y sont imprimés ne sont pas seulement des avertissements, mais des outils puissants, très souvent métaphoriques, pour sensibiliser aux dangers du tabac et lutter contre le tabagisme. Il s'agit d'un discours narratif double : d'un côté humain, pour le bien-être des citoyens et d'un autre côté, économique, pour éviter des maladies.

Notre étude vise à étudier les métaphores présentes dans les images (contenu visuel, non verbal) et leur figement syntaxique, sémantique et pragmatique d'un point de vue traductologique. Pour ce faire, nous avons élaboré un corpus photographique bilingue français-espagnol de 53 paquets de tabac différents. Parmi eux, 27 ont été enregistrés dans des bureaux de tabac à Paris, et 26 à Alicante. L'ensemble des photographies des paquets de tabac est composé de deux parties bien différenciées: message textuel et message visuel métaphorique. Pour différencier les données de notre corpus, nous distinguons deux types de contenu: textuel (verbal) et visuel (non verbal). Le premier fait référence aux textes, des énoncés verbaux apposés sur les paquets de tabac. Le deuxième, non verbal, concerne les images recouvrant les paquets de tabac en Europe. Ces deux données ne peuvent pas être comprises l'une sans l'autre parce qu'elles se complètent et parviennent à un but commun, c'est-à-dire, à provoquer un effet persuasif, voire provocateur sur les citoyens et les citoyennes en Europe.

Les métaphores visuelles apposées sur les paquets de tabac illustrent d'un point de vue créatif et convaincant (Gladka 2017) le texte qui les accompagne. Celles-ci aident « le lecteur à se projeter dans la situation dont nous parlons sur un plan émotionnel, corporel, vécu » (Lhuillier & Tsiang 2021: 50). En parallèle, les textes directs, sans équivoque, renforcent d'une manière concise le contenu sémantique visuel. D'un côté, nous étudions les métaphores visuelles apposées sur les paquets de tabac distribués en France et en Espagne et leurs rapports avec les textes qui les accompagnent d'un point de vue contrastif français-espagnol. De l'autre côté, nous analysons au niveau syntaxique et sémantique les équivalences français-espagnol de notre corpus textuel bilingue et leur degré de figement du point de vue traductologique (Albano 2020) et phraséologique (González Rey 1995 ; Gross G. 1996 ; Mel'cuk 2003 ; Uzcanga Vivar 2020).

Du point de vue de la traductologie, certains auteurs comme Jamet (2003) et Pacha-Abdesselan et Bachir (2011) se sont intéressés aux méthodes de traduction de la métaphore. Dans son ouvrage, Albano (2020) étudie les traductions de métaphores et les transferts d'informations métaphoriques allemandes et leurs traductions françaises en se basant sur les schémas culturels. En 2022, Hong analyse les traductions des métaphores et l'acquisition du langage métaphorique en didactique des langues étrangères à partir d'un corpus bilingue chinois-français. Ces productions scientifiques montrent la tendance à l'étude de la métaphore au niveau textuel (contenu métaphorique verbal). Pourtant la traduction des métaphores apposées (sous forme d'image) sur les paquets de tabac constitue encore un terrain à explorer. Étant donné l'ancrage linguistique et socioculturel de cette figure de style, sa traduction vers d'autres langues ne constitue pas une tâche aisée. L'originalité de cette étude réside dans la documentation métaphorique visuelle et dans l'analyse des mécanismes de traduction, toujours guidés par le cadre législatif européen actuel en matière de vente des produits de tabac.

2. La métaphore et le figement

Les métaphores, en tant que figures de style, sont largement utilisées dans la publicité pour influencer les perceptions et les comportements des consommateurs. D'après Lakoff & Johnson, la métaphore est toujours présente, de manière naturelle, dans nos vies.

> Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can getalong perfectly wellwithout metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphoris pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 : 3).

Dans leur ouvrage *Les métaphores dans la vie quotidienne,* Lakoff & Johnson (1986 [1980]) signalent la métaphore conceptuelle 'La discussion c'est la guerre' qui se reflète dans le langage quotidien par des expressions telles que:

> Vos affirmations sont indéfendables. Il a attaqué chaque point faible de mon argumentation. Ses critiques visaient droit au but. J'ai démoli son argumentation. Je n'ai jamais gagné sur un point avec lui. Tu n'es pas d'accord ? Alors, défends-toi ? Si tu utilises cette stratégie, il va t'écraser. Les arguments qu'il m'a opposés ont tous fait mouche (*Ibid.* : 22).

Jamet & Schmale (2018: 6), dans leur étude contrastive de supports publicitaires allemands, anglais et français, caractérisent le langage publicitaire par « sa plurivocité, c'est-à-dire qu'il recourt à divers médiums pour atteindre son but ». Dans cet enjeu publicitaire où plusieurs supports sont mis en œuvre pour un objectif commun, à savoir l'influence ou la persuasion, l'image joue un rôle fondamental parce qu'elle constitue le premier stimulus attentionnel du public. Joffe (2007) décrit le pouvoir persuasif de l'image quand celle-ci est conjuguée avec l'émotion: santé ou sécurité, entre autres. C'est précisément notre cas d'étude, la santé. L'auteure signale:

> Les campagnes de sensibilisation de type pédagogique s'appuyant sur des messages textuels ont été remplacées par d'autres qui s'appuient sur le média visuel et pratiquent une sorte de marketing social. Cette évolution prouve que l'information seule ne suffit pas à capter l'attention des gens pour garantir le succès d'une campagne. Le public doit plutôt être séduit, ce dont se charge le matériel visuel (*Ibid*. : 105).

Les images, notamment celles qui apparaissent sur les paquets de tabac, sont des métaphores visuelles relatives à la santé pouvant toucher les gens sur le plan émotionnel, de manière proche et en même temps exagérée. Cette exacerbation conceptuelle propre de la métaphore dressée au public par le biais de l'image constitue un outil puissant capable de capter l'attention. En même temps, l'image sert également à mémoriser par le biais de 'l'imagerie mentale' (Gautier 2018). L'une des applications la plus frappante de la métaphore visuelle en publicité est observée dans la couverture des paquets de tabac et dans les campagnes de prévention des accidents liés à la circulation routière. Il s'agit de circonstances étroitement liées à la santé, donc émouvantes et, par conséquent, faciles à retenir. Ces métaphores visuelles sont toujours accompagnées d'un texte. Dans le cas des avertissements contre le tabagisme, l'énoncé "Fumer tue" est représenté dans notre imagerie mentale écrit en noir avec un fond blanc et encadré, apposé sur un paquet de tabac. C'est la seule situation où notre cerveau est capable de placer cet énoncé. Cette casuistique syntaxique, sémantique et pragmatique signale qu'il s'agit d'un pragmatème

comportemental apposé (González Rey 2021). Il n'existe aucune alternative syntaxique possible à cet énoncé, sa structure syntaxique est figée et celle-ci implique des nuances sémantiques propres et des caractéristiques pragmatiques inchangeables. Les campagnes de prévention d'accidents suivent des principes métaphoriques semblables au niveau textuel et visuel. Par exemple, le slogan métaphorique « Attachez votre ceinture, attachez-vous à la vie » apposé sur une affiche pour la sécurité routière où nous pouvons observer, au fond, un accident routier où les occupants sont décédés contre le pare-brise. Dans ce dernier exemple, l'image complète et complémente le contenu métaphorique textuel.

Les métaphores visuelles sur les paquets de tabac en Europe véhiculent un double discours narratif. D'un côté, ces images mettent en avant le discours narratif humain, qui vise à promouvoir le bien-être des citoyens en les dissuadant de fumer et en les encourageant à adopter un mode de vie sain. Ces images montrent souvent des conséquences physiques dévastatrices du tabagisme, telles que des organes endommagés ou des individus gravement malades, dans le but de choquer les fumeurs potentiels et de les dissuader d'entamer ou de poursuivre leur habitude. De l'autre côté, ces métaphores visuelles soutiennent un discours narratif économique, promu par le ministère de la Santé européen, qui vise à réduire les coûts sanitaires en rapport avec le tabagisme. Ainsi, les images choquantes sur les paquets de tabac sont également destinées à encourager une réduction de la consommation de tabac afin de réduire la charge financière associée aux soins de santé. En effet, les maladies liées au tabac entraînent des dépenses considérables en traitements médicaux et en hospitalisations, ce qui pèse lourdement sur les systèmes de santé nationaux.

Cette double lecture narrative soulève des questions importantes sur les motivations sous-jacentes à l'utilisation de métaphores visuelles dans la lutte contre le tabagisme en Europe. Alors que les objectifs de santé publique et de bien-être des citoyens sont souvent mis en avant, il est clair que des considérations économiques jouent également un rôle significatif dans la conception et la mise en œuvre de ces campagnes. Selon Gantiva *et al.* (2018), la métaphore visuelle constitue un stimulus visuel convaincant très puissant dont l'efficacité au niveau du temps de réponse cognitive de fumeurs et non-fumeurs est démontrée dans le cas des paquets de tabac.

Ces métaphores représentées sous forme d'image constituent des éléments ancrés à une situation concrète. Elles constituent des énoncés visuels non verbaux figés, indépendants sémantiquement. L'ancrage situationnel déterminé par les 'coordonnées spatiales' (Blanco & Mejri 2018) d'emploi de ces images, c'est-à-dire les paquets de tabac, place ces énoncés visuels non verbaux dans un terrain à forte valeur pragmatique. Les métaphores visuelles apposées sur les paquets de tabac ne contiennent pas de contenu lexical apposé sur l'image mais elles sont accompagnées d'un énoncé textuel à côté de l'image.

> Première caractéristique définitoire d'un pragmatème: un pragmatème ne correspond jamais à une partie de discours [sauf, dans le cas de l'interjection, qui représente justement un énoncé], il s'agit toujours d'un énoncé complet, même quand il est formé d'une seule unité lexicale (Blanco & Mejri 2018: 26).

Malgré leur manque lexical, les images métaphoriques visuelles apparues sur les paquets de tabac, telles que celles des campagnes de prévention d'accidents de trafic et d'autres supports publicitaires non verbaux ancrés à une situation particulière d'énonciation constituent pour nous des pragmatèmes non verbaux proches de la définition de pragmatème comportemental apposé proposée par González Rey (2021) parce qu'ils apparaissent toujours apposés dans des situations communicatives très concrètes.

> Nous nommons pragmatèmes apposés ceux qui sont inscrits sur des supports 'dédiés', tels que des affiches publicitaires (p. ex. *À apparaître*; *À vendre*; *En vente*; *Prochainement au cinéma* […], des panneaux d'information (p. ex. *Accueil ; Caisse* ; *Information* […]), d'indication […] *Toilettes/WC* […], d'interdiction (p. ex. *Défense de fumer* […]) (*Ibid.* : 108-109).

À notre avis, les pragmatèmes apposés non verbaux sont représentés par des images. Ces images, photographies, affiches ou logos non verbaux peuvent être placés dans les toilettes, dans des moyens de transport, à la télé et dans des établissements publics ou privés pour des buts concrets déterminés par la propre situation d'énonciation, le support et le contenu visuel apposé. Les exemples mentionnés ci-dessus montrent que l'utilisation de la métaphore en publicité constitue une technique percutante. Celle-ci consiste à utiliser une image ou un symbole pour suggérer une idée ou une émotion spécifique dans le but d'influencer les attitudes et les comportements des consommateurs.

3. Le corpus

Dans cette section, nous examinons de manière contrastive les métaphores visuelles utilisées sur les paquets de tabac distribués en France et en Espagne, ainsi que les textes qui les accompagnent. Cette analyse nous permet de mieux comprendre comment les messages de prévention sont adaptés et interprétés dans différents contextes culturels et temporels.[1] Parmi les différences entre la France et l'Espagne concernant le format des paquets de tabac, le premier pays a déjà introduit le paquet neutre[2] tandis que l'Espagne garde les traits descriptifs propres à chaque marque. En outre, nous étudions les équivalences traductologiques et phraséologiques des énoncés textuels français et espagnols apposés sur les paquets de tabac. Cette analyse nous permet d'évaluer le degré de figement syntaxique entre les deux langues dans le cas du contenu textuel, les métaphores visuelles utilisées pour illustrer le message écrit et finalement, les nuances et les implications culturelles associées à leur utilisation conjointe en Europe.

Le corpus dont nous nous sommes servis contient 53 photographies[3] prises en janvier 2024 de 27 paquets de tabac français et 26 espagnols. Parmi ces 53 images, il y a 14 messages concis écrits (contenu textuel, verbal) en français et 14 en espagnol. Chaque message écrit est associé à deux images (contenu visuel, non verbal) et ces images se correspondent dans leurs traductions français-espagnol.

Comme l'indique Albano (2020 : 34-35), « il est évident que la structuration sémantique contrôle le fonctionnement syntaxique d'une séquence figée », dans le cas des métaphores textuelles (contenu verbal). L'analyse des équivalences textuelles-visuelles de notre corpus bilingue, en ce qui concerne l'étude de la métaphore visuelle, montre que le contenu visuel

[1] Depuis mai 2017, en France et en Espagne, les messages visuels et les 14 textes qui recouvrent les paquets de tabac n'ont pas changé. Les messages visuels, toujours métaphoriques, montrent de façon très réaliste les effets nuisibles du tabagisme.

[2] La France a introduit le paquet neutre de cigarettes comme mesure de santé publique en 2016, c'est-à-dire, il n'existe plus de traits distinctifs selon la marque. En Espagne, cette mesure n'est pas encore approuvée. Ainsi, les paquets de tabac espagnols partagent les mêmes messages textuels et les mêmes métaphores visuelles que ceux français mais ils se distinguent les uns des autres par la police utilisée pour écrire la marque et la couleur la caractérisant. En France, la couleur et le format des paquets de tabac et du vapotage sont standardisés depuis 2016 selon le Décret nº 2016-334 du 21 mars 2016 relatif au paquet neutre des cigarettes et de certains produits du tabac.

[3] Les images des paquets de tabac apparues dans cette étude sont libres de droits selon le Décret Royal 1/1996 parce qu'elles ont été prises et enregistrées par l'auteure de l'article dans des bureaux de tabac en France, à Paris et en Espagne, à Alicante.

métaphorique contrôle le fonctionnement sémantique et pragmatique de l'ensemble étudié, c'est-à-dire, le contenu verbal (texte) et le non verbal (image). En effet, nous constatons que le même texte peut trouver sa représentation métaphorique visuelle sous forme d'images différentes. Ainsi, 'Fumer augmente le risque de devenir aveugle' coïncide avec deux métaphores visuelles de notre corpus (voir Figure 1) en français et de même dans leur traduction espagnole, 'Fumar aumenta el riesgo de ceguera' (voir Figure 2). Pour 'Fumer peut tuer l'enfant que vous attendez', deux métaphores visuelles différentes ont été repérées (voir Figure 3) et de même dans leur traduction espagnole, 'Fumar puede matar al hijo que espera' (voir Figure 4).

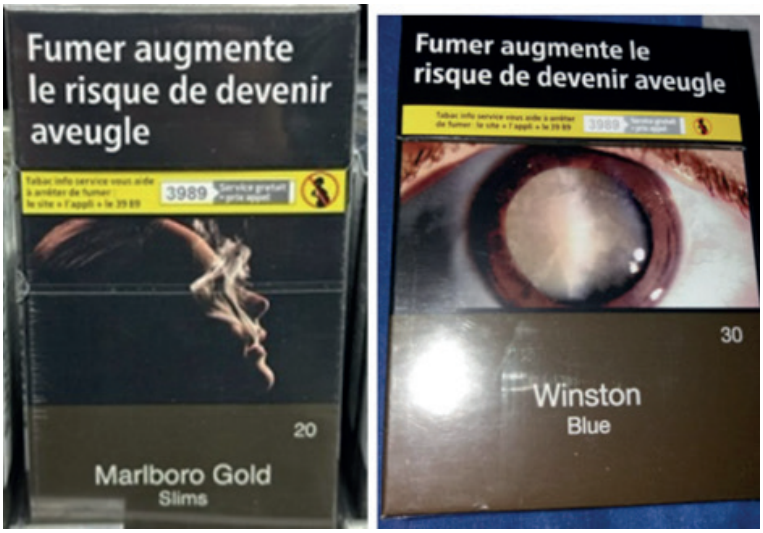


Fig. 1 : Fumer augmente le risque de devenir aveugle.



Fig. 2: Fumar aumenta el riesgo de ceguera.



Fig. 3 : Fumer peut tuer l'enfant que vous attendez.



Fig. 4: Fumar puede matar al hijo que espera.

Cette situation se répète dans l'ensemble des messages textuels analysés (voir Tableau 1 ci-dessous) : 14 en espagnol et 14 en français. Nous avons constaté que chaque texte, soit français, soit espagnol, est toujours associé à deux métaphores visuelles différentes l'illustrant.

Message textuel français	Message textuel espagnol
Fumer augmente le risque de devenir aveugle	Fumar aumenta el riesgo de ceguera
Fumer nuit à vos dents et à vos gencives	Fumar daña los dientes y las encías
Fumer nuit à vos poumons	Fumar daña los pulmones
Fumer bouche vos artères	Fumar obstruye las arterias
Fumer provoque le cancer de la bouche et de la gorge	Fumar provoca cáncer de boca y garganta
Fumer provoque des AVC et des handicaps	Fumar provoca embolias e invalidez
Fumer peut tuer l'enfant que vous attendez	Fumar puede matar al hijo que espera
Votre fumée est dangereuse pour vos enfants, votre famille et vos amis	Su humo es malo para sus hijos, familia y amigos
Arrêtez de fumer: restez en vie pour vos proches	Deja de fumar: siga vivo para sus seres queridos

Message textuel français	Message textuel espagnol
Fumer diminue la fertilité	Fumar reduce la fertilidad
Fumer provoque 9 cancers de poumon sur 10	Fumar provoca 9 de cada 10 cánceres de pulmón
Fumer provoque des crises cardiaques	Fumar provoca infartos
Les enfants de fumeurs ont plus de risques de devenir fumeurs	Los hijos de fumado restienen más probabilidades de empezar a fumar
Fumar aumenta elriesgo de impotencia	Fumar aumenta el riesgo de impotencia

Tab. 1 : Messages textuels (contenu verbal) composant ce corpus bilingue, création propre.

Quant à la syntaxe, parmi les 28 messages textuels analysés du corpus bilingue français-espagnol, trois sont identiques en français et en espagnol : 'Fumer provoque 9 cancers de poumon sur 10' et 'Fumar provoca 9 de cada 10 cánceres de pulmón' ; 'Fumer peut tuer l'enfant que vous attendez' et 'Fumar puede matar al hijo que espera' ; et 'Fumer augmente le risque d'impuissance' et 'Fumar aumenta el riesgo de impotencia'. Nous avons observé des différences concernant l'utilisation des adjectifs possessifs en français et en espagnol. Ainsi, les articles définis, caractérisant les structures syntaxiques espagnoles, sont très souvent remplacés par des adjectifs possessifs en français. Par exemple, 'los dientes y las encías' par 'vos dents et vos gencives' ; 'los pulmones' par 'vos poumons' ; 'las arterias' par 'vos artères' et 'familia y amigos' par 'votre famille et vos amis'. Finalement, nous constatons un changement de catégorie syntaxique entre 'ceguera' ('cecité' en français), substantif, et "devenir aveugle", locution verbale.

Au niveau sémantique, nous différencions les deux types de contenus étudiés : les textes et les images métaphoriques. Concernant les textes (verbaux), nous avons repéré quelques nuances significatives. Par exemple, une variation lexicale dans la traduction de 'infartos' par 'crises cardiaques' au lieu de 'infarctus du myocarde', sans doute car le premier a une fréquence d'usage plus importante et/ou moins technique. Puis, il nous semble remarquable la traduction de 'probabilidades de empezar a fumar' par 'risques de devenir fumeurs'. Premièrement, le changement lexical de 'probabilités' par 'risques' sans aucune justification et après, 'empezar a fumar' par 'devenir fumeurs' ou lieu de 'commencer à fumer'. En français, le message est plus sévère et percutant car 'devenir fumeur' va au-delà d'une action ponctuelle comme 'commencer à fumer' pouvant s'arrêter tout de suite. L'introduction dans la traduction française du verbe 'devenir' implique une habitude qui se répétera à vie, le pas du statut de non-fumeur à fumeur. Finalement, nous avons remarqué un changement lexical dans la traduction française de 'reduce la fertilidad' en espagnol. Au lieu de garder 'réduit', la traduction française proposée résulte un synonyme de 'reduce', le verbe en espagnol, soit 'diminue'. Il s'agit d'un choix traductologique qui n'est pas motivé par la fréquence d'usage des combinaisons 'diminuer la fertilité' (1.450.000 résultats sur Google dans 0,23 secondes) et 'réduire la fertilité' (1.290.000 résultats sur Google dans 0,37 secondes). Cette variation lexicale est provoquée sans doute par la familiarité du verbe 'diminuer' face à 'réduire', avec des connotations un peu moins relâchées.

Pour analyser la sémantique du contenu visuel métaphorique, nous proposons une description sémio-pragmatique du contenu visuel repéré sous l'angle de la signification et de la perception. Il est évident que ces images, apparues ailleurs, sur d'autres supports,seraient dépourvues d'une partie de leur contenu sémantique. Leur format conditionne partiellement leur sens. Nous pourrions les trouver dans les hôpitaux, dans les salles d'attente chez les médecins, dans les pharmacies et même sur les murs de plusieurs établissements publics et/ou privés pour avertir à propos des dangers du tabagisme. Cependant, leur ancrage situationnel les positionne seulement sur les paquets de tabac.

Dans cette analyse sémio-pragmatique des 28 images métaphoriques de notre corpus, toutes les images visent à prévenir des troubles de santé. Tenant compte du contexte où elles sont apposées, nous avons regroupé les images dans quatre champs sémantiques que nous avons ordonnés par nombre de coïncidences en ordre descendant:la mort (17 images), la famille (12 images), l'image de soi (7 images) et le handicap (4 images). Parmi ce regroupement, il y a certaines images métaphoriques placées au milieu de deux champs sémantiques. Pour mieux comprendre ce classement, nous proposons ci-dessous un regroupement visuel (voir Figure 5). Toutes les images de notre corpus constituent des messages métaphoriques visuels dépourvus de texte sauf deux photos appartenant au champ lexical de la mort. La première illustre le contenu textuel 'Fumer nuit à vos poumons' et 'Fumar daña los pulmones' et indique : 'Plaie ouverte consécutive à une chirurgie du poumon' et 'Herida abierta tras una operación quirúrgica de pulmón' en français et en espagnol, respectivement. La seconde illustre le contenu textuel 'Fumer provoque 9 cancers du poumon sur 10' et 'Fumar provoca 9 de cada 10 cánceres de pulmón' et indiquent, respectivement : 'chirurgie de poumon' et 'operación quirúrgica de pulmón'. Il s'agit de deux images très frappantes à propos d'interventions médicales parfois inconnues par le public récepteur. Afin d'assurer le transfert d'information sémantique par le biais de l'image, l'ajout d'une explication textuelle constitue un soutien explicatif contribuant à accomplir le but de ces publicités, c'est-à-dire, informer et avertir les gens à propos des dangers du tabagisme.

4. Conclusion

Comme l'indique Gautier (2018 : 4), « l'imagerie mentale est un processus qui se dessine sous une forme imagée au sein de la mémoire active du consommateur ». Si nous nous tenons à le message, les métaphores visuelles apposées sur les paquets de tabac en Europe contribuent à garder pendant une période plus longue que celle du contenu textuel. Dit autrement, dans un premier temps l'être humain mémorise avec moins de difficulté le contenu non verbal. Dans ce sens, les images apposées sur les paquets de tabac jouent un rôle essentiel dans la sensibilisation du public aux dangers du tabagisme et dans la promotion d'un mode de vie sain. Cependant, il est important de reconnaître que ces images ne sont pas seulement des
outils de prévention, mais qu'elles véhiculent également des messages économiques et sociaux plus larges.
En examinant de manière contrastive les métaphores utilisées en France et en Espagne, nous pouvons mieux comprendre les nuances culturelles et linguistiques qui façonnent la communication de la santé publique à travers l'Europe. Les données extraites de notre corpus photographique bilingue montrent le figement situationnel des images visuelles, constituant celles-ci par elles-mêmes des énoncés non verbaux indépendants sémantiquement lorsqu'elles sont apposées sur les paquets de tabac. Complémentant et complétant le contenu textuel, ces images métaphoriques représentant parfois des organes endommagés, des maladies ou des situations de vie dramatiques, visent à déclencher une réponse affective et émotive chez le consommateur.

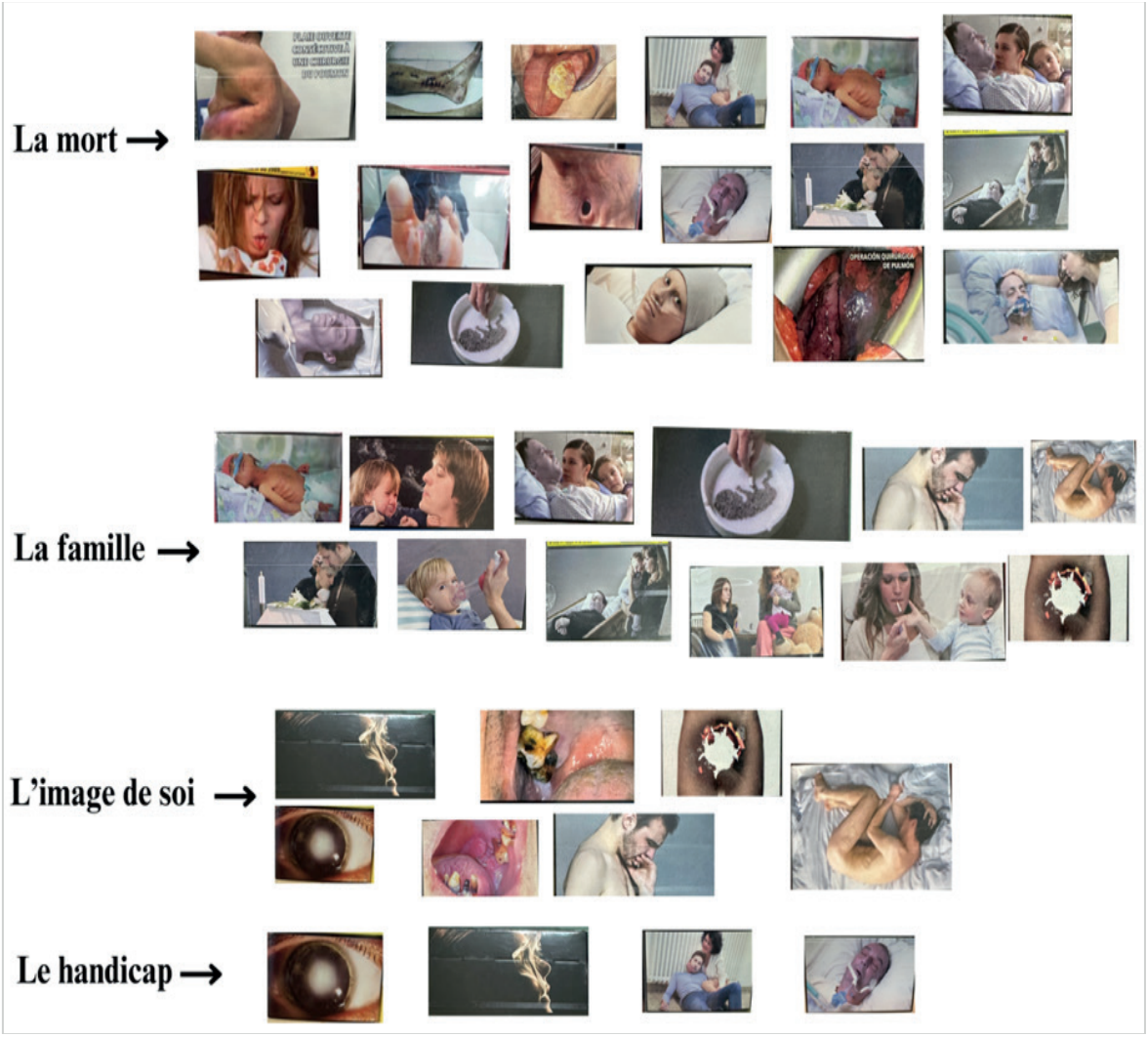


Fig. 5 : Regroupement visuel par champs lexicaux des images métaphoriques de notre corpus.

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Chapter 7.
Les dispositifs rhétoriques dans le discours publicitaire

Rhetorical Devices in Advertising Discourse

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Résumé

La publicité est une forme de communication commerciale dont l'objectif est d'influencer un public hétérogène. Pour y parvenir, elle doit être accessible et intelligible par tous les consommateurs. Sa nature protéiforme lui permet d'adapter son discours aux différents segments sociaux qu'elle cible.
Le développement d'un message publicitaire est le fruit d'un processus créatif méthodique et complexe. Il mobilise un corpus théorique étendu, intégrant des concepts issus du marketing, de la psychologie, de la sociologie, de la linguistique et de l'ethnologie. Un soin particulier est apporté à l'aspect esthétique, qui présente une haute densité de complexité graphique, iconique et symbolique.
Afin d'optimiser son efficacité, la publicité doit générer des messages percutants, créatifs et inventifs. Dans cette perspective, le recours aux dispositifs rhétoriques, et notamment aux figures de style, est jugé indispensable.
Ces figures de rhétorique sont des procédés discursifs employés pour stimuler l'imagination et capter l'attention du destinataire. L'objectif est de séduire, de convaincre et d'impressionner l'audience pour lui transmettre une vision spécifique du monde. Cette stratégie vise à renforcer l'expressivité du message en conférant aux mots des significations inédites, fabriquées sur mesure pour le contexte publicitaire.

Mots clés : publicité, consommateurs, persuasion, figures de style, sémantique.

Abstract

Advertising is a form of commercial communication designed to influence a heterogeneous audience. To achieve this, messages must be accessible and intelligible to all consumers. Its proteiform nature enables the adaptation of discourse to the various social segments being targeted.
The development of an advertising message results from a methodical and complex creative process. It mobilizes an extensive theoretical corpus, integrating concepts drawn from marketing, psychology, sociology, linguistics, and ethnology. Particular attention is paid to the aesthetic dimension, which exhibits a high density of graphic, iconic, and symbolic complexity.

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To optimize efficacy, advertising must generate impactful, creative, and inventive messages. From this perspective, the recourse to rhetorical devices, particularly figures of speech, is deemed essential.
These rhetorical figures are discursive procedures employed to stimulate the imagination and capture the attention of the recipient. The objective is to subtly influence, convince, and impress the audience to transmit a specific worldview. This strategy aims to reinforce the message's expressivity by conferring novel meanings upon words, tailor-made for the advertising context.

Keywords: advertising, consumers, persuasion, figures of style, semantics.

1. Introduction

La publicité est une opération communicationnelle à caractère commercial destinée aux consommateurs. Elle est effectuée par l'entreprise par le biais des mass médias pour accroître les ventes. Et puisqu'elle s'adresse à un public hétérogène, elle doit être apte à être admise et comprise par tous les consommateurs et ipso facto à leur influencer tous. À cet égard,

> En publicité, la signification de l'image est assurément intentionnelle : ce sont certains attributs du produit qui forment a priori les signifiés du message publicitaire et ces signifiés doivent être transmis aussi clairement possible (…) elle sera snob avec les snobs, « branchée » avec les jeunes, compassée avec les bourgeois, « canaille chic » avec les « bobos », et ainsi de suite (Berthelot-Guiet, 2020 [2005]: 9).

En contemplant le langage publicitaire, nous trouvons qu'il est inondé d'emphase, d'hypertrophie et de déclamation. En fait, les publicitaires n'épargnent pas d'efforts pour idéaliser les produits qu'ils promeuvent. À cet égard, les publicitaires usent constamment des amplificateurs, tels les adverbes « (très) important » et « (trop) commode » aussi que des expressions comme « (exclusivement) robuste et (particulièrement) délicieux » (Brouland 2006). Dans le même cadre, nous avons repéré dans les publicités étudiées, des hyperboles lexicales (liaison tumultueuse, affres de la passion) et des gradations intensives (pour vous plaire, pour vous séduire) outre des adjectifs séducteurs à connotation positive, notamment : « éblouissant, incomparable, charmant, etc. ». Les publicitaires associent donc un adjectif à connotation positive au produit vanté. Cependant, cette stratégie reste relative à la suite de la méfiance de la cible face à cette publicité positiviste et subjective. Par ailleurs, la publicité est riche en ellipse vu qu'elle doit être courte, précise et frappante. Pour l'être, elle utilise des phrases récapitulées et courtes où des parties linguistiques sont négligées, surtout les pronoms personnels et les verbes. De plus, les publicitaires inventent de nouveaux mots susceptibles d'ajouter une touche humoristique. Néanmoins, prise par ses soucis lucratifs, la publicité ne respecte guère la langue. En d'autres termes, la langue utilisée dans les publicités est agrammaticale. D'ailleurs, Adam et Bonhomme (1997) affirment que « la publicité abîme la langue ». Cependant, les publicitaires se défendent en disant qu'ils usent un « langage peu conventionnel » dans le but de charmer et d'intriguer le public. Dans cette optique, la publicité rend indispensable le recours aux tournures de style notamment les figures de style. C'est une méthode d'écriture (également appelée « figure de discours » ou « figure de rhétorique ») où l'auteur d'un texte, qu'il soit parlé ou écrit, tente de nous faire mieux comprendre ce dont il parle. En réalité, il cherche à captiver l'attention du destinataire afin de le séduire, le persuader, l'impressionner et lui offrir une perspective sur le monde. Cette approche résulte d'une intention de renforcer l'expression, en donnant aux mots de nouvelles significations conçues spécifiquement pour le contexte dans lequel ils sont utilisés.

La rhétorique, en tant qu'art du discours persuasif, trouve son origine dans l'Antiquité avec Aristote, qui distinguait trois modes de persuasion : l'ethos (autorité de l'orateur), le pathos (émotion du public) et le logos (logique de l'argumentation). Ces piliers sont encore au cœur du message publicitaire contemporain.
La sémiotique, quant à elle, offre un cadre complémentaire en analysant les signes visuels et linguistiques utilisés en publicité. Barthes (1964) met en évidence la polysémie de l'image publicitaire et sa capacité à condenser plusieurs niveaux de sens. Le Groupe μ propose une typologie précise des figures fondée sur la déviation par rapport aux normes linguistiques et sémiotiques.
Les figures de style, considérées comme des procédés rhétoriques, participent de la stratégie persuasive globale. Elles permettent de structurer le message, de le rendre plus expressif, plus marquant, voire plus affectif. Loin d'être de simples ornements, elles constituent l'ossature symbolique du discours publicitaire, capable de séduire, convaincre et ancrer le produit dans la mémoire collective.
Ainsi, la rhétorique publicitaire s'inscrit dans une interdisciplinarité féconde, entre linguistique, sémiotique, psychologie cognitive et sociologie de la communication.

2. Une étude de cas

Dans cette étude nous avons sélectionné certaines images, en langue française, des années 90 et 2000 qui nous permettent de montrer les figures de style employées.[1] Nous avons choisi les images qui montrent des textes très figuratifs et où les fgures de style sont très explicites.
Nous commencons par l'accumulation où nous pouvons observer l'illustration du principe d'adjonction (voir Fig. 1). Il s'agit de regrouper plusieurs objets. Sur le plan visuel, l'adjonction se manifeste par l'ajout, l'association ou la juxtaposition d'éléments identiques, partageant une nature ou une fonction similaire. Fréquemment, cette accumulation exprime une sensation de chaos, voire de désordre, à moins qu'elle ne soit soigneusement organisée et structurée. Le créateur visuel sera orienté vers une accumulation ordonnée ou chaotique grâce à la communication. En ce qui concerne la structure visuelle de la Fig. 1, nous pouvons observer que l'image montre une grille composée d'objets emblématiques de la marque Burberry (vêtements, accessoires, cosmétiques…). Chaque case contient un produit bien centré, mis en lumière individuellement. Ainsi, la grille donne une impression de rigueur visuelle et de cohérence esthétique. L'image publicitaire met en évidence l'effet rhétorique de l'accumulation car il s'agit d'un renforcement identitaire : tous les objets véhiculent les codes visuels caractéristiques de Burberry (notamment le motif tartan beige, noir et rouge). Nous pouvons également voir une diversité contrôlée car la variété des produits (des lunettes au trench-coat) montre l'étendue de la gamme tout en maintenant une unité de style. Le but est de rendre facilement mémorisable l'image publicitaire grâce à la répétition visuelle ancrant la marque dans l'esprit du consommateur. De surcroît, contrairement à une accumulation chaotique, ici, la répétition est ordonnée, ce qui reflète le luxe, la sophistication et la maîtrise de l'image de marque.
Nous pouvons donc supposer que cette accumulation évoque un univers complet, cohérent et homogène dans lequel le consommateur est invité à entrer. Elle véhicule l'idée que Burberry n'est pas simplement une marque, mais un style de vie totalisant. En rhétorique publicitaire, cela revient à construire un ethos de la marque structuré, rassurant et désirable.

[1] Toutes les images traitées dans cet article sont prises du site https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=les+figures+de+style+dans+les+images+publicitaires&form=HDRSC2&first=1&tsc=ImageBasicHover



Fig. 1 : Une accumulation d'objets chics soigneusement rangés et ordonnés.

En ce qui concerne la deuxième image que nous avons prise en considération (Fig. 2), nous pouvons observer qu'il s'agit d'une anacoluthe qui se caractérise par une rupture de construction dans la syntaxe en montrant une image surréaliste du parfum.



Fig. 2 : Un parfum, l'élégance prend forme.

Différemment, la confrontation de deux réalités opposées engendre un paradoxe (Fig. 3). Nous voyons Karl Marx, théoricien du communisme, utilisé pour faire la promotion d'une banque incitant à « devenir capitaliste ». C'est une antiphrase ironique car Marx s'opposait au capitalisme. Cela crée un effet de surprise et d'humour en détournant une figure historique à contre-sens. Le but de cette publicité est de créer un choc cognitif pour marquer les esprits et faire passer le message de manière décalée.



Fig. 3 : L'ironie du capital.

Un exemple qui nous semble intéressant est représenté par la Fig. 4 où nous assistons à un procédé mettant en lieu une analogie de forme, c'est-à-dire la mise en relation de deux objets, deux phénomènes, deux situations qui sont distincts mais qui font penser l'un à l'autre en raison de similitudes dans leur déroulement et leur apparence. Le jeu de mots repose sur l'expression « attrapez le London Virus », suggérant une fascination contagieuse pour Londres. Visuellement, la coiffure de la femme est transformée pour évoquer un poisson (Fish), renforçant le lien avec le plat typique britannique « Fish & chips ». Cette métamorphose humoristique appuie l'idée que le voyage à Londres transforme les gens. L'effet global sera donc « L'humour et l'absurde rendent la publicité mémorable et attrayante ».



Fig. 4 : Eurostar « Fish & Chips ».

Nous pouvons également observer des publicités qui s'inspirent d'une image déjà connue (référence universelle). Parfois, le détournement se résume à une simple altération : on modifie un détail et la signification change. Il peut prendre la forme d'une citation, d'un pastiche ou d'une parodie. À cet égard, l'image publicitaire de Kaléida utilise une œuvre inspirée de Picasso (visage vu sous plusieurs angles à la manière du cubisme) pour promouvoir un produit d'assurance. Le détournement consiste ici à reprendre un style artistique reconnu (cubisme) et à l'appliquer dans un contexte commercial (assurance multi-profils). Cela donne l'idée que l'assurance « voit la vie sous tous ses angles », exactement comme le cubisme montre un objet sous différents points de vue simultanément. Cela donne une impression de modernité, d'adaptabilité, et de couverture complète. Ce qui émerge est que associer l'image de l'assurance à une vision complète et artistique de la réalité, tout en attirant l'attention du public avec une esthétique culturelle familière.



Fig. 5 : Picasso détourné dans la publicité : Eu thymol. « Picasso's tube ».

À côté de cela, nous avons choisi d'analyser une autre image montrant la litote, c'est-à-dire la figure de la diminution. La litote est une expression de style qui implique de dire peu pour donner l'impression de beaucoup : « c'est vraiment bien ! ». En ce qui concerne l'image (Fig. 6), la litote implique de réduire la taille d'un élément, voire de l'éliminer, afin paradoxalement de lui accorder davantage d'importance. En général, le verbe est utilisé de manière négative : « Ce n'est pas mal ! » pour exprimer (C'est bien). Il ne s'agit pas d'un prix Nobel pour (c'est un idiot). Il s'agit d'une diminution considérée comme erronée et simulée.
La figure n. 6 montre une page blanche, avec un texte discret, qui est un exemple exceptionnel de litote employé à plusieurs reprises.

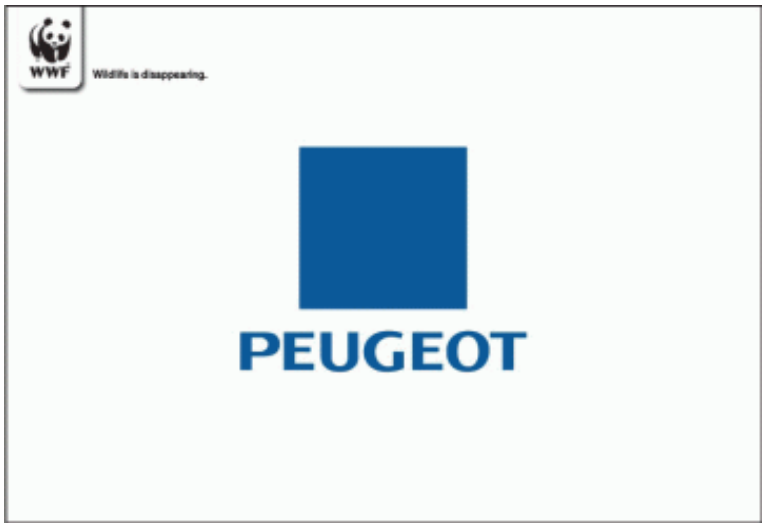


Fig. 6 : Peugeot « moins visible, plus frappant ».

En ce qui concerne la métaphore, nous pouvons observer la Figure n. 7 où une chose est remplacée par quelque chose qui lui ressemble ou l'évoque. Le message est formé à partir de deux univers distincts (deux champs sémantiques distincts) qui acquièrent tous les deux une signification.



Fig. 7 : Sekai « La force du lion domestiquée ».

Pour la métonymie, nous avons choisi la figure 8 où il y a un remplacement de l'effet par la cause.



Fig. 8 : Sécurité Routière : L'impact et la trace de sang (effet) est le résultat d'une vitesse excessive (la cause).

En ce qui concerne le paradoxe, nous avons pu observer une image (Fig. 9) où une affirmation (singulière) va à l'encontre de l'opinion générale (doxa). Prenons l'exemple d'une opposition entre le texte et l'image ou d'une référence utilisée à contre-pied (comme l'image d'une femme « extraordinaire » pour vendre quelque chose de « ordinaire »).



Fig. 9 : Publicité Tupperware.

En ce qui concerne la prosopopée, nous pouvons observer la figure 10. La prosopopée consiste à faire parler un objet inanimé ou une entité abstraite comme s'il s'agissait d'un être humain.

Ici, c'est le chocolat lui-même qui parle au spectateur, lui posant une question séduisante. Il s'adresse directement à lui avec une phrase qui crée un lien affectif et sensoriel. Le but est de susciter l'envie de goûter le produit.



Fig. 10 : Kinder Bueno.

Pour l'onomatopée, nous avons choisi l'image n. 11 qui nous permet de bien comprendre le mot évocateur, le récit vivant, sonore et réaliste. En effet, le mot « Snif » est une onomatopée, une imitation sonore traduisant le bruit d'un reniflement ou d'un pleur discret. Associée à l'image d'une pompe à essence qui pleure une goutte, cette onomatopée évoque la tristesse de consommer du carburant... sauf que le texte (en bas) met en valeur les économies faites grâce à la faible consommation de la voiture. L'effet recherché est celui de donner un ton humoristique à la publicité et montrer que cette voiture consomme si peu que même la pompe « pleure » à cause de son inutilité.



Fig. 11 : Snif « Quand l'économie de carburant fait sourire ».

3. Conclusion

Bien que notre corpus soit limité, ce qui émerge par notre étude est que l'essence de la publicité oscille entre esthétisme et efficacité, entre émotion et argumentation. En effet, les publicités examinées ne se limitent pas à une simple transmission d'informations commerciales : elles séduisent, amusent, interpellent et persuadent. Les figures montrent un langage multiple qui capte l'attention de publics variés, transcendant les générations, les cultures et les contextes socio-économiques.

L'efficacité de ces images reposent sur des stratégies sémantqiques qui montrent une alchimie subtile entre spontanéité créative et intention stratégique, entre figement et créativité. Ainsi, véritable carrefour culturel, la publicité puise dans les ressources du théâtre, du cinéma, de la musique, de la sculpture ou encore du dessin pour construire des univers cohérents et mémorables.

C'est précisément dans le recours aux figures de style et aux procédés rhétoriques que la publicité atteint son apogée. En exploitant la puissance suggestive du langage, elle parvient à condenser en quelques mots ou images un message percutant, à la fois esthétique, émotionnel et fonctionnel. Ainsi, loin d'être un simple ornement, la rhétorique publicitaire devient un levier de sens et un vecteur d'adhésion. Elle confère à la publicité cette capacité unique à être à la fois brève, claire, séduisante et inoubliable.

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Chapter 8.
La novlangue, comme métaphore indexicale. Reconfigurations des usages dans la presse française

Novlangue as an Indexical Metaphor. Reconfigurations of Uses in the French Press

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Résumé

La novlangue est le nom donné, dans le roman dystopique *1984,* à une langue artificielle créée par le gouvernement afin « de rendre impossible tout autre mode de pensée » (Orwell). Cette idée de l'imposition de la pensée au moyen du contrôle du langage va passer dans l'usage courant de 'novlangue', au point d'en devenir la métaphore : « Employer le mot X fait à la pensée ce que la novlangue fait à la société imaginée dans le roman *1984* ».
Or, 'novlangue' est un mot qui positionne plus que ce qu'il ne désigne. On emploie 'novlangue' à propos d'un néologisme dans le but de transférer la caractéristique « volonté de manipuler la pensée par le langage » à la personne qui a employé ce néologisme. En outre, on se signale soi-même comme occupant un positionnement spécifique dans l'espace idéologique, associant la caractéristique « critique du dogmatisme » associée à l'ouvrage d'Orwell à son propre positionnement. À ce titre, c'est un qualificatif d'altérité politique, et donc par conséquent un positionnement de soi.
Une analyse des usages de 'novlangue' montre que son sens reste stable tandis que son indexicalité s'inverse complètement au début des années 2010 : aujourd'hui, employer le terme de novlangue dans l'espace médiatique français est caractéristique des discours de la droite.
À l'intersection de l'analyse du discours et de la sociolinguistique, ce chapitre propose ainsi d'analyser l'emploi de 'novlangue' dans la presse française entre 1994 et 2024, au double prisme de la métaphore et de l'indexicalité. Ce chapitre vise ainsi à faire une double contribution : d'une part, il s'agira de comprendre les reconfigurations politiques de la qualification de novlangue ; d'autre part, il s'agira de proposer la notion de métaphore indexicale non seulement pour comprendre de quelle façon certaines métaphores sont employées pour indexer un sens social, mais plus largement pour qualifier les phénomènes d'attribution et de transfert de sens social.

Mots-clés : métaphore, indexicalité, novlangue, français, panique morale.

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Abstract

In the dystopic novel *1984,* 'novlangue' (Newspeak's translation in French) is the name of an artificial language created by the government in order to make impossible to think in any otherway. This idea of imposing a way of thinking through the control of language is nowadays commonly designated as 'novlangue', to the point that this is the very metaphor of it: «Using a given word X does to thought what novlangue does to the society Orwell imagined in *1984*».
That said, 'novlangue' is a term used to position rather than to designate. It is used about a neologism in order to transfer the «will to manipulate thought through language» feature to the person who used this neologism. Moreover, using the term is also a mean to take a specific stance in the ideological landscape, claiming for the «critic of dogmatism» feature, associated to Orwell's book. To this extent, 'novlangue' is a qualification of political otherness, and therefore of political self-positioning.
An analysis of 'novlangue' uses shows that its meaning remains stable while its indexicality reverse completely in the early 2010s. Nowadays, using the word 'novlangue' in the French media sphere characterises right-wing discourses.
At the crossroads of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, this chapter offers an analysis of the use of 'novlangue' in the French press from 1994 to 2024, through the double lens of metaphor and indexicality. The chapter aims thus to provide a double contribution: on one hand, to understand the political reconfigurations of the qualification of 'novlangue'; on the other hand, to coin the notion of indexical metaphor, not only to better understand how somemetaphors are used to index a social meaning, but also to better frame phenomena of attribution and transfer of social meaning.

Keywords: Metaphor, Indexicality, Newspeak, French, Moral Panic.

1. Introduction

Le lien entre métaphore et transformation sociale est richement exploré dans le roman de science-fiction de China Mieville, *Légationville*. Dans ce roman, les Arékians cohabitent avec des humains sur une planète aux confins de l'univers. Les Arékians ont pour particularité d'avoir la capacité de langage, mais réduite à sa dimension référentielle. Ils sont incapables de produire des métaphores, et donc de mentir, mais aussi plus généralement de dire ce qui n'est pas : le potentiel, le possible.
Mieville montre ainsi comment la force métaphorique est étroitement relié à l'imaginaire, au sens où le définit Castoriadis (1975) : ce qui rend possible la transformation sociale.
En effet, l'évolution dans le temps des sociétés dépend étroitement de la capacité à imaginer un monde autre que celui qui existe, à imaginer autre chose que l'existant, le *status quo*. Métaphore, imaginaire et transformation sociale sont donc profondément articulés. Partant de ce constat, je m'intéresserai dans ce chapitre à un usage socio-politique de la métaphore.
Je questionnerai plus particulièrement la possibilité de penser les métaphores comme indexicales, à partir de l'étude en corpus médiatique de la métaphore de la novlangue. Ce travail se situera à la croisée de la sociolinguistique et de l'analyse du discours. Je présenterai d'abord la notion d'indexicalité avant de donner une brève contextualisation de la novlangue. Je me concentrerai ensuite sur sa dimension métaphorique, puis sur sa dimension indexicale, avant de présenter des analyses en corpus témoignant d'un changement d'indexicalité qui plaide en faveur de la pertinence de l'articulation de ces deux notions. Je proposerai enfin une explication de ce changement.

2. Indexicalité

Issue de la sociolinguistique, la notion d'indexicalité, parfois aussi appelée sens social, désigne « la constellation de caractéristiques que les formes linguistiques véhiculent à propos de l'identité sociale des locuteurs » (Eckert 2008 : 464). Il s'agit également de la capacité des locuteurs à employer ces variables linguistiques, pour passer d'un style à l'autre.
Elle se manifeste donc en discours dans les choix linguistiques que font les acteurs *dans un contexte donné* et participe à produire les catégories sociales. Le concept a été développé pour penser les processus et les effets de la construction sociolinguistique des indices.
Or, ce sens social, comme tout élément de sens, demande un certain degré de stabilisation, de figement. Il est nécessaire que l'association d'une forme linguistique à une caractéristique sociale, idéologique ou stylistique soit conventionnalisée. Autrement dit, une forme linguistique indexe conventionnellement une (ou plusieurs) caractéristique sociale et transfère, sous certaines conditions, cette caractéristique à la personne qui emploie cette forme. Mais un index n'est pas un signe, au sens linguistique. L'indexicalité consiste en l'association entre un signe linguistique et un trait social. Peut-on dès lors parler de métaphore indexicale, au sens où certaines métaphores auraient pour fonction, ou du moins comme usage, d'indexer un sens social par leur emploi ?
Pour pouvoir discuter de cette question, il faut se situer à l'intersection de l'analyse du discours et de la sociolinguistique, comme nous y invite Blommaert (2007) qui souligne la richesse de la rencontre entre ces deux champs, intersection qui connait actuellement un beau développement à la faveur des approches socio-discursives.
Les mécanismes d'association d'une forme linguistique à une caractéristique sociale restent un objet de questionnement en sociolinguistique. Comment un trait linguistique est-il socialement conventionnalisé ? En proposant que cette association puisse être d'ordre métaphorique, cela pourrait constituer un apport pour la sociolinguistique.
Par ailleurs, s'interroger sur la possibilité de métaphores indexicales, qui transfèrent au locuteur des caractéristiques socio-énonciatives indexées par une forme linguistique, pourrait enrichir l'analyse de discours.
Ainsi, tout en me situant dans la même démarche que Jensen (2022) qui appelle à une meilleure prise en compte de l'indexicalité dans l'analyse des métaphores, je procèderai en sens inverse : j'observerai la dimension métaphorique des enjeux d'indexicalité. Il va de soi que l'enjeu est le même : relier théoriquement ces deux notions, aussi fondamentales l'une que l'autre pour l'étude du sens en contexte.

3. Novlangue

Je me concentrerai sur le cas de la novlangue, dans la mesure où elle contient à la fois une dimension indexicale et une dimension métaphorique.
La novlangue (traduction française de la *Newspeak,* proposée par Amélie Audiberti) est le nom donné à une langue imaginée dans le roman dystopique *1984* du socialiste Georges Orwell. Dans le roman, c'est une langue artificielle créée par le gouvernement et dont le but politique est « non seulement de fournir un mode d'expression aux idées générales et aux habitudes mentales des dévots de l'Angsoc, mais de rendre impossible tout autre mode de pensée » (Orwell 1949).
Il était entendu que

> lorsque la novlangue serait une fois pour toute adoptée et que l'ancilangue serait oubliée, une idée hérétique, c'est-à-dire une idée s'écartant des principes de l'Angsoc serait littéralement impensable, du moins *dans la mesure où la pensée dépend des mots.*[1]

On voit ici l'imaginaire linguistique d'Orwell : le monde et le langage entretiennent une relation de miroir, et on peut éliminer des choses ou des idées en éliminant le mot qui y renvoie. C'est une vision whorfienne de la langue dans laquelle 1) la pensée dépend des mots, mais également une vision du langage dans laquelle 2) les mots (et donc la pensée) sont contrôlables. Cette pensée est développée de manière explicite dans un court essai, *Politics and the English Language,* qu'Orwell publie quelques années plus tôt (1946).
L'analyse des politiques linguistiques nous montre bien que le contrôle du langage – bien qu'il soit un fantasme régulier et une tentative régulière des approches autoritaires – demeure difficile à mettre en œuvre de manière totale, du fait même de la nature équivoque, polysémique et non-référentielle du langage. C'est néanmoins cette idée de l'imposition de la pensée au moyen du contrôle du langage qui va passer dans l'usage courant de 'novlangue', au point d'en devenir la métaphore, construite (selon Perelman et Olbrecths-Tyteca 2008) sur l'analogie : « Employer le mot X fait à la pensée ce que la novlangue fait à la société imaginée dans le roman *1984* ».

3.1. La novlangue comme métaphore

À ce titre, 'la novlangue' est une métaphore d'un certain rapport du langage à la pensée (d'une certaine idéologie linguistique, pourrait-on dire) et/ou d'une certaine utilisation du langage. Plus spécifiquement, 'la novlangue' est une langue imaginée qui sert de métaphore au contrôle du langage. On entrevoit déjà la dimension indexicale de cette métaphore qui désigne une certaine utilisation du langage, nous y reviendrons.
Mais le cas de 'novlangue' constitue aussi un cas métaphorique intéressant en ce qu'il encapsule la tension entre créativité et figement, à trois niveaux: aussi bien dans son sens symbolique que dans son sens discursif et dans son sens social.

> Du point de vue symbolique, c'est une langue créée, imaginée – et non imaginaire comme le souligne bien Krieg-Planque (2012) – donc fruit de la *créativité* (de Georges Orwell comme de l'Angsoc, d'un point de vue polyphonique) dont l'objectif politique est de désamorcer toute réflexion critique (*figement).*
> Du point de vue discursif, la 'novlangue'qualifie les nouveaux mots eux-mêmes, ou nouvelles expressions (*créativité*) ayant pour principe de bloquer la pensée (*figement*).
> Du point de vue sociopolitique enfin, 'novlangue' est une désignation elle-même néologique (*créativité),* tout en présentant volontiers une structure *figée* dans ses usages non-littéraires, médiatiques ou politiques : 'novlangue' + adj. ou + de SN (*novlangue technico-étatique, novlangue hollywoodienne, novlangue des marchés financiers*, etc.). Elle devient alors elle-même prise dans des dynamiques phraséologiques de figement, et donc de cristallisation des idées sur le plan conceptuel.

On peut ainsi dire que la 'novlangue' transfère paradoxalement au *néologisme* le trait du *contrôle du langage*. À l'instar des slogans de *1984*, la nouveauté (linguistique) c'est le figement (de la pensée). Et c'est aussi bien les mots désignés par la novlangue que l'emploi même du terme 'novlangue' qui contiennent cette tension.

[1] Je souligne.

3.2. La novlangue comme index

Mais le sens de 'novlangue' reste peu défini au-delà de la définition qu'on en a donné plus haut. Cela est dû au fait que le terme ne désigne pas réellement des mots spécifiques.
Comme le dit Fassin (1994) à propos du *politiquement correct* : « La définition [en] est malheureusement devenu un genre impossible […]. Il ne s'agit pas de prétendre que la notion soit vide de sens ; bien au contraire, elle en regorge. On y met tout ce qu'on veut, ou plutôt tout ce qu'on ne veut pas. C'est le rebut de la pensée » (*Ibid.* : 34).
À ce titre, le mot 'novlangue' est un cas d'indexicalité intéressant car il questionne le rapport entre indexicalité et métaphore. En effet, 'novlangue' est un mot qui positionne plus que ce qu'il ne désigne. On emploie 'novlangue' à propos d'un néologisme dans le but de transférer la caractéristique « volonté de manipuler la pensée par le langage » à la personne qui a employé ce néologisme. En outre, dans un travail de l'ethos, on se signale soi-même comme occupant un positionnement spécifique dans l'espace idéologique, associant métonymiquement la caractéristique « critique du dogmatisme » associée à l'ouvrage d'Orwell à son propre positionnement. À ce titre, c'est un qualificatif d'*altérité politique* (Fassin 1994, Krieg-Planque 2012) : on positionne l'autre dans un espace idéologique, et du même coup on se positionne soi-même.
Dire que l'Autre parle la 'novlangue'ou des fragments de 'novlangue', ce n'est jamais décrire des fonctionnements linguistiques, c'est plutôt dénoncer les projets politiques portés par l'Autre. 'Novlangue' est toujours employé en termes disqualifiants : on ne rencontre aucun énoncé dans lequel un locuteur se félicite ou félicite quelqu'un d'avoir recours à la 'novlangue'. Il s'agit de dénoncer une prise de parole comme comportant une visée mensongère, manipulatrice, falsificatrice, trompeuse ou perverse.
On peut formuler cette idée en termes rhétoriques : en ce qu'elle « transfère le langage du domaine Ressource (métaphorique) vers le domaine Problème (le métaphorisé) » (Plantin 2016 : 385), la qualification de 'novlangue' transfère la ressource « manipulation, contrôle dogmatique » à l'élément métaphorisé, ici *l'emploi du mot qualifié de novlangue*, et par extension à l'intention du locuteur qui a employé ce mot.
Dans l'utilisation métaphorique de la 'novlangue', le thème (ou problème) ne concerne donc pas seulement le domaine référentiel, le champ désignationnel ou sémantique d'un mot en particulier mais sa dimension indexicale, qui va être métaphorisée, et sa dimension éthique, morale.

3.3. La novlangue, une métaphore indexicale ?

Ainsi la 'novlangue' n'est pas seulement une métaphore du point de vue de son domaine de désignation (le néologisme, si on le traite du point de vue discursif seul), mais également du point de vue de son indexicalité. Elle métaphorise le positionnement idéologique de qui l'emploie (dimension éthique, renvoyant à l'aspect symbolique) et de celui ou celle à propos de qui on l'emploie (dimension indexicale, renvoyant à l'aspect sociopolitique). En ce sens, la notion de *métaphore indexicale* permet de qualifier les phénomènes d'attribution et de transfert de sens social.
Plantin écrit que « l'analogie est une invitation à observer le Problème à travers la lunette de la Ressource ; la métaphorisation permet d'oublier la lunette » (2016 : 387). Qualifier une expression de 'novlangue' permet en effet de transférer une lecture politique sans déclarer un positionnement (*stance*) explicite, cet implicite reposant sur un préconstruit.

En effet, « la métaphore ne désigne pas par détour un référent préalablement constitué, mais elle fabrique son référent à travers le double geste de désignation et de signification » (Patiño-Lakatos 2012). En ce sens, parler de métaphore indexicale évoque la « fonction référentielle » de la métaphore de Ricoeur, telle qu'on peut l'appliquer au discours politique : « Des métaphores qui forgent en même temps un sujet et un monde – car le sujet et le monde se constituent réciproquement » (Patiño-Lakatos 2012).
Une lecture rhétorique de la métaphore indexicale nous conduit même, dans les pas de Françoise Douay, à penser une métaphore indexicale à trois corps : le monde, et deux sujets qui se le représentent différemment (Douay-Soublin 1994 : 21). Au-delà de sa fonction épistémique (comment l'homme se représente un monde) ou ontologique (comment la métaphore fabrique un monde), il s'agit d'une vision agonique de la métaphore, qui positionne soi et l'autre dans le monde, dans une visée politique.

4. Analyse de corpus

Qualifier un usage linguistique de 'novlangue' est donc un qualificatif d'altérité, et l'emploi de ce qualificatif indexe à son tour un positionnement politique. Mais quels sont ce positionnement et cette altérité ? L'indexicalité de 'novlangue' est particulièrement intéressante, car c'est un terme qui a changé d'indexicalité politique dans un temps assez resserré.
Comme le montrent Olivesi et Kergomard (2020), dans l'espace médiatique français, on trouve facilement des occurrences de 'novlangue' dans les titres de presse de droite comme de gauche. Des différences d'emplois apparaissent contextuellement, mais la qualification de 'novlangue' pour indexer l'usage d'un néologisme sur une position autoritaire ou dogmatique traverse l'ensemble du spectre politique.
Les médias de gauche se réfèrent généralement à la 'novlangue' dans le cadre d'une critique du capitalisme ou du discours entrepreneurial, par exemple :

> Le capitalisme financier, comme on l'appelle en novlangue, n'est qu'un stade du capitalisme livré à sa propre sauvagerie, adapté à notre époque [Anon].
> La novlangue des écoles de commerce nourrit l'abstraction du discours managérial [Giret].[2]

Héritier légitime de la position politique d'Orwell, le discours de gauche mobilise également plus largement la référence au roman *1984* pour condamner les pratiques de surveillance et les atteintes au droit à la vie privée à l'ère numérique (Krieg-Planque 2012).
Les références à la 'novlangue' dans les journaux et magazines d'information de droite sont, quant à elles, généralement utilisées comme synonyme de « politiquement correct » :

> Et puis, allez savoir pourquoi, mais probablement sous l'influence d'un certain puritanisme, la novlangue de Big Brother, imaginée par George Orwell en 1949, est apparue insidieusement non pas en 1984, mais en 2014 [le politiquement correct n'en était peut-être qu'un ersatz] [Chiflet].

On y qualifie la 'novlangue' de dominante ou de moderne :

> Comment ne pas régulariser les clandestins, devenus, par la magie de la novlangue dominante, des « sans-papiers » ou, mieux, des « migrants » ? [Anon 2003].
> Il est amusant de voir la novlangue moderne s'enrichir de nouveaux concepts, jour après jour.[3]

[2] J'emprunte ces exemples à Olivesi et Kergormard (2020) et les donne en français (ils sont traduits en anglais dans leur article).
[3] *Idem*.

Ces exemples montrent que le sens métaphorique de 'novlangue' est relativement stabilisé et réparti. Mais si l'on regarde la répartition des emplois dans le temps et selon la couleur politique des journaux, on voit apparaître des variations intéressantes.
J'ai mené une analyse des usages de 'novlangue' dans la presse française, à l'aide de la base de données Europress, depuis 1994, date de première occurrence.
Voici les résultats, selon la couleur politique des journaux (Figure 1) :

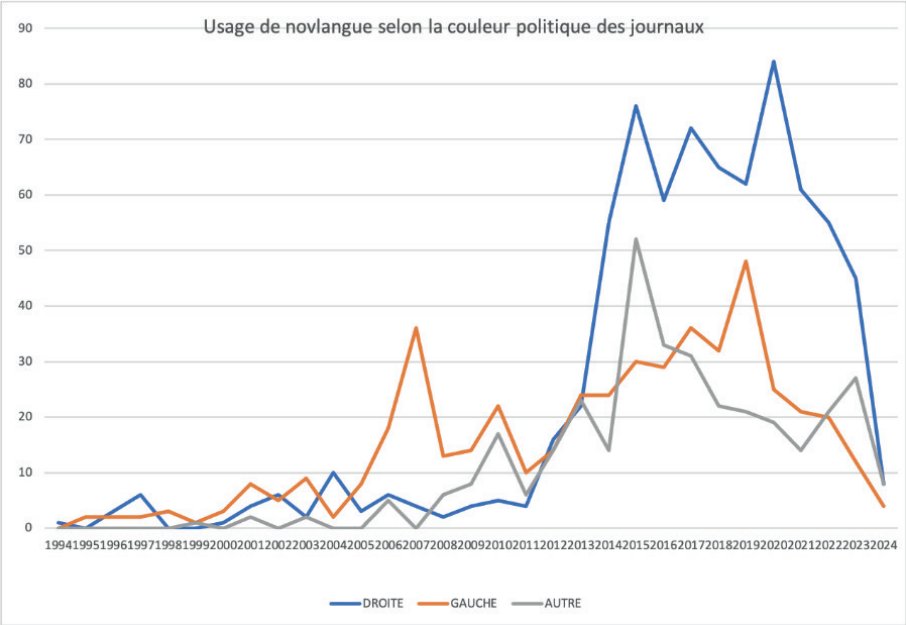


Fig. 1 : Usage de novlangue selon la couleur politique des journaux.

La courbe orange correspond aux emplois de 'novlangue' dans les journaux de gauche (*L'Humanité, Libération, Médiapart, L'Obs*, …). La courbe bleue représente les emplois dans les journaux de droite (*Le Point, Le Figaro, Valeurs Actuelle, Le Parisien*, *Marianne* …). En gris, les journaux sans ancrage politique marqué de la ligne éditoriale (*Le Monde, Ouest-France*, etc.) ou non-identifiés.
On voit que dans les années 1990 et surtout 2000, la 'novlangue' est un terme employé par la gauche, avec des occurrences du type:

- *novlangue du néolibéralisme* ;
- *novlangue technico-étatique* ;
- *novlangue hollywoodienne* ;
- *novlangue des marchés financiers*.

À partir des années 2010, la tendance s'inverse, et ce sont les journaux de droite qui se mettent à employer majoritairement l'expression (croisement de la courbe orange et de la courbe bleue). Il faut noter deux choses : 1) cette inversion se fait alors que la gauche ne cesse pas de l'employer, voire l'emploie de manière légèrement croissante, c'est donc un emploi *massif* de la presse de droite qui génère cette inversion (jusqu'à plus de 80 occurrences par an) ; 2) cette presse de droite l'emploie de manière *soudaine*. Ce caractère *soudain* et *massif* est caractéristique des paniques morales (Cohen [1972] 2002), dont nous reparlons plus bas.
L'analyse révèle donc que le sens métaphorique de 'novlangue'([imposition idéologique par l'usage de certains mots]), tout comme l'ethos qu'il permet de mettre en place [dénoncer l'imposition idéologique]) restent stables, tandis que son indexicalité ([couleur politique

conférée par cette dénonciation]) s'inverse complètement : d'un terme employé majoritairement par la gauche du spectre politique jusqu'en 2012, il va basculer à un terme très majoritairement (et massivement) employé dans la presse de droite, à partir de cette date-là. Aujourd'hui, employer le terme de 'novlangue' dans l'espace médiatique français est donc plus caractéristique des discours de la droite.
On peut donc dire qu'il y a simultanément stabilité de la métaphore et de ses enjeux éthiques et changement de polarité de son indexicalité sociopolitique.
Pour comprendre si ce changement d'indexicalité impliquait également un changement de référent (qui accuse-t-on d'utiliser la 'novlangue' ?), j'ai regardé plus en détail si la couleur politique du journal était corrélée à la couleur politique de celles et ceux que 'novlangue' désigne ou à qui elle est associée.
En d'autres termes, pour comprendre qui est l'Autre de la novlangue, j'ai regardé si le mot 'novlangue' apparaissait en même temps que le mot 'droite' ou 'gauche'dans les journaux, avec prise en charge énonciative ou non de ce qualificatif.
Voici les résultats (Figure 2) :

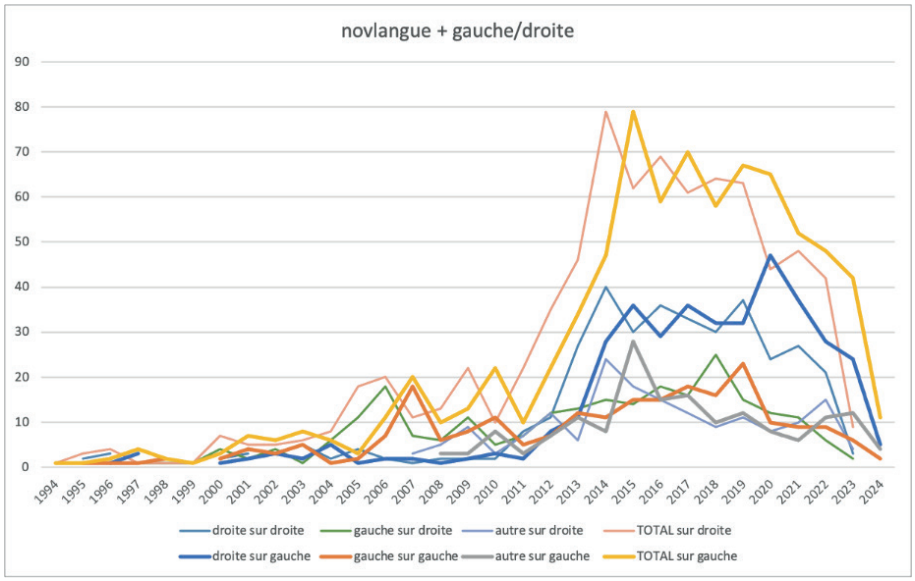


Fig. 2. : Novlangue + gauche/droite.

Les deux courbes jaunes montrent qu'on ne voit pas de différence significative entre l'emploi de 'novlangue' pour construire une altérité de droite ou de gauche. C'est-à-dire que même si ce sont massivement des journaux de droite qui emploient le terme, ils l'emploient autant pour qualifier des pratiques discursives de la droite que de la gauche, ce qui est assez étonnant vu que l'indexicalité, elle, a bien changé.
De même, au sein d'un courant politique donné (les deux courbes bleues d'une part, les courbes vertes et oranges d'autre part), on ne voit pas non plus de variation significative du référent qui est accusé d'employer la 'novlangue'. La gauche parle aussi bien de la gauche que de la droite. La droite parle aussi bien de la gauche que de la droite.
Pour nuancer ce résultat étonnant, il faut cependant prendre en compte qu'un certain nombre d'occurrences consistent en des reprises polyphoniques avec mise à distance énonciative, du type « ils disent que nous employons la novlangue » ou des métadiscours, du type « est-ce que l'emploi de X est de la novlangue ? ».
Mais dans tous les cas, le fait que la couleur politique de la personne accusée de pratiquer la 'novlangue' ne varie pas de manière significative entre les discours de gauche et les discours de droite, combiné au fait, vu plus haut, que le sens métaphorique soit stabilisé, permet

d'affirmer que ce qui évolue, ce n'est donc pas ce que le mot désigne, ni la métaphore elle-même, mais bien la couleur politique de qui l'emploie.
Recourir à la métaphore de la 'novlangue'est une pratique discursive de gauche jusqu'en 2012, date à laquelle cet emploi métaphorique change de couleur politique et transfère à son locuteur un positionnement politique à droite du paysage politique français.
Ces résultats plaident en faveur de la pertinence de la notion de métaphore indexicale pour saisir des dynamiques de changement de sens social. C'est bien l'indexicalité de la métaphore qui change, et non pas son sens, ni sa charge axiologique. La dimension métaphorique, quant à elle, permet cet double dynamique de stabilité du sens et de changement du sens social. Ainsi elle permet de maintenir la force politique du terme (et de l'accusation) en faisant oublier la lunette analogique et par là, la généalogie idéologique du terme.

5. La panique morale

D'un point de vue sociolinguistique, on peut enfin se demander comment et pourquoi se produit un tel changement d'indexicalité. En effet, l'aspect le plus frappant de ces données est peut-être la dimension soudaine et massive de la bascule indexicale.
Comme évoqué plus haut, ce phénomène évoque les paniques morales. Selon Stanley Cohen, qui forge la notion, les paniques morales correspondent à :

> Une situation, un évènement, un groupe ou un individu [qui] émerge pour être identifié comme une menace aux valeurs et aux intérêts de la société. Sa nature est présentée de manière caricaturale et stéréotypée par les médias de masse, des digues morales sont érigées par des éditorialistes, les autorités religieuses, les politiques, des experts, etc. (Cohen 2002 : 1).

Stuart Hall, spécialiste de la contre-culture, a par ailleurs démontré que ces paniques morales sont rarement accidentelles. Certains acteurs politiques tentent d'élaborer des paniques morales, consciemment et volontairement, dans le but politique à la fois de renforcer et justifier des dispositifs de contrôle social et de détourner l'attention ou faire oublier certains enjeux ou problèmes importants. L'amplification médiatique de la menace a alors des effets sur les institutions officielles et peut même servir à justifier une action politique, voir législative (1978). Cela a par exemple été le cas du wokisme aux États-Unis ou de l'écriture inclusive en France (Mahoudeau 2022, Abbou 2023).
Or, les politologues et les analystes du discours qui travaillent sur les paniques morales soulignent l'importance de la massification des occurrences sur des temps resserrés, comme produisant un effet de martèlement, de panique et, conséquemment de blocage de la pensée critique (Klemperer 1947, Cohen 1972, Hall 1978, Angenot 1982, Dupuis-Deri 2022, Smyrnaios & Ratinaud 2023, et plus spécifiquement sur 'novlangue' Olivesi & Kergomard 2020).
Le philologue allemand Victor Klemperer (1947), dans son analyse du discours nazi, en souligne par exemple le caractère formellement monotone et répétitif. L'esthétique de la répétition et l'efficace du martèlement se produit notamment dans certaines récurrences lexicales et dans la prolifération de slogans.
Mais la massification soudaine des occurrences ne suffit pas à voir dans l'usage de 'novlangue' une panique morale. Un autre aspect fondamental concerne la dimension langagière de la panique morale. En effet, on a vu que, chez Orwell comme chez les personnes contemporaines qui reprennent l'expression 'novlangue', cet emploi s'appuie sur une idéologie linguistique spécifique : la pensée est tout entière conditionnée par les limites du langage. L'implicite de

cette idéologie est que le langage serait univoque : dans un jeu de miroirs, ce que l'un dit, l'autre le pense.
Or, l'une des plus grandes paniques morales des dernières décennies partage aussi cette obsession pour le langage, il s'agit de la panique morale du 'politiquement correct'. Comme le démontre Dupuis-Deri (2022), le mythe du politiquement correct est une puissante théorie du complot, qui repose sur l'idée que des groupes d'individus agiraient et contrôleraient secrètement le langage pour imposer un agenda totalitaire servant leurs intérêts propres. Dans les premières analyses du phénomène en 1995, Wilson montre que le politiquement correct repose principalement sur 4 mythes :

- le culte de la culture occidentale notamment à travers l'idée des 'classiques';
- le mythe de la rectitude sexuelle : désormais les féministes seraient la majorité normative imposant un rapport purement contractuel à la sexualité ;
- le mythe de la discrimination inversé : les majorités seraient désormais minoritaires : racisme anti-blanc, masculinisme, etc.;
- le mythe des éléments de langage : des façons de parler seraient imposées de manière à contraindre la pensée ou afin de faire taire quiconque ne s'aligne pas sur une position libérale.

On retrouve dans ce dernier mythe le champ métaphorique de la 'novlangue'. L'image suivante, repérée en capture d'écran sur twitter par Mahoudeau, est prise pendant la pandémie du COVID. Elle montre une personne portant un masque avec la mention « censuré », tout en siégeant dans une des chambres parlementaires états-unienne.

Il s'agit ici de se mettre en scène comme étant censuré. Plus précisément, il s'agit de prendre la parole pour dire que l'on est censuré, dans un contexte où la personne est devant un micro au sein d'une institution législative. Le message vise à laisser entendre que certains discours seraient empêchés alors que d'autres seraient imposés, rejoignant les discours sur le contrôle de la parole. Une photo ne permet pas de préjuger des possibilités effectives qu'à cette personne de se faire entendre, mais tout le dispositif que l'on voit sur l'image indique que cette personne a accès à la parole, et qui plus est, à une parole dans un cadre institutionnel et légitime. Se dire 'censuré' n'indique ainsi pas la possibilité ou non de parler, mais indique la couleur politique de cette femme qui invoque ici le quatrième mythe des éléments de langage.



Fig. 3 : Censuré.

À ce titre, la panique morale du ‘politiquement correct’ et de la ‘novlangue’ ne sont pas sans évoquer les discours pamphlétaires décrits par Marc Angenot (1982 : 342) :

> Le pamphlétaire part d’un scandale qui doit être *absolument dénoncé*. Dans un monde dominé par l’imposture, il lui faut révéler le renversement et la dégradation des valeurs. Il s’agit de dénoncer la dégénérescence et la barbarie, la perte de l’ordre. Le pamphlétaire trouve une légitimité dans son rapport à une vérité enfouie et évidente.

Le langage est alors un enjeu crucial, et la ‘novlangue ’incarne la dimension langagière de cette imposture.
Voici un exemple d’une telle posture, dans le *Dictionnaire de novlangue* (2009) de Le Gallou, Jean-Yves, Geoffroy Michel et Polemia :

> Faire prendre aux Français des vessies pour des lanternes et camoufler la réalité par le recours à des mots trompeurs, subliminaux ou sidérants. Rééduquer politiquement les locuteurs dans une logique “antisexiste”, “antiraciste”, “antiphobies”, cosmopolite et droits-de-l’hommiste. Expurger la langue en rendant certains mots tabous, pour que l'expression des “mauvaises pensées” devienne impossible.

Il ne s’agit donc pas seulement de se positionner et de positionner l’autre et ses mots ou son rapport au langage. De manière extrêmement paradoxale, la circulation massive sur une courte période de temps de l’expression ‘novlangue’ pour qualifier son ennemi politique participe ainsi aux effets de blocage ou de distorsion de la capacité critique, tout en dénonçant précisément ce blocage.

6. Conclusion

À partir du cas de ‘novlangue’, on peut donc penser la métaphore indexicale comme la mobilisation d’un phore linguistique pour modifier un thème énonciatif, idéologique ou social. Cette proposition peut constituer un apport à la sociolinguistique comme à l’analyse du discours pour penser les phénomènes de transfert de sens social.
Aujourd’hui, employer le terme ‘novlangue’ indexe un locuteur à la droite de l’échiquier politique français, peu importe à propos de qui ou de quoi ce terme est employé. La métaphore elle-même ne change pas (‘novlangue’ désigne le « contrôle totalitaire de la pensée par le langage »), sa force pragmatique non plus (‘novlangue’ est employé pour « dénoncer ce contrôle ») mais, dans l’imaginaire de celui qui l’emploie, la couleur de ce contrôle totalitaire change, et dans le réel de l’énonciation la couleur politique de qui mobilise l’expression change également.
Qualifier de ‘novlangue’ un emprunt ou un néologisme est alors un emploi métaphorique dans la mesure où il transfère à ce terme à la fois une connotation (la volonté perverse de contrôler la pensée de l’autre) qui désigne l’intention de l’énonciation du néologisme, mais il transfère également un sens social à l’énonciateur qui qualifie de ‘novlangue’ ce terme.
Si l’on rend visible les mises en équivalence, on peut dire que « employer ce (nouveau) mot » revient à « faire de la novlangue », c’est-à-dire « tenter de contrôler la pensée par le contrôle du langage et l’usage de néologismes ».
En bref : « Employer ce nouveau mot fait à la pensée ce que la novlangue fait à la société imaginée dans le roman *1984* ».
Mais grâce à la fusion opérée par la métaphore, la similitude entre thème et phore est présentée comme une donnée et non comme une suggestion. Dans ce cas, c’est donc une métaphore argumentative, selon la définition de Perelman et Olbrechts-Tyteca, dans la mesure où elle nécessite l’adhésion de l’auditeur (2008 : 229).

À partir de ce cas, peut-on penser plus largement que l'indexicalité repose sur une dynamique métaphorique ? L'association stabilisée entre une *persona* ou un positionnement et une forme linguistique peut-elle être considérée comme une métaphore transférant des caractéristiques attachées au mot (« qualification de l'autre ») au locuteur (par exemple « de droite ») ?
Et que se passe-t-il lorsque cette forme linguistique est elle-même une métaphore ? Le cas de 'novlangue', on l'a vu, peut fonctionner pour tout néologisme dont on soupçonne un emploi manipulateur et réducteur de la pensée.
L'enchâssement de ce fonctionnement métaphorique et de ce fonctionnement indexical permet de nous interroger sur la zone frontière entre analyse du discours et sociolinguistique. Et la dimension indexicale de la métaphore permet de révéler son effet politique en tant que panique morale.

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Chapter 9.
Les métaphores conceptuelles dans le discours politique marocain

Conceptual Metaphors in Moroccan Political Discourse

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Résumé

L'objectif de ce travail est l'analyse des métaphores dans le discours politique marocain à partir d'un corpus constitué essentiellement d'allocutions, déclarations et programmes des partis politiques marocains à obédiences idéologiques divergentes. Ainsi, il sera question de relever les domaines métaphoriques les plus utilisés dans notre corpus afin d'étudier la manière dont les leaders politiques utilisent cette figure pour façonner et influencer l'opinion publique.
Nous nous basons sur les travaux de Lakoff et Johnson (1980) qui considèrent les métaphores comme des structures mentales influençant notre manière de penser et de comprendre le monde.

Mots clés : métaphore conceptuelle, discours politique, Maroque, français.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze metaphors in Moroccan political discourse using a corpus consisting primarily of speeches, declarations, and programs from Moroccan political parties with divergent ideological orientations. Specifically, it will identify the most frequently used metaphorical domains in our corpus in order to study how political leaders employ this figure of speech to shape and influence public opinion.
Our analysis draws on the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who consider metaphors as mental structures that influence how we think and understand the world.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, political discourse, Morocco, French language.

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1. Introduction

Le présent travail se veut une étude des métaphores les plus usuelles dans le discours politique marocain. Pour ce faire, nous nous appuierons sur un corpus tiré des déclarations
et programmes des principaux partis politiques marocains à obédiences idéologiques divergentes. Notre objectif principal est de dégager les domaines métaphoriques les plus sollicités afin d'étudier les valeurs qu'ils véhiculent. Il serait donc question de relever, en premier lieu, les différentes métaphores dans le but de les soumettre, en second lieu, à une analyse selon les domaines où elles s'inscrivent pour passer, en troisième lieu, à discuter les valeurs qu'elles véhiculent.
Autrement dit, cette étude se propose d'analyser les valeurs véhiculées par les métaphores conceptuelles dans le discours politique marocain contemporain. Si l'identification des métaphores les plus fréquemment employées constitue une étape préalable nécessaire, l'enjeu principal de la recherche réside dans l'examen des fonctions discursives et idéologiques de ces métaphores. Il s'agit de comprendre comment les différentes formations politiques mobilisent des domaines métaphoriques spécifiques pour construire leurs représentations du monde social, légitimer leurs positions ou disqualifier leurs adversaires. La problématique centrale porte ainsi sur la manière dont les métaphores conceptuelles participent à la structuration du discours politique et à la transmission de valeurs, en fonction des orientations idéologiques des partis.
Notre cadre théorique s'appuiera, principalement, sur les travaux de la sémantique cognitive initiée par les travaux de Lakoff et Johnson qui affirment que les métaphores ne sont pas une affaire de mots mais elles font partie de nos pensées. Nous essaierons donc de montrer que le discours politique marocain est émaillé des expressions métaphoriques qui relèvent des domaines variés à portée argumentative et persuasive.

2. La Métaphore : Essai de définition

Nombreuses sont les définitions qui ont été attribuées à la métaphore. En effet, la manière dont cette figure est théorisée dépend largement de l'approche méthodologique ou disciplinaire adoptée, ce qui influence directement l'interprétation qu'en proposent les chercheurs. Ainsi, pour la rhétorique antique, la métaphore est considérée comme une figure d'ornement et d'embellissement fondée, essentiellement, sur l'analogie.
Dans le *Dictionnaire de linguistique et des sciences du langage* dirigé par Dubois *et al.* (2012), la métaphore est définie comme une figure de signification qui consiste à transférer le sens propre d'un mot à un autre, en raison d'une relation d'analogie ou de ressemblance implicite. Elle repose en particulier sur un mécanisme de substitution sémantique, où un terme concret ou humain est remplacé par un terme abstrait ou non humain, sans l'intermédiaire explicite d'un comparant. Ce procédé permet de conférer au discours une dimension figurée, enrichissant ainsi la signification des énoncés.
Grâce à cette définition, Dubois *et al*. (*Ibid*.) souligne que la métaphore n'est pas seulement un ornement stylistique, mais un outil fondamental de la pensée et du langage, opérant une transposition cognitive qui structure la perception et l'expression des idées. Cette approche s'inscrit dans une perspective linguistique et cognitive, où la métaphore est perçue comme un processus dynamique de construction du sens, influençant la manière dont les individus conceptualisent et communiquent le monde qui les entoure.
Par ailleurs, Dumarsais, dans son traité, l'a définie comme suit :

> Une figure par laquelle on transporte pour ainsi dire, la signification propre d'un mot à une autre signification propre d'un mot qui ne lui convient qu'en vertu d'une comparaison qui est dans l'esprit (Dumarsais 1988 : 4).

Il est à signaler que ces définitions insistent sur la relation d'analogie et de transfert de sens à partir d'un premier référent vers une nouvelle signification manifestée par un rapprochement entre les deux entités.
Pour Jakobson (1973 : 22),

> Les métaphores et les métonymies sont les deux modes essentiels du moyen de communication. Les métaphores ne sont pas uniquement des mots. Ce sont des concepts sur lesquels, en théorie, et souvent en pratique, on agit. En tant que telles, elles définissent de manière significative ce que l'on considère comme la « réalité ».

Par la suite, dans la perspective cognitiviste, Lakoff et Johnson (1985 [1980]) affirment que

> La métaphore est perçue comme caractéristique du langage, comme concernant les mots plutôt que la pensée ou l'action. […] Nous nous sommes aperçus au contraire que la métaphore est partout présente dans la vie de tous les jours, non seulement dans le langage, mais dans la pensée et l'action (*Ibid.* : 14).

Les deux auteurs soulignent, également, que

> La métaphore n'est pas uniquement une figure de style linguistique, mais un mécanisme fondamental de la pensée. Elle reflète la structure même du système conceptuel humain, qui fonctionne en grande partie de manière métaphorique (*Ibid.*).

Il est évident, donc, que l'approche de Johnson et Lakoff a pris en compte la perspective cognitive qui postule que les métaphores ne s'observent pas uniquement au niveau du langage; mais se manifestent, essentiellement, « dans la pensée de l'action ».
Ce modèle a engendré ce que les deux chercheurs ont nommé la métaphore conceptuelle qui se détermine par le biais du recours à deux domaines : le premier est considéré comme source alors que le second est appelé « domaine but ». La relation entre les deux domaines ainsi que les critères de leur identification ont été établis par les deux chercheurs. Dans ce sens, Oliveira (2005) a souligné que

> Les idées progressistes ont le relevéle statut de la métaphore dans la mesure où nous ne pouvons plus regarder celle-ci comme un trope superflu à valeur ornementale mais bien comme un outil cognitif. Les sciences cognitives ont dégagé un certain nombre de concepts clés pour expliquer nos mécanismes de raisonnement (*Ibid*. : 3).

Il apparaît donc que la définition de la métaphore reste sujette à débat, aucun consensus ne s'étant dégagé parmi les spécialistes quant à une définition universellement admise. En ce qui nous concerne, nous suivrons la lignée de Johnson et Lakoff qui considèrent la métaphore conceptuelle comme un processus par lequel une structure conceptuelle (le domaine source) est utilisée pour comprendre une autre structure (le domaine cible).
Notre objectif dans ce travail, est de repérer les métaphores conceptuelles dans notre corpus, en l'occurrence, le discours politique marocain afin d'identifier les deux domaines, et de tenter d'élucider les valeurs qu'elles essaient de véhiculer.

3. La scène politique au Maroc : un aperçu général

Au Maroc, le multipartisme est une caractéristique essentielle de la vie politique nationale étant donné que le nombre de formations politiques est très élevé donnant ainsi, un paysage politique diversifié et, par conséquent, un discours politique varié tenant en compte plusieurs variables telles que les appartenances idéologiques de chaque formation en plus de sa position sur l'échiquier politique en tant que parti de la coalition gouvernementale ou de l'opposition. Ainsi, selon les dernières élections de 2021, c'est le Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI) qui dirige la coalition gouvernementale succédant au gouvernement dirigé par le Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD).
À partir de ces données, nous pouvons dire que le discours politique marocain puise ses sources de plusieurs fondements et conceptions religieuses et idéologiques à travers lesquels l'acteur politique cherche sa légitimité auprès des citoyens.
C'est un discours d'influence selon Rodolphe Ghiglione (1989) dont « le but est d'agir sur l'autre pour le faire agir, le faire penser, le faire croire, etc. » (*Ibid.* : 9).
Ainsi, afin d'influencer l'auditoire, il est important de recourir à des stratégies discursives pertinentes. Autrement dit, l'éloquence de l'acteur politique dépend, en grande partie, de son maniement des figures rhétoriques dont la métaphore est une composante essentielle.

3.1. La métaphore dans le discours politique marocain

Nombreuses sont les études qui ont traité de la question de l'usage des métaphores dans le discours politique. En effet, au-delà de sa fonction ornementale, cette figure peut avoir d'autres fonctions et valeurs, ce qui donnerait à l'acteur politique plus de possibilités afin de communiquer efficacement auprès des citoyens et, par conséquent, il pourrait les convaincre à adopter ses positions et ses points de vue.
Dans ce qui suit, nous essaierons, d'abord, de repérer quelques métaphores utilisées dans notre corpus, en l'occurrence, le discours politique marocain, prononcé par des personnalités représentant les principales forces politiques nationales et qui adoptent des affinités idéologiques divergentes, afin de montrer que l'usage de cette figure n'est pas restreint à une force particulière. Par la suite, notre tâche se résumera dans la classification de ces métaphores selon les domaines qu'elles représentent et enfin, nous passerons à l'analyse des résultats obtenus et surtout aux valeurs que ces métaphores véhiculent dans notre corpus.

3.2. Présentation du corpus

Notre corpus sera extrait des allocutions, interviews ou programmes de différents partis politiques marocains à obédiences idéologiques divergentes.
Ainsi, nous essaierons, dans la mesure du possible, de repérer des exemples de certaines occurrences métaphoriques des partis représentant toutes les sphères idéologiques possibles afin de voir l'impact de la composante idéologique sur la composante discursive.
Examinons les exemples suivants :

- « La politique, c'est comme un ring de boxe, on tape, mais il arrive parfois de prendre des coups et il faut savoir les encaisser » (Abdelilah Benkirane, 2015) ;

- « Il nous faut agir avec un double souci, qui est d'apporter des solutions aux Marocains, tout en veillant à nos équilibres macroéconomiques », a-t-il soutenu, ajoutant que « l'action de l'Exécutif d'aujourd'hui doit atténuer l'onde de choc sans laisser un héritage difficile aux générations futures » (Leader du RNI Aziz Akhenouch, Aujourd'hui le Maroc, 6 JANVIER 2023) ;
- « Ce que nous avons réalisé est le fruit d'un travail collectif avec le bureau politique (…) Tariqsalam n'était pas un lièvre de scrutin. Il était convaincu de sa candidature et il a exercé son droit » (Driss Lachgar, leader de l'USFP, dans un entretien avec Médias 24, 5 novembre 2022) ;
- « La critique des partis c'est le sport où excellent les institutions officielles du pays, les médias et surtout les télés publiques. Pendant cinq ans, une guerre est déclarée contre les partis dans les médias officiels » Abdellatif ouahbi, leader du PAM (Médias 24, 6 septembre 2022) ;
- « L'Istiqlal est le vieux parti historique. C'est un géant de l'histoire. Un repère de la vie du Maroc. Il ne peut être la succursale d'aucun autre parti » (Nizar Baraka, chef du parti de l'Istiqlal, Médias 24,10 Avril 2021) ;
- « Le parti de l'Istiqlal est affecté par une léthargie qui a grandement impacté le climat général à l'intérieur de cette formation, et a réduit la communication entre la direction et les bases » (Nizar Baraka, Le 360.ma, 13/02/2024) ;
- « Cette question de l'arabisation nourrit tous les fantasmes et réveille de vieux démons…» (Nizar Baraka, 22 février 2019) ;
- « À mi-parcours de son mandat, ce gouvernement est appelé à prendre les mesures nécessaires et s'armer des législatives pour assainir la vie politique pour que les institutions élues ne soient pas des otages de lobbies corrompus » (Abdelilah Benkirane, 2015) ;
- « J'ai été élu au 17ème congrès de l'Istiqlal (…), Heureusement, pendant les quatre ans de mon mandat, on a rectifié le tir en donnant plus d'importance à la pensée » (Nizar Baraka, Interviewé par le Journal, Médias 24, 5 juillet 2021) ;
- « On ne peut pas. C'est le plus grand meeting tenu au Maroc durant cette campagne. Ceci est un peuple. le PJD est le fils du peuple » (A. Benkirane, leader du PJD, Médias 24,3 septembre 2015) ;
- « Celui qui vous vole un objet ne vous vole qu'un simple objet. Mais celui qui achète des voix vous vole votre pays, votre école, vos droits et ceux de vos enfants » (A. Benkirane, leader du PJD, Médias 24,3 Septembre 2015) ;
- « Mon ambition donne un avant-goût de la bataille féroce qui se jouera dans trois ans. Mais pour l'heure, la priorité est d'avoir un gouvernement qui fonctionne » (Déclaration A. Akhennouch, leader du RNI, Jeune Afrique, 26 Février 2018) ;
- « La critique des partis, c'est le sport où excellent les institutions officielles du pays, les médias, et surtout les télés publiques. Pendant cinq ans, une guerre est déclarée contre les partis dans les médias officiels. Or, les partis sont une composante de l'état. Si on ne comprend pas cela, on va affaiblir l'état » (Abdellatif Ouahbi, S. G du PAM. Médias 24,9 juin 2021) ;
- « Tariq Salam n'était pas un lièvre de scrutin. Il était convaincu de sa candidature et il a exercé son droit. Malheureusement, certaines personnes prennent à la légère les noms qui ne sont pas consacrés par les médias » (Driss Lachgar, S.G de l'USFP, Médias 24, 3 Février 2022).

3.3. Analyse du corpus

Une première analyse de notre corpus nous permet de relever différents domaines métaphoriques. En effet, en adoptant l'approche que nous avons choisie, en l'occurrence celle de Lakoff et Johnson, selon laquelle nous sommes en présence d'un système conceptuel métaphorique qui nous permet d'appréhender notre réalité, nous considérons que le langage politique ne se limite pas à un simple reflet de cette réalité, mais contribue activement à la construire et à la modeler par des métaphores structurantes. En fait, ces dernières jouent un rôle central dans la manière dont les citoyens perçoivent les enjeux politiques, les relations de

pouvoir, et les dynamiques sociales, en rendant intelligibles des concepts abstraits par des images plus ancrées dans l'expérience quotidienne.
Les deux chercheurs ajoutent que la métaphore n'est pas un phénomène simplement linguistique ; mais elle est inhérente à notre pensée. Dans cette perspective, les acteurs politiques, conscients du pouvoir que cette figure leur attribue, n'hésitent pas à en faire usage dans leurs allocutions et interviews.
En effet, il est à souligner que notre corpus englobe les domaines suivants comme en témoignent les énoncés ci-dessus.
En ce qui concerne le domaine de la guerre, il s'agit d'une métaphore très sollicitée dans ce type de discours étant donné que l'arène politique est souvent définie comme un champ de bataille où l'on essaie de faire valoriser ses idées et points de vue aux dépens des autres.
Les énoncés métaphoriques qui relèvent de ce domaine se manifestent comme suit :

> À mi-parcours de son mandat, ce gouvernement est appelé à prendre les mesures nécessaires et s'armer des législatives pour assainir la vie politique pour que les institutions élues ne soient pas des otages de lobbies corrompus.

Dans cet énoncé, les expressions métaphoriques empruntées du domaine militaire qui envisagent les élections comme des armes, des outils de défense ou d'attaque cherchent à montrer que la politique est, effectivement, un champ de bataille où les élections deviennent des instruments de lutte pour rétablir l'ordre.

> J'ai été élu au 17ème congrès de l'Istiqlal (…). Heureusement, pendant les quatre ans de mon mandat, on a rectifié le tir en donnant plus d'importance à la pensée (Nizar Baraka, Interviewé par le Journal, Médias 24, 5 juillet 2021).

Cette métaphore « rectifier le tir » empruntée du domaine de la guerre, veut créer une image dynamique, celle d'un acteur politique lucide et perspicace qui a la capacité de reconnaître ses erreurs passées et d'y remédier. Le but recherché est de donner une impression de rigueur, de prise de conscience et de correction constructive.

> Mon ambition donne un avant-goût de la bataille féroce qui se jouera dans trois ans. Mais pour l'heure, la priorité est d'avoir un gouvernement qui fonctionne (Déclaration A. Akhennouch, leader du RNI, Jeune Afrique, 26 Février 2018).

Par le biais de cette métaphore guerrière « bataille féroce », le locuteur cherche un effet de dramatisation de la réalité politique en la représentant comme une scène de guerre. Le leader du RNI annonce sa détermination et cherche à montrer qu'il est un leadership capable de gérer les priorités en tant que combattant ambitieux pour l'avenir et conscient des priorités du présent.
L'énoncé « Pendant cinq ans, une guerre est déclarée contre les partis dans les médias officiels » est un exemple montrant qu'il y a un conflit entre les médias officiels et les partis politiques qui subissent une attaque systématique et agressive dans le but de les affaiblir. Le secrétaire général du PAM dénonce cette dérive autoritaire et essaie d'attirer l'attention du citoyen sur la manipulation possible de l'opinion publique.
Ainsi, les exemples cités confirment l'idée selon laquelle le recours à cette métaphore guerrière dans le discours politique émane du fait que les acteurs politiques veulent donner à leurs propos une résonnance plus forte que d'ordinaire. Dans cette perspective, Alain Mons (1992) explique l'usage de la métaphore par : « la capacité à déplacer le sens, à le cristalliser par une image forte, à passer par de l'Autre pour signifier le Même, à poétiser les vérités comme des énigmes » (*Ibid.* : 23).

C'est pour cette raison que les expressions telles que « S'armer des législatives », « otages » et « rectifié le tir », « bataille féroce » et « une guerre » ont été utilisés par les responsables politiques marocains afin d'impressionner le récepteur et de montrer l'importance des enjeux politiques.

En effet, l'usage de ces métaphores par les acteurs politiques, compte tenu de leurs appartenances idéologiques, émane du fait que cette figure possède plusieurs fonctions et participe d'une manière efficace à l'élévation ou à la dévalorisation, à l'attaque d'un adversaire d'une façon subtile ou encore à la valorisation de ses exploits. Autrement dit, la métaphore, selon l'expression de Ch. Perelman (1977 : 138) propose « une restructuration du réel ».

Dans le même ordre d'idées, G. Gauthier (1994 : 135) souligne que « la métaphore guerrière est manifestement un constituant et une illustration de la communication politique ». Cela corrobore l'idée que nous avons soulevée qui indique que la plupart des politiciens usent de ces métaphores guerrières dans leurs allocutions dans l'objectif de montrer qu'ils doivent être mobilisés contre leurs adversaires sur l'arène politique.

En ce qui concerne le domaine du sport, défini comme un ensemble d'exercices physiques se présentant sous forme de jeux individuels ou collectifs, donnant généralement lieu à compétition, pratiqués en observant certaines règles précises, nous pouvons observer la métaphore sportive qui est omniprésente dans les déclarations des politiciens marocains étant donné que la compétition entre acteurs politiques représente un enjeu important dans la vie politique.

Ainsi, le point commun entre les deux domaines, en l'occurrence, le sport et la politique se manifeste par la concurrence entre deux ou plusieurs camps qui cherchent à remporter une compétition donnée durant une période déterminée. D'ailleurs, Charaudeau (2005 : 246) a défini le discours politique comme « un jeu de masques auquel nous participons tous, élites et peuples, et qui nous lie par un contrat de solidarité réciproque ».

En effet, l'examen de notre corpus révèle le recours à ces métaphores empruntées du domaine de sport comme le montrent ces exemples.

Par exemple, si nous observons l'énoncé « la politique, c'est comme un ring de boxe, on tape, mais il arrive parfois de prendre des coups et il faut savoir les encaisser », nous pouvons affirmer que les expressions métaphoriques sportives soulignent la dimension conflictuelle de la scène politique insistant sur la nécessité d'être offensif et combattif. En effet, le fait d'évoquer la boxe est significatif dans la mesure où ce sport est réputé pour son intensité et sa dureté. Le locuteur cherche, donc, à mettre en relief la violence symbolique du monde politique.

Voyons un autre énoncé : « Le PAM est aujourd'hui le champion de la récupération des élus transhumants. Ils préférèrent jouer seuls ». Dans cette phrase, le locuteur cherche à attaquer son principal rival politique (le PAM) en utilisant des métaphores empruntées du domaine sportif. En effet, l'expression « jouer seuls » indique que cette formation choisit des bénéfices et intérêts personnels au lieu de se soumettre au collectivisme et la solidarité du groupe.

Observons :

> (…) Tariq Salam n'était pas un lièvre de scrutin. Il était convaincu de sa candidature et il a exercé son droit. Malheureusement, certaines personnes prennent à la légère les noms qui ne sont pas consacrés par les médias.

Le terme « lièvre » est souvent utilisé dans l'athlétisme pour désigner un coureur chargé de favoriser la performance d'un autre athlète qui a l'ambition de battre un record. Dans cette métaphore, le secrétaire général de l'union des forces populaires réfute les attaques de ses opposants qui avaient déclaré que sa victoire était jouée d'avance.

Ainsi, l'emploi des expressions métaphoriques relatives au domaine du sport peut être expliqué par la popularité dont jouissent les activités sportives auprès des récepteurs. En effet, la politique est souvent rattachée à la compétition et au jeu, ce qui donne aux acteurs politiques la possibilité d'exprimer leurs positions et avis à l'aide d'un langage emprunté d'un domaine qui a le pouvoir de toucher un grand public.
En effet, un examen plus attentif de nos exemples nous permet de constater que la politique est associée à la boxe, discipline de combat par excellence, qui oppose deux adversaires ayant recours à la violence physique. De même, dans l'énoncé suivant, il est question d'une attaque dévalorisante à l'encontre d'un parti rival qualifié d'une manière ironique d'un champion dans le domaine de la récupération des élus des autres formations.
Pour le domaine de la médecine, nous pouvons constater plusieurs énoncés :

> « C'est donc la fin du consensus qui a toujours handicapé le rendement politique du parti (…) » ; « Nous sommes face à un cancer répugnant à tout acte thérapeutique en dehors de l'éradication. (…) sur la base d'une vision permettant de diagnostiquer la réalité d'une manière objective et d'agir en conséquence » ; « Le parti de l'Istiqlal est affecté par une léthargie qui a grandement impacté le climat général à l'intérieur de cette formation ».

En effet, il appert que les acteurs politiques utilisent souvent ce type de métaphores afin de montrer leur capacité à se présenter comme des détenteurs de solutions miracles vis à vis des problèmes causés par leurs concurrents des autres formations politiques. En effet, les termes tirés du domaine de la médecine ont souvent une connotation négative (handicapé, cancer, léthargie…), ce qui leur permet de faire valoir leurs statuts et de montrer leurs compétences quant aux solutions proposées.
Nous avons constaté la présence de certaines métaphores concernant d'autres domaines déjà soulevés. Ainsi, notre corpus regroupe des métaphores qui relèvent d'autres domaines tels que le domaine du théâtre ou encore de la météo.
Ainsi, des énoncés tels que :

> Si des problèmes existent au R.N.I., pourquoi n'ont-ils pas tiré la sonnette d'alarme depuis 2004 ? On a assisté ces derniers mois à un scénario de série B, avec une mise en scène laborieuse, mais avec de grands moyens, autour d'un quarteron de comédiens et une cohorte de figurants intermittents. Le clou de cette représentation, au sens théâtral du terme, a été le show du 7 octobre 2009 à l'hôtel de tour Hassan à Rabat (…).

Cette métaphore cinématographique ou théâtrale vise à dénigrer les opposants du secrétaire général du parti (RNI) en les accusant d'opportunisme et de manque de conscience.
D'autres énoncés comme :

> « Je précise, qu'en général, les élections ont eu lieu dans un climat démocratique et l'autorité de manière impartiale et positive » ; « Il existe aussi un autre grand défi à signaler est celui qui consiste à moraliser l'environnement politique » (Entretien de Nabil Ben Abdellah, Médias 24, 21 Mars 2017).

Ainsi, rapprocher la politique de la météo peut s'avérer comme une stratégie efficace dans la communication politique dans la mesure où l'orateur politique essaie de montrer la multiplicité des ressources et des thématiques utilisées et, par conséquent, sa capacité à attirer l'attention et la sympathie de ses partisans. En outre, ces images empruntées à la météo ont pour fonction de rendre le discours des politiciens plus vivants et, par conséquent, lui attribuer une valeur ajoutée quant à la mobilisation du soutien de l'opinion publique et l'apaisement des craintes ressenties.

De surcroît, le discours politique marocain regroupe d'autres domaines métaphoriques relatifs à la construction et au bâtiment comme l'attestent les énoncés suivants :

> « La portée sociale est celle qui permet aux Marocains de vivre une vie dont les fondements sont la santé, l'éducation, le travail et le développement. Et la portée démocratique est celle qui renforce les libertés, la pluralité politique et la conduite politique responsable » (Driss Lachgar, leader de l'USFP, entretien avec Médias 24,23 Avril 2024) ; « Renforcer les fondations de la démocratie, Renforcer le choix démocratique et renforcer ses mécanismes » (A. Akhenouch, premier ministre marocain et leader du RNI, 11 Octobre 2021).

En effet, par le biais de cette métaphore, les acteurs politiques cherchent à montrer l'importance des valeurs qu'ils défendent, lesquelles sont basées sur la solidarité et la collaboration.
Par conséquent, il est important de constater que notre corpus regroupe différents domaines métaphoriques auxquels les acteurs politiques marocains ont eu recours afin de faire valoir et valoriser leurs points de vue dans le but de gagner la confiance et la sympathie des citoyens.

4. Conclusion

À l'issue de ce travail, plusieurs remarques essentielles se dégagent. Tout d'abord, il apparaît clairement que la métaphore constitue un procédé particulièrement sollicité dans le discours politique. Elle transcende les appartenances partisanes, ce qui signifie que son usage ne se limite pas à une formation politique spécifique ; en d'autres termes, la dimension idéologique n'est pas un facteur déterminant dans le recours à cette figure de style.
La métaphore joue un rôle fondamental dans la communication politique, car elle permet de vulgariser des idées complexes, facilitant ainsi leur compréhension tout en suscitant des émotions fortes chez les récepteurs. Ce pouvoir émotionnel confère à la métaphore une efficacité redoutable, notamment lorsqu'il s'agit de délégitimer les adversaires et de renforcer l'adhésion du public aux arguments avancés.
En somme, la métaphore s'impose comme un outil stratégique majeur dans la construction et la diffusion du discours politique.

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Chapter 10.
Les métaphores genrées dans les dictionnaires monolingues français en ligne

Gendered Metaphors in Online French Monolingual Dictionaries

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Résumé

En se basant sur une approche de genre de la (méta) lexicographie, ainsi que sur l'approche cognitive de l'étude de la métaphore, cette recherche vise à repérer et à observer les métaphores génrées – à savoir la conceptualisation des femmes et des hommes – dans un corpus de dictionnaires monolingues français en ligne (institutionnels et non institutionnels). Nous montrerons que les métaphores genrées « stéréotypisent » les comportements féminins et masculins, contribuant à la conservation/induction de l'idéologie dominante. Cela implique le principe selon lequel l'appartenance à l'un ou l'autre sexe correspond à deux manières distinctes d'agir, ou à des normes comportementales établies, ce qui les légitime en tant qu'identités féminines ou masculines.

Mots-clés : (méta)lexicographie, métaphores genrées, approche de genre, approche cognitive.

Abstract

Based on a gendered approach to (meta)lexicography, as well as the cognitive approach to the study of metaphor, this research aims to identify and observe gendered metaphors – namely the conceptualisation of women and men – in a corpus of online French monolingual dictionaries (institutional and non-institutional). We will demonstrate that gender metaphors 'stereotype' feminine and masculine behaviours, contributing to the conservation/induction of the dominant ideology. This implies the principle that belonging to one sex or the other corresponds to two distinct ways of acting or established behavioural norms, which legitimise them as feminine or masculine identities.

Keywords: (meta)lexicography, gender metaphors, gender approach, cognitive approach.

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1. Introduction

La linguistique cognitive définit les métaphores non pas comme des expressions linguistiques métaphoriques, mais comme des structures métaphoriques sous-jacentes, dont les premières sont des réalisations (Casadei 1999: 167). Elles sont appelées métaphores conceptuelles (cf. Lakoff 1987a, 1987b, 1993, 2008; Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Kövecses 2002) et consistent à utiliser la structure conceptuelle d'un domaine pour en expliquer un autre. Plus précisément, dans les mots de Lakoff, il s'agit d'« une projection sélective des traits d'un domaine conceptuel sur un autre » (Lakoff 1993 : 1). Les progrès réalisés par l'approche cognitive ont donc permis de ne plus considérer la métaphore comme un « trope superflu à valeur ornementale mais bien comme un outil cognitif » (Oliveira 2005 : 3), un processus d'organisation de l'expérience en domaines qui aide l'être humain à former un ordre cohérent du monde : par la projection conceptuelle, un domaine-cible ou abstrait est compris à partir d'un domaine-source ou concret, plus simple ou plus immédiat. Comme le soutient Lakoff, au cours de ce processus de transfert de traits entre domaines, des relations automatiques, appelées *mappings,* sont déclenchées, c'est-à-dire des correspondances ontologiques dérivées d'un système conceptuel métaphorique inhérent à la pensée humaine:

> The word "metaphor" has come […] to mean "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system". The term "metaphorical expression" refers to a linguistic expression (a word, a phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross domain mapping (this is what the word "metaphor" referred to in the old theory) (Lakoff 1993: 203).

Observons à titre d'exemple la phrase « Elle est une tigresse » : les traits du domaine source ANIMAUX, sont transférés au domaine cible FEMMES (Elle est agressive), ce qui donne lieu à une structure cognitive sous-jacente ou métaphore conceptuelle, à savoir, dans ce cas, LES FEMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX.

Ce processus de conceptualisation métaphorique se définit par son caractère systématique dans l'utilisation quotidienne du langage par les locuteurs, ce qui prouve que le système conceptuel humain est de nature métaphorique. Selon les termes d'Amoraritei « c'est la pensée même qui est structurée métaphoriquement » (2002 : 5). À cet égard, Lakoff et Johnson avaient déjà souligné que « les métaphores dans le langage sont possibles précisément parce qu'il y a des métaphores dans le système conceptuel de chacun » (1980 [1985] : 16).

Notre pensée et notre façon d'agir sont alors modelées, à un niveau inconscient, sur des analogies qui nous permettent de traduire et de simplifier la réalité : « our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of. In most of the little things we do everyday, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines » (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 : 3). Une telle simplification de l'expérience est toutefois circonscrite dans son essence, car, comme l'indique Lakoff, étant donné que la structuration métaphorique des concepts est alignée sur un système de valeurs déterminé, elle sera toujours une représentation partielle mais cohérente de la réalité (*Ibid.* : 58). Les associations sont donc limitées à une compréhension préférée, c'est-à-dire choisie parmi d'autres qui seront par conséquent exclues : en effet, seule une partie des traits qui constituent la structure du domaine-source sera projetée sur le domaine-cible. Nous comprenons dès lors que la métaphorisation construit la réalité sociale et politique « par le biais d'un réseau cohérent d'implications qui mettent en évidence certaines caractéristiques de la réalité et en cachent d'autres » (*Ibid.* : 157, notre traduction). C'est pourquoi Ervas fait valoir que « la métaphore n'est jamais « neutre » : dans le processus de projection des propriétés, certaines propriétés du domaine source deviennent saillantes et d'autres restent latentes» (Ervas 2019 : n.p., notre traduction).

En se basant sur une approche de genre à la (méta)lexicographie, ainsi que sur l'approche cognitive de l'étude de la métaphore, cette recherche vise à repérer et à observer les *métaphores génrées* – à savoir la conceptualisation des femmes et des hommes – dans un corpus de dictionnaires monolingues français en ligne (institutionnels et non institutionnels). Nous montrerons que les métaphores genrées « stéréotypisent » les comportements féminins et masculins, contribuant à la conservation/induction de l'idéologie dominante. Cela implique le principe selon lequel l'appartenance à l'un ou l'autre sexe correspond à deux manières distinctes d'agir ou, à des normes comportementales établies, ce qui les légitime en tant qu'identités féminines ou masculines.

2. Cadre théorique

Si, comme nous l'avons indiqué, la métaphore lie différents domaines, il est possible d'affirmer qu'elle est basée sur la différence, juxtaposant dans la syntaxe des signes qui ne présentent pas d'« analogie préfabriquée » (Prandi 2002 : 14). Comme le souligne Rossi, « l'enjeu majeur de l'interaction métaphorique résiderait alors dans ce mariage forcé (encore une métaphore !) entre deux signes distants » (2015 : 3).
Partant de cette évidence, nous précisons que les métaphores genrées reposent sur une double différence, non seulement celle entre des domaines opposés, mais aussi sur une pensée oppositionnelle entre les sexes. En effet, Perry (2021), reprenant les théories constructivistes de Sapir, avance que « la bicatégorisation du genre sur le masculin/féminin exclusif est une forme de métaphorisation violente du sexe » (*Ibid.* : 100). Il en découle que la métaphorisation de genre ou « métaphorisation du dualisme sexué » (*Ibid.* : 113) implique un facteur politique idéologique qui révèle sa nature pragmatique.
Si la réalité est comprise comme une fracture entre des pôles opposés, où le féminin est positionné dans la sphère privée (femme au foyer) et le masculin dans la sphère publique (homme public), les métaphores sont également structurées dans le binarisme masculin/féminin, la bipartition étant le critère sur lequel nous basons notre compréhension, déterminons nos choix et nos actions et jugeons ceux des autres (bon/mauvais). Le processus de métaphorisation est par conséquent aussi, à un niveau inconscient, genré, c'est-à-dire qu'il vise à créer des catégories de division entre les sexes : « the sense of a word can be seen as forming a category, with each sense being a member of that category» (Lakoff 1987b : 18).
Notre système de catégorisation de la réalité repose donc sur des modèles cognitifs idéalisés ou ICMs (Lakoff 1987), « soit des modèles superordonnés utilisés pour comprendre le monde » (Rollo 2012 : 175) dans lesquels les métaphores genrées sont également intégrées, diffusant aujourd'hui encore des stéréotypes obsolètes. Le dictionnaire étant, comme l'indique Yaguello (1978), une « création idéologique », un objet culturel miroir de la société, il se prête à l'analyse de l'évolution ou de la *stagnation* des représentations métaphoriques de la féminité et de la masculinité, tout en engendrant leur diffusion : « en tant qu'autorité indiscutable, en tant qu'outil culturel, le dictionnaire joue un rôle de fixation et de conservation, non seulement de la langue mais aussi des mentalités et de l'idéologie » (*Ibid.* : 165).
Quelques études sur la lexicographie francophone[1] unilingue (Delesalle *et al*. 1979, Farina 2005, Kottelat 2009) et bilingue italien-français (Lo Nostro 2007, Tallarico 2024), anglais-français (Campbell 2004, 2006) et serbe-français (Marjanovic 2013) se sont penchées sur le traitement du mot FEMME ou des mots désignant les femmes (de l'apparence physique au comportement, des rôles aux professions, des métaphores animalières aux insultes), parfois en

[1] Pour un aperçu plus large du sujet dans une perspective internationale, voir: Tallarico (2024).

comparaison avec la représentation de la masculinité (cf. Beaujot 1979, Delesalle *et al.* 1979, Lehmann 1980, 2011, Campbell 2004, Kottelat 2009, Marjanovic 2013). Les résultats de ces recherches ont souvent montré comment le dictionnaire est un objet qui a véhiculé et continue de diffuser des stéréotypes et du sexisme. La représentation des femmes, en particulier, est doublement discriminée, à la fois par leur exclusion du travail d'élaboration des dictionnaires et par le contenu misogyne des entrées qui les concernent. À cet égard, Pruvost (2007), en prenant notamment l'exemple du mot épicène « lexicographe », souligne que l'inclusion du féminin et du masculin ne correspond pas à l'inclusion réelle des femmes dans la profession, encourageant la réflexion sur les dictionnaires et la relation femme-homme:

> […] qu'il s'agisse d'être spécialiste des mots, lexicologue, ou de faire des dictionnaires, donc de se montrer lexicographe, ou enfin de les analyser scientifiquement, comprenons être métalexicographe, voilà trois mots savants qui sont épicènes. Pourtant cette dernière caractéristique qui porte sur l'indifférence du genre, féminin ou masculin, ne masque en rien la réalité, parce que dans les faits, le dictionnaire a très longtemps été seulement écrit et lu par des hommes. D'où la nécessité aujourd'hui d'étudier l'évolution des dictionnaires quant au rapport établi entre les hommes et les femmes (*Ibid.* : 41).

Cette mise à l'écart des femmes lexicographes a fait que le féminin n'a longtemps été décrit que selon le regard masculin : c'est n'est qu'au XXème siècle que « la femme devient une lectrice et une consommatrice potentielles du dictionnaire » (*Ibid*. : 51). Il s'agit d'une période qui marque, comme l'explique Tallarico, l'apparition de la « femme-lexicographe » : « la première fut sans doute Josette Rey-Debove, qui participe depuis 1952 à l'aventure éditorial de Paul Robert et rédige l'article "homme" » (2024 :4).

Outre l'entrée tardive des femmes dans la profession, des inégalités ont également été constatées dans la conception du féminin dans la microstructure. Pruvost (2007) fournit la première définition du mot « femme » apparue en 1680 dans le premier dictionnaire monolingue français, *le Dictionnaire françois contenant les mots et les choses* de Pierre Richelet, en soulignant son manque de nuances : « Créature raisonnable faite de la main de Dieu pour tenir compagnie à l'homme ». De même, dans l'exemple lexicographique, il note une accentuation du « sentiment de supériorité masculine que le lexicographe reflète avec l'impudente assurance du moment : « Prendre une femme est une étrange chose, & c'est bien fait d'y songer toute sa vie » (*Ibid.* : 43).

L'incidence du regard masculin sur la représentation du féminin s'est perpétuée au fil des années, malgré le fait que l'entrée des femmes lexicographes (cf. Pruvost 2007, Lillo 2012) ait pu introduire un double regard égalitaire. La cause en est l'absence de mise à jour des outils lexicographiques en termes de suppression des acceptions discriminatoires ou obsolètes.

Néanmoins, il est indéniable que de petits progrès en matière d'égalité ont été réalisés, comme en témoigne l'étude de Lo Nostro (2007) qui, en examinant les mots se référant au féminin dans des dictionnaires bilingues italien-français des années 2000 (Boch, Garzanti, DIF), constate une diminution des références associées au jugement moral et à la réputation et, au contraire, une mise en évidence des « soi-disant professions "nouvelles" ». Ces deux aspects dénotent une évolution du rôle social de la femme:

> Il est intéressant de remarquer qu'à part la procréation et le rôle que la femme occupe dans la famille, et avec lesquels on l'a souvent identifiée, on commence enfin à saisir des marques qui laissent entrevoir des renvois aux étapes principales de l'émancipation des droits de la femme et, donc, au changement de son rôle dans la/les société(s) (Lo Nostro 2007 : 107).

Farina (2024), à son tour, à travers une étude des dictionnaires de professionnels et de profanes en ligne, souligne le paradoxe entre le désir de militantisme, que l'on retrouve dans la prolifération de la néologie néo-féministe dans les dictionnaires collaboratifs, et la résistance à la « sanction de la discrimination d'origine sexiste », résultat de l'influence entre lexicographie professionnelle et collaborative (*Ibid*. : 294-295).
Parallèlement, l'analyse par Tallarico d'exemples lexicographiques dans un corpus de dictionnaires bilingues italiens-français contemporains, Garzanti, Larousse et Boch, révèle des contradictions entre la présence d'une nouvelle représentation émancipée des femmes, « bien qu'à un degré variable », et une « vision traditionnelle » discriminatoire et stéréotypée qui lie encore les femmes au jugement moral, à la réputation et à la maternité (*Ibid*. : 13-14).
L'aperçu des recherches réalisées sur ce sujet nous montre à la fois l'intérêt porté à la dimension de genre dans la (méta-)lexicographie et les évolutions, les problèmes et les différences en matière de traitement des entrées véhiculant des *idées* de féminité et de masculinité. Ce qui ressort, c'est que la lexicographie d'aujourd'hui n'est pas encore en ligne avec la mentalité actuelle en matière de genre, tendant de plus en plus vers l'égalité, et qu'elle continue à proposer, conserver et reproduire de vieux schémas idéologiques. En effet, comme l'explique Lehmann, le dictionnaire n'est pas seulement un « objet socio-culturel » reflétant l'idéologie dominante de son époque, mais il a la fonction d'un *producteur* d'idéologie:

> […] il est aussi, et surtout, un *élément essentiel du dispositif producteur d'idéologie :* il participe au maintien et à la conservation de l'idéologie puisqu'il crée les conditions de sa durée (valeur contraignante des réponses), il peut également contribuer à infléchir les représentations idéologiques par l'accentuation (ou l'atténuation) de certains traits culturels et/ou linguistiques (Lehmann 1980 : 238-239).

Il convient de signaler que si la vision de la féminité a été largement observée dans la recherche académique, la masculinité est parfois plutôt abordée de manière contrastive pour mettre en évidence les inégalités hommes-femmes. Cependant, ce sont les deux sexes qui sont soumis à des stéréotypes, des préjugés et des attentes comportementales, comme nous allons le montrer à travers l'observation des métaphores genrées (cf. Koller 2004, Velasco Sacristan 2005, Messer & Kennison 2018, Li 2020, Zhumasheva *et al*. 2022, Ahrens *et al.* 2024) dans le corpus lexicographique sélectionné.

3. Corpus et méthodologie

En nous appuyant sur une approche de genre à la (méta)lexicographie (cf. Scullen 2003, Lo Nostro 2007, Murano 2012, Tallarico 2024) ainsi que sur l'approche cognitive de l'étude de la métaphore (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1980 ; Cuenca & Hilferty 1999), nous repérons et observons, sans prétendre à l'exhaustivité, la conceptualisation des femmes et des hommes dans un corpus de dictionnaires monolingues français en ligne. Ces derniers ont été préférés car, donné que « tous les dictionnaires se sont dotés de supports numériques, mettant en évidence la présence de milliers de termes ajoutés et mis à jour » (Lo Nostro 2024 : 108), ces outils témoignent de l'usage et du sens actuels des unités étudiées. Fait exception le *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, également intégré au corpus, car, bien qu'il ne soit plus mis à jour, il demeure aujourd'hui l'un des dictionnaires en ligne les plus consultés en raison de la richesse et de la validité des informations disponibles (cf. Pierrel 2007), ainsi qu'une ressource de référence pour l'étude de la langue française (cf. Pierrel 2003), y compris en classe de FLE (cf. Calvi 2020). Par conséquent, il continue de véhiculer ses représentations de la masculinité et de la féminité dans la société contemporaine.

Les outils lexicographiques sélectionnés nous permettent ainsi d'observer la fixité ou l'évolution de la langue et de la société au regard de la conceptualisation des genres. En particulier, les unités lexicales et phraséologiques prises en considération ont été tirées du *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* - 9e édition (DAF) et du *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* (TLFi) en tant qu'ouvrages institutionnels de référence, du *Dictionnaire Larousse* (DL) et du *Dico Le Robert* (DLR), visant à décrire l'usage de la langue et destinés au grand public. Nous avons choisi des dictionnaires institutionnels et non institutionnels pour observer les ressemblances et les différences en termes de traitement lexicographique des unités par rapport au genre.

Pour l'extraction, le critère de la synonymie parfaite et approximative a été spécifiquement suivi, c'est-à-dire en partant d'un mot-vedette et en suivant les synonymes, ainsi que les renvois analogiques, mis à disposition dans les différents outils du corpus. Dans les autres cas, des méthodes déductives ont été utilisées : relations sémantiques hiérarchiques et d'inclusion (hypéronymie, hyponymie, méronymie, holonymie) et relations sémantiques d'équivalence et d'opposition (synonymie et antonymie). Ce n'est que pour le TLFi qu'il a été possible d'exploiter l'outil de recherche assistée, pour afficher les articles dont la définition contient les mots femme et/ou homme.

Une fois les expressions métaphoriques concernant les deux sexes repérées, nous les avons classées selon quatre niveaux (tableau 1) : deux mégamétaphores, L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES (tableaux 2, 3, 4 et 5) et LA FEMME EST UNE ENTITÉ PASSIVE/NON VIVANTE (tableau 6) (1) ; huit sous-métaphores (féminines et masculines) classées en fonction du domaine source dont elles relèvent (noms propres, métiers, animaux, objets/choses, parties du corps, nourriture, êtres mythologiques/surnaturels, plantes) (2) ; quatre comportements qui leur sont associés (impudique, innocent/domestiqué, lubrique, brutal) (3) et qui créent, à leur tour, quatre sous-sous-métaphores féminines et masculines (domaine comportement) (4).

Il en découle que la conceptualisation de la femme et de l'homme met en œuvre un réseau métaphorique intégrant un système de sous-métaphores et de sous-sous-métaphores liées à une mégamétaphore : « Lakoff and Johnson note that many everyday metaphors relating to the same topic can be grouped to get her into a mega-metaphor on a semantic basis » (Partington 1995 : 27).

MÉGAMÉTAPHORE : L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES		
Sous-métaphores féminines	Comportement associé	Sous-sous-métaphores féminines
LES FEMMES SONT DES NOMS PROPRES LES FEMMES SONT DES MÉTIERS LES FEMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX LES FEMMES SONT DES PARTIES DU CORPS LES FEMMES SONT DES ÊTRES MYTHOLOGIQUES/ SURNATURELS LES FEMMES SONT DES PLANTES	Impudique	LES FEMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT IMPUDIQUE
LES FEMMES SONT DES NOMS PROPRES LES FEMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX LES FEMMES SONT DES ÊTRES SURNATURELS	Innocent/Domestiqué	LES FEMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT INNOCENT/DOMESTIQUÉ
Sous-métaphores masculines	Comportement associé	Sous-sous-métaphores masculines
LES HOMMES SONT DES NOMS PROPRES LES HOMMES SONT DES MÉTIERS LES HOMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX LES HOMMES SONT DES PARTIES DU CORPS LES HOMMES SONT DES ÊTRES MYTHOLOGIES/ SURNATURELS	Lubrique	LES HOMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT LUBRIQUE
LES HOMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX LES HOMMES SONT DES PLANTES	Brutal	LES HOMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT BRUTAL
MÉGAMÉTAPHORE : LA FEMME EST UNE ENTITÉ PASSIVE/NON VIVANTE		
Sous-métaphores féminines	Comportement associé	Sous-sous-métaphores féminines
LES FEMMES SONT DES OBJETS/CHOSES LES FEMMES SONT DE LA NOURRITURE	Impudique	LES FEMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT IMPUDIQUE

Tab. 1 : Système de classification des métaphores genrées en quatre niveaux mégamétaphores, sous-métaphores, comportement associé et sous-sous-métaphores.

4. Résultats

Nous présentons les résultats de l'analyse à partir des deux mégamétaphores L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES (tableaux 2, 3, 4 et 5) et LA FEMME EST UNE ENTITÉ PASSIVE/NON VIVANTE (tableau 6). La classification s'organise comme suit: sous-métaphores (féminines et masculines) réparties par domaine source, unité lexicale ou phraséologique, sens figuré de l'unité suivi du dictionnaire dont elle est tirée entre parenthèses, dictionnaire/s où l'unité apparaît,[2] sous-sous-métaphores (féminines et masculines) du domaine comportement.

MÉGAMÉTAPHORE : L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES			
Sous-métaphores féminines	Sens	Dictionnaire/s	Sous-sous-métaphores féminines
LES FEMMES SONT DES NOMS PROPRES			
Marie-couche-toi-là	Familier et péjoratif Femme facile (DLR)	TLFi, DLR, DL	
Lorette	Jeune femme élégante et facile (DLR)	TLFi, DAF, DLR, DL	
Margot ;Margoton (synon.) *Courir les margotons*	Pop. et région., péj. S'emploie pour désigner une femme bavarde ou une femme aux mœurs légères	TLFi	
LES FEMMES SONT DES MÉTIERS			
Allumeuse	Au figuré, péjoratif Femme aguichante, qui cherche à susciter le désir (DLR)	DAF, TLFi, DLR, DL	
Bergère	P. ext., fam. ou pop. Femme aimée, épouse ou maîtresse ; péj. fille facile	TLFi	
Marchande d'amour	Vieilli, prostituée	DAF	
LES FEMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX			
Caille coiffée	Péj. Vieilli. Femme légère, prostituée	TLFi	
Carne	Personne qui se conduit mal, qui use de mauvais procédés envers les autres; en partic. femme de mauvaise vie	TLFi	LES FEMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT IMPUDIQUE
Chamelle	*Arg.* Terme injurieux désignant une femme de mœurs légères	TLFi	
Chevreuil	*Arg.* Fille facile	TLFi	
Chienne	Péjoratif (injure) Femme détestable ; spécialement femme lubrique (DLR)	DLR, TLFi, DL	
Cocotte	Familier et vieux. Femme entretenue ; demi-mondaine (DL)	TLFi, DLR, DL	
Grue	Vieux et familier Femme légère et vénale (DLR)	TLFi, DLR, DL	

Tab. 2 : Métaphores genrées classées sous la mégamétaphore L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES (1ère partie).

Faire le pied de grue	[Le suj. désigne une prostituée]	TLFi	
Limande	P. anal. Prostituée	TLFi	
Merluche	Rare, pop. Femme débauchée	TLFi	
Morue	Pop. et péj. 1. Prostituée 2. [Comme terme d'injure à l'adresse d'une femme]	TLFi, DLR, DL	
Louve	P. métaph. [Avec une idée de mœurs libres, dépravées] Femme débauchée, prostituée	TLFi	
Poule	Péj. 1. Femme, fille de conquête facile, le plus souvent entretenue 2. Maîtresse ou concubine d'un homme (TLFi)	TLFi, DLR, DL	
Poule de luxe	Pop. et vieilli. une femme entretenue aux goûts dispendieux	TLFi	
Souris	Femme légère, prostituée	TLFi	
Truie	P. anal., péj. a) Femme grosse et malpropre; femme de mauvaise réputation b) [Interj. injurieuse lancée à une femme]	TLFi	
Volaille	*Arg.* Femme facile, prostituée	TLFi	
LES FEMMES SONT DES PARTIES DU CORPS			
Avoir la cuisse légère	Fam. en parlant d'une femme, être de mœurs faciles (DAF)	DAF, TLFi, DL	
Arriver par les cuisses	Parvenir à une situation sociale enviable en utilisant ses relations intimes	TLFi	
LES FEMMES SONT DES ÊTRES MYTHOLOGIQUES/ SURNATURELS			
Amazone	Argot. Prostituée qui racole ses clients en voiture (DL)	DLR, DL	
Circé	Femme artificieuse, séduisante et dangereuse	TLFi	

Tab. 3 : Métaphores genrées classées sous la mégamétaphore L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES (2ème partie).

[2] L'unité peut être un mot-vedette ou apparaître dans l'article.

Diablesse	Femme (en particulier petite fille) turbulente, espiègle ou malicieuse	TLFi	
Nymphette	Très jeune fille à l'air faussement candide, qui, par ses manières, aguiche les hommes (DAF)	DAF, TLFi, DLR, DL	
Sirène	Littéraire. Femme douée d'une séduction dangereuse (DL)	DAF, TLFi DLR, DL	
LES FEMMES SONT DES PLANTES			
Belle-de-jour	Au figuré Prostituée dont l'activité est diurne	DLR	
Belle-de-nuit	Populaire. Prostituée (DL)	DAF, TLFi, DL	
Regarder, voir la feuille à l'envers	Fam. [Le suj. désigne une femme] Se livrer aux ébats amoureux (dans un bois)	TLFi	
LES FEMMES SONT DES NOMS PROPRES			
Pénélope	Femme considérée comme un modèle de constance et de patience	TLFi	LES FEMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT INNOCENT/DOMESTIQUÉ
LES FEMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX			
Oie blanche	Familier et péjoratif. Jeune fille innocente, niaise (DLR)	DAF, DLR, DL	
Punaise de sacristie	Fig. et fam. Une bigote malveillante (DAF)	DAF, DLR	
LES FEMMES SONT DES ÊTRES SURNATURELS			
Fée du logis	Maîtresse de maison très habile (DLR)	DAF, TLFi, DLR	
Sous-métaphores masculines	Sens	Dictionnaire/s	Sous-sous-métaphores masculines
LES HOMMES SONT NOMS PROPRES			
Don Juan	Séducteur sans scrupules. Par affaiblissement. Homme qui recherche les succès féminins (DAF)	DAF, TLFi, DL	
LES HOMMES SONT DES MÉTIERS			
Bourreau des cœurs	Familier. séducteur ; don Juan (DL)	DAF, TLFi DLR, DL	

Tab. 4 : Métaphores genrées classées sous la mégamétaphore L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES (3ème partie).

Marchand de femmes, de plaisir, de viande	Arg., pop. ou fam. Proxénète, entremetteur	TLFi	
LES HOMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX			
Bouc	P. anal. ou métaph., usuel, péj. Homme d'une lubricité anormale	TLFi	
Un chaud lapin	Familier. Un homme porté sur les plaisirs sexuels (DL)	DAF, TLFi DLR, DL	LES HOMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT LUBRIQUE
Étalon	Fam. Homme ardent aux plaisirs de l'amour	TLFi	
LES HOMMES SONT DES PARTIES DU CORPS			
Faire le joli cœur	Chercher à séduire (DL)	DAF, DL	
LES HOMMES SONT DES ÊTRES MYTHOLOGIQUES			
Satyre	Fig. et fam. Homme licencieux, au comportement obscène (DAF)	DAF, TLFi, DLR	
LES HOMMES SONT DES PLANTES			
Se chatouiller le poireau	Se masturber	TLFi	
LES HOMMES SONT DES ANIMAUX			
C'est un cheval, un cheval de bât, de carrosse, de charrue	Péj. C'est un homme grossier et brutal	TLFi	
C'est un vrai porc	Fig. se dit d'un homme sale, répugnant ou dont les manières sont grossières (DAF)	DAF, DLR	LES HOMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT BRUTAL
Loup *C'est un loup, un vrai loup (vieilli)*	Homme malfaisant et cruel (DL) Fig. se dit d'un homme cruel, malfaisant, sauvage (DAF)	DAF, DL	
Rhinocéros	P. anal. Homme brutal, grossier, féroce	TLFi	

Tab. 5 : Métaphores genrées classées sous la mégamétaphore L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES (4ème partie).

MÉGAMÉTAPHORE : LA FEMME EST UNE ENTITÉ PASSIVE/NON VIVANTE			
Sous-métaphores féminines	Sens	Dictionnaire/s	Sous-sous-métaphores féminines
LES FEMMES SONT DES OBJETS/CHOSES			
Chiffon	Au fig. Péjoratif Femme négligée dans sa tenue ou libre dans ses mœurs	TLFi	
Paillasse (à soldats, de corps de garde)	Pop. Prostituée de bas étage (TLFi)	TLFi, DL	
Poupée *Poupée à ressorts*	*Populaire* - Maîtresse, concubine. - Femme aguichante qui cherche l'aventure ; prostituée Synon. de prostituée	TLFi	LES FEMMES SONT UN COMPORTEMENT IMPUDIQUE
Traînée	Pop. Prostituée ; par extension, femme dévergondée (DAF)	DAF, TLFi, DLR, DL	
Vadrouille	Au figuré, vieux Femme de mauvaise vie (DLR)	DAF, TLFi, DLR	
LES FEMMES SONT DE LA NOURRITURE			
Aller au persil, faire le persil	Arg. Activité des prostituées, et en partic., action de racoler les clients.	TLFi	
Boudin	Arg. Prostituée, femme facile	TLFi	
Saucisson	Péjoratif Femme grasse et de mœurs dissolues	TLFi	
Gorille	Au fig., fam. Homme d'une grande force physique, d'une laideur repoussante et parfois d'une méchanceté violente	TLFi	

Tab. 6 : Métaphores genrées classées sous la mégamétaphore LA FEMME EST UNE ENTITÉ PASSIVE/NON VIVANTE.

Nous avons recensé au total 62 unités figurées, dont 48 sont attribuées aux femmes (12 portent la marque *péjoratif* ; 4 sont qualifiées d'*injure*) et 14 aux hommes (2 possèdent la marque *péjoratif* ; absence d'injures[3]), ce qui démontre une plus grande catégorisation et stéréotypie du féminin que du masculin. Spécifiquement, 85.48 % des unités sont lemmatisées dans le TLFi, suivi du DLR et du DL (33.87 %) et du DAF (30.65 %). La présence nettement plus importante des métaphores genrées dans le TLFi s'explique par le fait que le dictionnaire n'a pas été mis à jour depuis 1994, comme indiqué sur le site:

> Avertissement : la rédaction du TLF est terminée depuis 1994 et la plupart des contributeurs ont quitté le laboratoire. Il n'a pas vocation à être mis à jour. Cette ressource, qui ne fait pas l'objet d'une veille lexicographique, est donc close « en l'état ». Il est donc tout à fait naturel que les définitions qui s'y trouvent ne rendent pas compte des évolutions de la société.

S'il est probable que le manque d'actualisation du TLFi fasse perdurer de nombreuses acceptions considérées comme offensantes ou fabriquées en termes de genre, les sens discriminatoires ne manquent pas non plus dans les dictionnaires constamment mis à jour : ce facteur constaté atteste de la dimension idéologique du dictionnaire. On remarque donc que certains comportements prédéterminés continuent d'être associés au féminin et au masculin, en perdurant ainsi dans l'imaginaire contemporain (homme *vs* femme). Il faut cependant souligner que le manque d'un grand nombre de sens figurés dans les autres outils du corpus par rapport au TLFi témoigne d'une attention accrue portée à l'élimination des métaphores genrées : l'écart évident entre le DAF et les autres dictionnaires montre qu'un début de mission d'égalité est en train de s'accomplir, également et majoritairement, au niveau institutionnel.
La phraséologie, présente en petit nombre (25 unités), et surtout trouvée dans la microstructure (à l'exception des unités MARIE-COUCHE-TOI-LA, BELLE-DE-NUIT, BELLE-DE-

[3] Tous les dictionnaires ne présentent pas pour les mêmes unités, attribuées aux femmes ou aux hommes, la marque *péjoratif*, ce qui confirme à nouveau la dimension idéologique du dictionnaire : nous avons notamment observé qu'elle est employée dans le TLFi (11 cas) et dans le DLR (5 cas). Il en va de même pour *injure*, qui apparaît 3 fois dans le TLFi et 2 fois dans le DLR et le DL.

JOUR), n'est pas toujours précédée d'étiquettes et parfois, le sens est donné par synonymie comme pour POUPÉE À RESSORTS dans le TLFi.
Pour chaque entrée, dans tous les dictionnaires, la catégorie grammaticale et le genre sont indiqués, les acceptions sont divisées par des signes typographiques et des discriminateurs de sens, dans certains cas l'emploi signalé est précisé (*par analogie, par extension, p. métaph, au figuré, fig*. etc.) et d'autres marqueurs tels que *pop., vieilli., vieux, péjoratif, péj., fam, littéraire* etc. apparaissent également.
En termes de richesse d'information, les articles du TLFi ne sont pas comparables à ceux des autres dictionnaires, qui se fondent davantage sur le principe de l'« économie » et de la rapidité de recherche de l'acception ciblée. Toutefois, les potentialités combinatoires des mots sont enregistrées par les rubriques « Combinaisons » et « Exemples » dans le DLR et « Expressions » dans le DL (mais pas systématiquement pour toutes les entrées). Par rapport à ces derniers, le DAF présente des articles de taille majeure, contenant la première attestation du mot et sa source, les indicateurs métalinguistiques (domaines, niveaux de langue, marques d'usage etc.), la prononciation, un nombre plus grand d'acceptions, des remarques normatives etc.
Concernant les exemples figurés,[4] forgés ou cités (cf. Rey-Debove 2005, Pruvost 2006, Melnikiene 2019, Mejri 2021), ils sont strictement liés à l'emploi figuré du mot dans le TLFi et dans le DAF le cas échéant, contenus dans une seule section dans le DLR[5] avec les autres acceptions du mot et réduits ou absents dans le DL.
Si l'on entre dans le détail du processus de métaphorisation, la relation entre unité lexicale ou phraséologique et comportement révèle un large éventail de synonymes parfaits et de synonymes approximatifs, qui métaphorisent le plus souvent la femme en termes de « prostituée » (19 unités) et l'homme en termes de « séducteur » (2 unités). Cela clarifie la vision dominante des deux genres dans l'idéologie sans changements diachroniques, idéologie qui investit donc aussi bien la macrostructure que la microstructure (Girardin 1979). Les traitements lexicographiques *des deux genres* sont donc encore imprégnés de stéréotypes sexistes et participent à leur perpétuation.
Plus précisément, nous avons observé que les domaines cibles des femmes et des hommes sont conceptualisés en termes d'entités actives/vivantes (noms propres, métiers, animaux, parties du corps, êtres mythologiques/surnaturels, plantes, éléments) et que seules les femmes le sont également en termes d'entités passives (objets/choses/nourriture). Cela montre comment la métaphorisation poursuit une idée du féminin liée à l'« objectification » et à la passivité, par opposition à l'agentivité propre au masculin. Nous avons également observé que les expressions métaphoriques des deux sexes sont attachées à des comportements fabriqués : les sous-métaphores féminines font référence à des comportements impudiques, innocents/domestiqués. La femme fatale qui piège l'homme, s'oppose en effet à la femme innocente ou au foyer, personnification de la conduite vertueuse et de l'« instinct domestique », obstinément associés au féminin. Cette polarité ange-démon n'existe pas chez les hommes, dont le comportement est lubrique ou brutal, les deux prouvant une exagération, parfois naturalisée et justifiée, sans qu'aucun sentiment de culpabilité, de pudeur ou de honte ne s'y attache, comme on peut le constater en examinant les différentes définitions associées aux deux sexes.

[4] En ce qui concerne la dimension idéologique des exemples, nous avons constaté que, dans la majorité des cas, il n'y a pas de différences substantielles par rapport à la définition à laquelle ils sont associés, mais, faute de place ici, l'analyse sera explorée plus en détail dans une étude ultérieure.

[5] Il est précisé que les exemples « sont sélectionnés automatiquement et ne font pas l'objet d'une relecture par les équipes du Robert ».

Si les définitions de tous les dictionnaires répondent aux critères de concision et de clarté, on remarque des différences en termes de neutralité. En effet, comme l'indique Pruvost (2005), « bien que présenté comme garant d'une certaine neutralité, le dictionnaire reste à vrai dire œuvre personnelle », car l'« individu-lexicographe » ne peut s'empêcher d'apporter sa subjectivité (*Ibid.* : 129). Dans les dictionnaires du corpus, des diversités ont été constatées à la fois entre les mêmes unités se référant aux femmes et entre les différentes unités se référant aux deux sexes. D'ailleurs, comme l'explique Girardin (1979 : 84) « la définition des mots fortement marqués idéologiquement ou impliquant un jugement de valeur "normé" culturellement suivront l'évolution de l'idéologie dominante ».

Si l'on examine les entrées désignant des femmes, LORETTE, SIRÈNE, NYMPHETTE, COCOTTE, ALLUMEUSE et TRAÎNÉE, les seules lemmatisées dans tous les dictionnaires du corpus, on constate de subtiles dissemblances qui font apparaître les femmes plus ou moins coupables de comportements impudiques. En commençant par SIRÈNE, nous observons que l'adjectif « dangereux/euse » apparaît dans trois définitions, mais tandis que dans le DAF il est lié au charme de la femme (« Femme au charme dangereux, qui séduit par sa grâce ou par ses manières ») et dans le DL à la séduction de la femme (« Femme douée d'une séduction dangereuse »), dans le DLR l'adjectif « dangereuse » est directement attribué à la femme/séductrice (« Dangereuse séductrice »). Dans le TLFi, en revanche, aucune connotation négative n'est inférée ; au contraire un "pourvoir" de séduction est attribué à la femme (« Femme ayant un très grand pouvoir de séduction »).

Pour NYMPHETTE, alors que dans le DAF il est précisé que « par ses manières » la femme attire les hommes, donc par son comportement (« Très jeune fille à l'air faussement candide, qui, par ses manières, aguiche les hommes »), l'insertion de la locution « plus ou moins » dans le DL donne un sentiment d'atténuation et de doute sur la nature intrinsèque du comportement « féminin » (« Très jeune fille, à l'air faussement candide et aux manières plus ou moins aguichantes »). Dans le TLFi, on justifie le charme troublant de la femme par son immaturité (« Très jeune fille au physique attrayant, au charme trouble et provocant provenant de son immaturité »), de même que dans le DLR où «très jeune fille» est renforcé par « adolescente » (« Très jeune fille au physique attrayant ; adolescente aux manières aguicheuses, à l'air faussement candide »).

Dans le cas de COCOTTE, la plus grande différence est l'omission de « entretenu » uniquement dans le DLR (« Femme de mœurs légères »), ce qui diminue la connotation négative du mot. Inversement, l'inclusion seulement dans le DL de « demi-mondaine» l'accentue (« Femme entretenue ; demi-mondaine ») : la femme passe d'être entretenue par un amant (passivité) à fréquenter les milieux mondains (comportement actif). La marque *péjoratif* n'est présente que dans le TLFi.

Dans la définition d'ALLUMEUSE, le DAF met l'accent sur la sensation de plaisir de la femme, déclenchée par son comportement séduisant (« Femme coquette, qui se plaît à éveiller le désir des hommes »). Le DLR, le seul avec le TLFi à insérer la marque *péjoratif*, utilise la locution verbale « chercher à », de sorte qu'au lieu d'un plaisir découlant de l'acte de séduction, il s'agit d'une tentative d'éveiller le désir masculin (« Femme aguichante, qui cherche à susciter le désir »). Dans le TLFi, où la connotation négative est plus forte avec l'ajout du sens « prostituée », le verbe « attirer » est préféré (« Prostituée ou femme chargée d'attirer des clients dans les maisons de prostitution »), puis le sentiment de plaisir est à nouveau souligné (« Femme qui excite le désir, se plaît à aguicher »). Le DL est plus concis en recourant au syntagme nominal « Femme aguicheuse ».

Pour TRAÎNÉE, le TLFi et le DL sont les seuls à inclure la marque *injurieux* dans la microstructure et à ne pas mentionner le nom « prostituée », atténuant ainsi sa connotation

négative: « Prostituée ; par extension, femme dévergondée » (DAF); « Femme de mauvaise vie » (TLFi); « Femme de mauvaise vie, prostituée » (DLR) ; « Femme débauchée » (DL).
Enfin, le sens de LORETTE dans le DAF (« Au XIXe siècle, jeune femme élégante et de mœurs légères »), le DLR (« Jeune femme élégante et facile ») et le DL (« Jeune femme élégante et de mœurs faciles ») ne diffèrent pas significativement, car toutes trois insistent sur l'élégance et la débauche. Le TLFi (« Jeune femme du demi-monde, aux mœurs faciles et qui habitait au milieu du XIXe siècle principalement dans le quartier de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, à Paris »), en revanche, tout en ajoutant des informations historiques supplémentaires, n'utilise pas l'adjectif « élégante », mais insère le syntagme prépositionnel « du demi-monde », renforçant ainsi la connotation négative du mot.
Si l'on se penche maintenant sur les unités concernant les deux sexes exprimant un comportement séduisant ou lié au désir sexuel (« impudique » pour les femmes, « lubrique » pour les hommes), on constate que, pour la plupart, celles qui se réfèrent aux hommes n'ont pas la même connotation négative que celles qui se réfèrent aux femmes. Prenons l'exemple des deux seules unités lemmatisées dans tous les dictionnaires, UN CHAUD LAPIN et BOURREAU DES CŒURS : la première expression, à laquelle les marques pop. et fam. sont attribuées, est définie dans le DAF, le TLFi et le DL comme « Un homme porté sur les plaisirs sexuels », tandis que dans le DLR comme « Homme insatiable de plaisirs sexuels ». Dans tous les cas, le plaisir sexuel est attribué à l'homme comme son inclination naturelle. La définition du DL ajoute le caractère d'insatiabilité masculine, c'est-à-dire le fait de ne pas pouvoir se passer d'un comportement luxurieux.
Pour BOURREAU DES CŒURS, dans toutes les définitions ou les renvois (sauf le DAF), nous trouvons les mots « séducteur » et « Don Juan » : « Séducteur, Don Juan » (TLFi) ; « ➞ Don Juan, séducteur » (DLR) ; « Séducteur ; Don Juan » (DL). Dans le DAF, le comportement séduisant est associé au mot « succès », tout en soulignant l'action de faire souffrir les femmes (« Un homme qui a beaucoup de succès auprès des femmes et qui les fait souffrir »). Le DLR insère en outre la marque *par plaisanterie*, donnant à la séduction masculine la dimension du jeu.
Si l'on considère d'autres mot-vedettes, présents dans seulement quelques dictionnaires du corpus, on constate que pour DON JUAN le mot « succès » réapparaît, apportant un sens de positivité à l'action de conquête : « Séducteur sans scrupules. Par affaiblissement. Homme qui recherche les succès féminins » (DAF); « Grand séducteur sans scrupules ; homme à succès féminins, toujours en quête d'aventures amoureuses » (DL).
En général, la plupart des entrées se référant aux hommes n'ont pas de connotations négatives, la marque *péjoratif* n'apparaissant que pour BOUC dans le TLFi. Les définitions tendent à insister sur l'inclination de l'homme à un comportement lubrique insolent, mais en même temps naturel et réussi. Cependant, ce n'est que pour SATYRE qu'une connotation négative est soulignée. Il est défini dans le TLFi comme un « Homme lubrique, obsédé qui recherche des relations sexuelles avec des inconnues, notamment des petites filles, ou qui se livre à des actes répréhensibles (exhibitionnisme, voyeurisme) ».
Bien que les femmes soient métaphorisées en termes de comportement séduisant (impudique) ainsi que les hommes (lubrique), les unités figurées concernant les premières ont une connotation négative plus importante: si la sexualité et le désir féminins sont associés à la culpabilité et au péché, pour les hommes, c'est le jeu, la réussite de la conquête et l'intrinsèque qui justifient leur instinct de passage à l'acte.
Pour les unités qui évoquent le comportement innocent des femmes, la plus significative en termes de comparaisons d'entrées est OIE BLANCHE. Le DL insiste davantage sur l'innocence ou la candeur par l'usage de l'adverbe « très » et de l'adjectif « candide » (« Jeune fille très candide et innocente »). Le DLR (« Jeune fille innocente, niaise »), où l'on trouve la marque

péjoratif, et le DAF (« Une jeune fille innocente et naïve ») signalent respectivement la sottise et la naïveté de la femme.
Pour les sens figurés qui évoquent des comportements masculins brutaux, les définitions accentuent la méchanceté et la grossièreté, auxquelles s'unissent un aspect repoussant (GORILLE; C'EST UN VRAI PORC) et la stupidité (CARROSSE).

5. Conclusion

L'observation des données lexicographiques concernant les métaphores genrées nous a permis de constater leur présence nombreuse dans les dictionnaires du corpus et la façon dont elles stéréotypisent les comportements féminins et masculins : la femme est le plus souvent métaphorisée comme « prostituée », l'homme comme « séducteur ».
Spécifiquement, l'analyse des unités figurées a révélé des dissymétries entre les sexes tant en termes quantitatifs qu'en termes qualitatifs. Nous avons identifié : 2 mégamétaphores, L'HOMME ET LA FEMME SONT DES ENTITÉS ACTIVES/VIVANTES, LA FEMME EST UNE ENTITÉ PASSIVE/NON VIVANTE, ce qui prouve que seules les femmes se voient attribuer le caractère de passivité ; 8 sous-métaphores qui renvoient à des comportements genrés *incarnant* l'idée de féminité ou de masculinité – ce qui montre que les hommes et les femmes *personnifient* des comportements – et dont découlent 4 sous-sous métaphores.
Nous avons recensé au total 62 unités figurées, dont 48 décrivant les femmes (12 ayant la marque *péjoratif* et 4 *injure*) et 14 les hommes (2 ayant la marque *péjoratif*; absence d'injures) : une plus grande catégorisation et stéréotypie du féminin a donc été observée.
Globalement, c'est dans le TLFi que l'on trouve le plus grand nombre de sens figurés (85.48%), suivi du DLR et du DL (33.87%), et enfin du DAF (30.65%). Ils ont donc considérablement diminué par rapport au TLFi (qui n'a pas été mis à jour depuis 1994). En outre, la présence moindre d'unités dans le DAF témoigne de l'attention accrue portée par les institutions à la non-perpétuation de la discrimination fondée sur le sexe.
Néanmoins, l'existence des métaphores genrées continue d'être massive dans tous les dictionnaires du corpus, confirmant leur dimension idéologique. Cette dernière est visible non seulement dans la macrostructure, mais aussi dans la microstructure : en nous concentrant sur les définitions, nous avons notamment remarqué des dissemblances entre les mêmes unités se référant aux femmes et entre les diverses unités se référant aux deux sexes.
Les définitions des unités désignant les femmes lemmatisées dans tous les dictionnaires du corpus, *Lorette, Sirène, Nymphette, Cocotte, Chienne, Allumeuse et Traînée*, dévoilent des différences qui présentent les femmes comme plus ou moins coupables de comportements impudiques; la connotation négative des mots peut être plus ou moins évidente selon les cas.
En comparant les définitions des unités concernant les deux sexes et relatives aux comportements évoquant la séduction et le désir sexuel (impudique pour les femmes; lubrique pour les hommes), on a remarqué que, pour la plupart, les unités qui se réfèrent aux hommes n'ont pas la même connotation négative que celles qui se réfèrent aux femmes : si le plaisir sexuel des femmes est lié à la prostitution, à l'impudique et au péché, celui des hommes apparaît comme un penchant naturel et insatiable, auquel s'ajoute la dimension du jeu, justifiant leur comportement luxurieux, également lié à l'idée de succès. De plus, aucune métaphore n'a été repérée pour les hommes appartenant au domaine source « objet », ils ne subissent donc pas, contrairement aux femmes, un processus d'« objectification ».

La dualité typique du féminin stéréotypé, ange ou démon, est également présente, certaines métaphores soulignant d'ailleurs le comportement pudique de la femme en opposition au précédent, mettant en avant sa candeur, son innocence et sa sottise.
Le comportement masculin montre également une dualité, quoique différente, à savoir les hommes ne sont pas seulement lubriques, mais aussi brutaux : certaines unités soulignent leur méchanceté, leur grossièreté et leur stupidité.
La représentation figurée des femmes et des hommes dans les dictionnaires pris en considération est donc imprégnée de stéréotypes et d'attentes comportementales qui contribuent à la perpétuation d'images binaires et discriminatoires, favorisant la standardisation de la féminité et de la masculinité.

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Corpus

[DAF] Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, 9ème édition https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/
[DL] Dictionnaire Larousse français monolingue en ligne https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais.
[DLR] Dico en ligne Le Robert https://dictionnaire.lerobert.com/.
[TLFi] :Trésor de la langue Française informatisé http://www.atilf.fr/tlfi, ATILF - CNRS & Université de Lorraine, http://atilf.atilf.fr/.

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Chapter 11.
L'acqua come culturema concettuale nella lingua del calcio italiano. Metafore di numerosità nelle costruzioni [[N1] di N2] tra linguistica culturale e Blue Humanities - un'analisi qualitativa

Water as a Conceptual Cultureme in the Language of Italian Football. Metaphors of Numerosity in [[N1] of N2] Constructions between Cultural Linguistics and the Blue Humanities - A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract

Questo articolo esamina il funzionamento linguistico e concettuale delle metafore acquatiche (waterphors)[1] nel giornalismo calcistico italiano. Lo studio si concentra su espressioni intensificative complesse (es. *pioggia, diluvio, ondata, marea, fiume, tsunami*) analizzate attraverso i paradigmi della linguistica culturale e delle *Blue Humanities*. L'acqua viene qui definita come un culturema centrale dell'identità italiana, una risorsa interpretativa che modella la valutazione e il significato collettivo nel discorso mediatico. Basandosi su un corpus di 65 articoli pubblicati tra il 2021 e il 2024 su *La Gazzetta dello Sport* e *Tuttosport*, la ricerca dimostra che i termini acquatici non sono intercambiabili: ognuno codifica profili valutativi distinti. Se *pioggia* indica abbondanza improvvisa, *diluvio* evoca minaccia, *marea* esprime pressione incontrollabile e *tsunami* devastazione.Questi schemi rivelano un sistema graduato di intensità metaforica che riflette un "immaginario idrico" italiano, influenzato da geografia, storia ed esperienza quotidiana. In conclusione, l'articolo sostiene che il linguaggio sportivo contribuisce attivamente alle narrazioni idro-culturali, evidenziando il ruolo dei media nella costruzione culturale del rapporto uomo-acqua e arricchendo il dialogo interdisciplinare tra linguistica, discipline umanistiche ambientali e consapevolezza ecologica.

[1] Cfr. *Appel à communications Waterphors 2024 conference* (Lyon, France), https://ecopoetique.hypotheses.org/9612

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Parole chiave: culturema, metafora dell'acqua, espressioni complesse, numerosità, cronache di calcio, linguistica culturale, *Blue Humanities*.

Abstract

This article examines the linguistic and conceptual functioning of aquatic metaphors (*waterphors*) in Italian football journalism. The study focuses on complex intensifying expressions (i.e. *pioggia*, *diluvio*, *ondata*, *marea*, *fiume*, *tsunami*) analyzed through the paradigms of cultural linguistics and the *Blue Humanities*. Water is defined here as a central cultureme of the Italian identity, an interpretive resource that shapes evaluation and collective meaning in media discourse.Based on a corpus of 65 articles published between 2021 and 2024 in *La Gazzetta dello Sport* and *Tuttosport*, the research demonstrates that the aquatic terms are not interchangeable: each one encodes distinct evaluative profiles. While *pioggia* indicates sudden abundance, *diluvio* evokes threat, *marea* expresses uncontrollable pressure, and *tsunami* devastation. These patterns reveal a graded system of metaphorical intensity that reflects an Italian "hydro-imaginary", influenced by geography, history, and everyday experience. In conclusion, the article argues that sports language actively contributes to hydro-cultural narratives, highlighting the role of the media in the cultural construction of the human-water relationship and enriching the interdisciplinary dialogue between linguistics, environmental humanities, and ecological awareness.

Keywords: culturemes, water metaphor, waterphors, numerosity, complex expressions, Italian football journalism, cultural linguistics, Blue Humanities.

1. Introduzione

Negli ultimi decenni del secolo precedente la riflessione linguistica ha mostrato con sempre maggiore evidenza come il linguaggio non costituisca un sistema astratto e autonomo, bensì un dispositivo profondamente radicato nell'esperienza umana, corporea e culturale (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Croft & Cruse 2004, Bocian 2020, Kövecses 2022, Dixon 2023). In questa prospettiva, le metafore concettuali rappresentano uno dei meccanismi fondamentali attraverso cui le comunità linguistiche organizzano, interpretano e comunicano il mondo. Tra i domini concettuali che si prestano maggiormente a tale funzione, quello della natura occupa una posizione privilegiata: elementi quali la terra, il fuoco, l'aria e, soprattutto, l'acqua forniscono un repertorio simbolico estremamente produttivo (Luu Nguyen 2013, Kwapisz-Osadnik 2018, Al-Azary, Gagné & Spalding 2020). Il presente contributo si propone di indagare la metafora dell'acqua nelle cronache di calcio italiane, concentrandosi in particolare sulle espressioni complesse di tipo binominale [[N1] di N2] che veicolano concetti di numerosità e intensificazione. Tali strutture, caratterizzate dall'uso di classificatori metaforici quali *pioggia, diluvio, ondata, fiume, marea, tsunami*, consentono di osservare il funzionamento della metafora non solo come figura retorica, ma soprattutto come strumento cognitivo e culturale (Latos & Benigni 2025). L'analisi in questione si colloca esplicitamente nell'ambito delle *Blue Humanities* (Gillis 2013, Alaimo 2019), un campo interdisciplinare relativamente recente che pone l'acqua al centro della riflessione umanistica,[2] considerandola non solo come elemento naturale, ma come bene comune, spazio simbolico, archivio culturale e vettore di relazioni sociali (Jarosz 2021). In questo senso, il linguaggio del giornalismo sportivo, e in particolare quello delle cronache di calcio, si rivela un terreno di indagine particolarmente fecondo: esso riflette infatti un immaginario condiviso, fortemente radicato nella cultura nazionale (Ferrarotti 2005), ma al tempo stesso dinamico e creativo (Godzich &

[2] Si tengano, inoltre, in considerazione i contributi di Bauman (2003, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2011) rilevanti per l'analisi delle dinamiche socio-culturali contemporanee.

Szpingier 2024). Considerato quanto detto sopra, l'obiettivo principale della ricerca è duplice: da un lato, descrivere il funzionamento linguistico e concettuale delle strutture intensificative [[N1] di N2] con classificatori acquatici, dall'altro, mostrare come tali strutture contribuiscano alla costruzione di un immaginario idroculturale che può essere interpretato alla luce delle *Blue Humanities*. In questa prospettiva, il contributo intende anche avviare una riflessione più ampia sul ruolo dell'acqua in quanto *culturema concettuale* dell'area linguistico-culturale italiana (Godzich in stampa).

2. Quadro teorico: l'acqua come *culturema concettuale* nella prospettiva delle *Blue Humanities*

La concezione dell'acqua come *culturema concettuale* dell'area linguistico-culturale italiana trova un naturale e fecondo raccordo con la prospettiva delle *Blue Humanities*, che negli ultimi anni hanno posto l'elemento acquatico al centro della riflessione umanistica, considerandolo non soltanto come oggetto naturale, ma come principio relazionale, storico e simbolico (Gillis 2013: 10-11, Alaimo 2019: 429-430, Jarosz 2021: 8-9). Le *Blue Humanities* invitano, infatti, a superare una visione dell'acqua come semplice sfondo o risorsa, per riconoscerla come agente culturale capace di strutturare immaginari, pratiche sociali e forme di narrazione (Gillis 2013: 12, Alaimo 2019: 431). In questo quadro, l'acqua non è intesa esclusivamente come referente materiale, bensì come spazio concettuale e semiotico attraverso cui le comunità umane interpretano il mondo e se stesse. Tale impostazione è pienamente compatibile con l'idea di *culturema concettuale* elaborata nella linguistica culturale: in entrambi i casi, l'acqua emerge come elemento capace di condensare esperienze collettive, valori condivisi e modelli di interpretazione della realtà (Anusiewicz 1994: 113, Nagórko 2004: 27, Rak 2015: 18).

Cionondimeno, se le *Blue Humanities* sottolineano il carattere dinamico, transnazionale e comunitario dell'acqua (Jarosz 2021: 7-8), la linguistica culturale consente di osservare come tali dimensioni si riflettano e si stabilizzino nella lingua sotto forma di immagini linguistiche, metafore concettuali e schemi valutativi condivisi (Anusiewicz 1995: 65, Wierzbicka 1997: 15). Le metafore acquatiche analizzate nel presente contributo rappresentano precisamente questo punto di intersezione: esse mostrano come l'acqua, intesa come fenomeno fisico e culturale, venga mobilitata nel discorso per concettualizzare fenomeni astratti quali la numerosità, l'intensità, la pressione emotiva e il movimento collettivo, confermando il ruolo dell'acqua come *culturema concettuale* produttivo dell'italiano contemporaneo. In tal senso, considerare l'acqua come *culturema concettuale* significa riconoscerle una duplice funzione: da un lato, essa opera come interprete culturale, permettendo ai parlanti di attribuire senso e valore all'esperienza sportiva attraverso schemi condivisi e immediatamente riconoscibili; dall'altro, essa agisce come ponte interdisciplinare tra linguistica culturale e *Blue Humanities*, mostrando come l'immaginario idrico non sia soltanto un patrimonio simbolico, ma anche una risorsa discorsiva attiva nel linguaggio contemporaneo. Il suddetto raccordo teorico consente inoltre di collocare l'analisi delle cronache di calcio in un orizzonte più ampio, che tiene conto delle attuali riflessioni sull'ambiente, sulla crisi idrica e sul rapporto tra esseri umani e acqua. Le metafore acquatiche non appaiono così come scelte stilistiche isolate o puramente retoriche, ma come manifestazioni linguistiche di una sensibilità culturale in cui l'acqua è percepita simultaneamente come elemento vitale, forza ambivalente e bene comune.[3] Alla luce di ciò, la presente disamina intende mostrare come il dominio acquatico,

[3] *Reflection Paper. Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030*.
https://commission.europa.eu/publications/sustainable-europe-2030_pl

in quanto *culturema concettuale*, svolga un ruolo strutturante nell'immagine linguistica del mondo italiano e come l'approccio delle *Blue Humanities* permetta di cogliere appieno la portata simbolica, culturale e discorsiva di tale dominio. L'analisi delle metafore dell'acqua nelle cronache di calcio si configura pertanto come un osservatorio privilegiato per indagare l'interazione tra lingua, cultura e ambiente, confermando la rilevanza dell'acqua non solo come tema di studio, ma come principio organizzatore dell'immaginario linguistico contemporaneo. Le *Blue Humanities* rappresentano un approccio interdisciplinare che integra studi umanistici, scienze sociali e riflessioni ambientali, ponendo al centro l'acqua nelle sue molteplici dimensioni: fisica, simbolica, storica, politica e culturale (Gillis 2013, Alaimo 2019, Jarosz 2021). In questa prospettiva, l'acqua non è solo una risorsa naturale, ma un elemento relazionale che attraversa confini geografici, culturali e disciplinari. Applicare le *Blue Humanities* all'analisi linguistica significa interrogarsi su come l'acqua venga concettualizzata, rappresentata e narrata nei discorsi quotidiani e mediatici. Le metafore acquatiche diventano così una finestra privilegiata per osservare il rapporto tra lingua, cultura e ambiente, nonché per riflettere sul potenziale ruolo della linguistica nell'attivismo ambientale contemporaneo.

In tale quadro teorico si colloca il concetto di *parole chiave di una data cultura* (*cultural keywords*), introdotto e sviluppato da Wierzbicka (1997), che le definisce come «words which are particularly important and revealing in a given culture» (Wierzbicka 1997: 20). Come sottolinea la studiosa, non esiste un elenco chiuso e definitivo di tali parole per una determinata cultura, né procedure oggettive e universalmente valide per identificarle. Ciò che risulta centrale è piuttosto la possibilità di formulare osservazioni significative e rivelatrici su una cultura attraverso l'analisi approfondita di alcuni lessemi salienti. In questa prospettiva, la frequenza d'uso, la produttività metaforica e la centralità discorsiva di specifiche unità lessicali possono essere considerate indicatori rilevanti della loro funzione culturale. Un'impostazione in parte analoga è rintracciabile nel concetto di *culturema concettuale*, che, pur muovendosi in un quadro teorico distinto, condivide con le parole chiave di Wierzbicka l'idea che determinati elementi linguistico-concettuali svolgano una funzione privilegiata nel rendere accessibili i valori, le categorie interpretative e le rappresentazioni salienti di una cultura. In entrambi i casi, l'attenzione non è rivolta a inventari chiusi, bensì a nodi semantici particolarmente densi e culturalmente rivelatori (Godzich in stampa). L'*acqua*, intesa sia come lessema sia come dominio concettuale, presenta caratteristiche che la rendono una valida candidata al ruolo di *parola chiave* in termini di Wierzbicka (1997), e, in questo senso, di *culturema concettuale* nella cultura italiana. La sua presenza ricorrente nel lessico figurato, nelle espressioni idiomatiche e nei discorsi mediatici suggerisce infatti un forte radicamento nell'immaginario collettivo.

Dalla prospettiva della linguistica cognitiva, la metafora non costituisce una semplice figura retorica, bensì un meccanismo cognitivo fondamentale che consente di comprendere e strutturare domini astratti attraverso domini più concreti ed esperienziali. Come mostrano Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 3), le metafore concettuali costituiscono parte integrante del sistema concettuale umano e influenzano il modo in cui pensiamo, agiamo e interpretiamo l'esperienza. Il processo di mappatura metaforica implica il trasferimento sistematico di tratti strutturali e inferenziali da un *dominio sorgente* a un *dominio bersaglio*, secondo corrispondenze parziali ma regolari (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 6, Lakoff 1993: 207). Nel caso delle espressioni del tipo *N1 di N2* analizzate in questo contributo, il dominio di partenza è rappresentato dai fenomeni acquatici, mentre il dominio di arrivo riguarda concetti quali la numerosità, l'intensità, la pressione o l'impatto emotivo. Ciò che rende queste strutture particolarmente interessanti è il fatto che N1 perde la propria funzione referenziale originaria per assumere una funzione classificatoria e intensificativa, proiettando su N2 specifici tratti

semantici coerenti con lo schema concettuale del dominio di partenza (Lakoff 1993: 215). Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 3) sottolineano l'esperienza quotidiana della metafora: «Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action». Ne consegue che le espressioni del tipo *una pioggia di gol* o *uno tsunami di polemiche* non sono semplici abbellimenti stilistici, ma realizzazioni linguistiche di mappature concettuali sistematiche, in cui il dominio di partenza (fenomeni acquatici) struttura quello di arrivo (numerosità, pressione, impatto emotivo). Gli studiosi americani (1980: 56) sottolineano, inoltre, che le metafore concettuali sono profondamente radicate nell'esperienza corporea e percettiva: «Many of our most basic concepts are structured in terms of spatial metaphors that arise from our bodily experience». Il dominio acquatico risponde pienamente a questa logica: pioggia, onde, maree e inondazioni sono esperienze quotidiane degli italiani e delle italiane, caratterizzate da movimento, pressione, intensità e perdita di controllo. Tali tratti vengono sistematicamente proiettati sui concetti astratti di quantità e intensificazione nel discorso sportivo. Per completare il quadro teorico-metodologico osserviamo che la prospettiva cognitiva trova un naturale punto di incontro con la linguistica culturale di Anusiewicz (1994), in particolare con la nozione di *immagine linguistica del mondo*. Come osserva l'autore (1994: 113): «L'immagine linguistica del mondo non è un riflesso della realtà, ma una sua interpretazione».[4] Quest'affermazione integra e completa l'approccio cognitivo: se Lakoff & Johnson (1980) spiegano come funziona la metafora a livello cognitivo, Anusiewicz (1994) delinea perché determinate metafore si riscontrano in una cultura piuttosto che in un'altra. Per di più, lo studioso polacco (1994: 120) mette in rilievo il carattere valutativo dell'immagine linguistica del mondo, puntualizzando che «L'immagine linguistica del mondo è sempre intrisa di valori e giudizi valutativi». L'aspetto in questione appare centrale per comprendere la non-sinonimia dei classificatori acquatici: *pioggia*, *diluvio* e *tsunami* non differiscono solo per grado quantitativo, ma per valore assiologico, costruendo scale di intensità emotiva e simbolica. Il legame strutturale tra lingua e cultura è ulteriormente chiarito dalle osservazioni di Wierzbicka che ha sviluppato il concetto di *parole chiave di una data cultura* (*cultural keywords*). Secondo la studiosa (1997: 1): «Words reflect and pass on ways of living and ways of thinking characteristic of a given society». Ne consegue che «per capire una data cultura, dobbiamo capire le sue parole chiave» (Wierzbicka 1997: 5). L'autrice polacca insiste sul fatto che le *parole chiave* non siano semplicemente frequenti, ma semanticamente dense e culturalmente rivelatrici. In questa prospettiva, l'acqua e il dominio acquatico possono essere interpretati come *parole chiave* dell'italiano, data la loro ampia diffusione metaforica e la loro capacità di veicolare valori e atteggiamenti condivisi. Va ancora ribadito che risulta particolarmente rilevante l'osservazione secondo cui non esiste un inventario chiuso di parole chiave: «There is no finite set of keywords for any culture. The question is not how to prove that a word is a keyword, but how much cultural insight one can gain by studying it» (Wierzbicka 1997: 16). Difatti, nella parte dedicata all'analisi degli esempi rinvenuti nel corpus vedremo quanto la parola *acqua* sia produttiva e rivelatrice nel discorso sportivo italiano. Un ulteriore conferma deriva dal contributo di Nagórko (2004) che mette in evidenza la necessità di un approccio comparativo nello studio del rapporto lingua-cultura. La linguista (2004: 27) osserva che «Le differenze semantiche tra le lingue derivano da diversi modi di concettualizzare il mondo»[5]. In effetti, mentre l'italiano ricorre frequentemente a *pioggia* o *marea*, altre lingue privilegiano metafore diverse (ad es. la *grandine* in polacco). Ciò conferma che la scelta del dominio acquatico non è universale, ma culturalmente motivata. Alla luce delle prospettive riportate sopra, possiamo notare che in un tale quadro le metafore acquatiche nelle cronache di calcio italiane emergono come elementi

[4] Traduzione mia.

[5] Traduzione è mia.

stabilizzati dell'immagine linguistica del mondo, coerenti con l'approccio delle *Blue Humanities* che invita a riconoscere nell'acqua un principio organizzatore non solo dell'ambiente, ma anche del linguaggio e dell'immaginario culturale.

3. Domande di ricerca e corpus

La ricerca delineata sopra si articola attorno alle seguenti domande:in che misura le rappresentazioni della natura, e, in particolare, del dominio acquatico, sono presenti nelle cronache di calcio italiane? Qual è il funzionamento linguistico e concettuale delle espressioni complesse [[N1] di N2] con classificatori acquatici? È possibile considerare l'acqua un *culturema* dell'area linguistico-culturale italiana?
Il corpus analizzato è costituito da 65 articoli pubblicati online tra il 2021 e il 2024 su *La Gazzetta dello Sport* e *Tuttosport*. Sono stati esclusi i testi non dedicati al calcio. Il corpus complessivo ammonta a 97.745 parole e l'estrazione delle occorrenze è stata effettuata manualmente.

4. Analisi: i classificatori dal campo semantico dell'acqua e valori semantico-discorsivi nelle costruzioni [[N1] di N2]

Prima di passare alla disamina degli esempi riscontrati nel corpus, ritengo opportuno illustrare come il dominio acquatico serva come "sfondo" narrativo nelle cronache di calcio analizzate: in effetti nel materiale di ricerca osserviamo che il dominio acquatico opera spesso come scenario o metafora estesa che incornicia la narrazione calcistica:

> (1)
> «Lo chiamano il derby del Secchia, dal nome del fiume che segna il confine tra la provincia di Modena e quella di Reggio Emilia».

In base a questo esempio vediamo come l'acqua non intensifica un N2, ma svolge una funzione geo-identitaria: il fiume marca il confine e diventa *toponimo culturale*, trasformando una partita in "derby" mediante una geografia vissuta. In chiave delle *Blue Humanities*, il fiume è infrastruttura naturale che organizza comunità e appartenenze.

> (2)
> «Abate piace ai suoi ragazzi perché a 37 anni, con "codici" da calciatore ancora molto freschi, ha le chiavi adatte per gestire calciatori che vivono un'età sportivamente complicata. Quella in cui ci si affaccia sul mare profondo della prima squadra, o comunque del professionismo. Quella però in cui si rischia anche di non restare a galla, in quel mare».

In (2) l'acqua è metafora di transizione e rischio: il "mare profondo" indica complessità e precarietà; "restare a galla" attiva lo schema corporeo della sopravvivenza. Si tratta di un'immagine fortemente motivata: il passaggio al professionismo è concettualizzato come passaggio in acque profonde, dove le competenze di superficie non risultano sufficienti.

> (3)
> «Nella Roma, in questo momento, è tutto in alto mare. Senza un d.s. e col budget ancora da definire (varierà in base alla qualificazione o meno alla prossima Champions), di mercato a Trigoria si è parlato poco o niente».

Come vediamo, nell'esempio soprastante l'acqua segnala l'indeterminatezza e la mancanza di controllo. Il dominio acquatico indica l'incertezza gestionale e dalla prospettiva culturale richiama l'idea che in mare aperto manchino punti fermi e perciò non "si governa" facilmente.

(4)
«Nel diluvio di Cardiff le lacrime si mescolano alla pioggia».

In (4) osserviamo come la pioggia e le lacrime (l'emozione) convergano, in quanto la precipitazione atmosferica legittima e amplifica l'affetto collettivo.
Gli esempi riportati sopra mostrano che il dominio acquatico nelle cronache di calcio italiane non è solo una fonte di intensificatori, ma anche un repertorio di scenari che servono da sfondo alla competizione sportiva e in cui l'acqua appare come ambiente dinamico, rischioso, identitario, emotivo - tutti temi centrali nelle *Blue Humanities* (Gillis 2013, Alaimo 2019, Jarosz 2021).
Le strutture binominali [[N1] di N2] individuate nel corpus (*pioggia, diluvio, ondata, marea, fiume* e *tsunami*) funzionano come costruzioni intensificative in cui N1 ne costituisce testa sintattica e N2 è testa semantica. In questi costrutti N1 perde il proprio referente primario ("precipitazione", "corso d'acqua", "onda marina", ecc.) e agisce come classificatore metaforico, proiettando su N2 una combinazione di tratti, quali quantità iperbolica (molto / moltissimo), configurazione spaziale (diffusa dall'alto, flusso lineare, massa espansa, fronte d'urto), dinamica temporale (improvvisa, ciclica, crescente, persistente) e valenza esperienziale / affettiva (benedizione / abbondanza vs minaccia / oppressione). I suddetti tratti non sono intercambiabili: la scelta tra *pioggia* e *diluvio*, tra *marea* e *fiume*, tra *ondata* e *tsunami* produce effetti di senso distinti, riconoscibili e culturalmente motivati.
Nelle costruzioni analizzate, N1 non designa più un referente concreto (*pioggia* come "precipitazione atmosferica", *fiume* come "corso d'acqua", ecc.), ma assume una funzione metaforica e classificatoria. Come osservano Latos & Benigni (2025: 5), tali strutture proiettano su N2 non solo un valore quantitativo, ma anche informazioni relative alla forma, alla distribuzione e alla dinamica dell'evento o dell'oggetto denotato.

4.1. "pioggia" di N: diffusione dall'alto, che avviene all'improvviso, molteplicità

Nel corpus, *pioggia* è il classificatore più polisemico e "neutro" rispetto a *diluvio* o *tsunami*. Difatti, esso proietta soprattutto:abbondanza numerica, distribuzione diffusa (molti elementi sparsi), provenienza dall'alto (metafora della "caduta addosso"), nonché di qualcosa di improvviso, inaspettato. Vediamo gli esempi con valenza positiva o neutra:

(5)
una pioggia di gol, di reti, di cross e tiri.

Qui *pioggia* converte azioni di gioco in un evento atmosferico: non un singolo gesto, ma una serie ripetuta, con effetto di saturazione. Di conseguenza, la partita con il suo ritmo risultano scanditi dall'attacco, come se il campo fosse investito da un continuo precipitare di azioni.

(6)
una pioggia di elogi, di applausi, di sorprese, di grazie

In (6) la pioggia disegna la reazione del pubblico che si prospetta moltiplicata. La metafora dell'acqua in questo caso non implica distruzione, bensì abbondanza e simultaneità.

(7)
una pioggia di richieste

Notiamo che l'intensificatore in (7) segnala l'effetto valanga di domande: la pioggia costruisce un'immagine di pressione amministrativa (arrivano troppe richieste), ma ancora senza la cupezza minacciosa del *diluvio*.

(8)
una (la) pioggia di biglietti gratis, di banconote, di milioni, di sterline, di soldi

(9)
«gli Inglesi, che arruolano il loro portiere ben prima della tournée americana che partirà il 20 luglio, e l'Inter, che raccoglie una pioggia di sterline necessaria per risolvere la pratica Lukaku»

In (8) e (9) è interessante la coesistenza fra valore quantitativo e quello utilitaristico: non solo "molte sterline", ma sterline che "piovono" dall'esterno, come risorsa che arriva non prodotta internamente. La pioggia, pertanto, risulta un dono o afflusso inatteso.

(10)
«Grande atmosfera, piovono maglie da firmare e si finisce anzitempo con il tentativo di gioiosa invasione di palco. Altra pioggia di maglie e chiusura dello show».

Anche in (10) la pioggia indica l'abbondanza e la spontaneità. Tuttavia, nel corpus si registrano anche esempi con connotazioni negative:

(11)
una pioggia di insulti, di critiche

(12)
«Milan contestato sotto la curva: pioggia di insulti»

(13)
«Non fosse arrivato in finale di Champions League, Inzaghi oggi sarebbe altrove. E, chissà, magari sulla panchina dell'Inter ci sarebbe Thiago Motta. Allora giù il cappello, perché l'impermeabile indossato la primavera scorsa si è rivelato perfetto per farsi scivolare tutto addosso e per proteggersi da qualunque cosa, pioggia di critiche e pure qualche fiammata di fuoco amico. E l'impermeabile lo ha scelto lui, lo ha scelto Inzaghi: è il suo merito più grande, a pensarci bene. Ha trovato lui il modo di andare oltre. Con i risultati, ovvio. Ma i risultati, se prolungati, non possono mai essere figli del caso».

Notiamo che negli esempi soprastanti *pioggia* attiva lo schema dell'aggressione diffusa: un insieme di atti ostili. Cionondimeno, benché la pioggia renda la negatività pervasiva e ripetuta, essa non risulta necessariamente devastante: infatti, ci si può "riparare".

(14)
pioggia di cartellini, di squalifiche, di errori

Qui il classificatore metaforico indica frequenza e moltiplicazione di eventi (*cartellini, errori*) come fenomeno quasi meccanico. L'effetto è di "partita spezzata", in quanto la pioggia di cartellini la interrompe e cade in sequenza.

(15)
pioggia di fumogeni, di ananas, di pugni in testa

In (15) l'elemento acquatico ristruttura un evento materiale (oggetti lanciati, colpi sferrati) secondo la forma di un fenomeno atmosferico. In questi esempi la metafora lavora sulla dinamica verticale (dall'alto verso il basso) e sulla molteplicità di punti di caduta.

4.2. "diluvio" di N: oppressione, minaccia, pressione continua

Il secondo classificatore metaforico presente nel corpus è *diluvio*, il quale intensifica *pioggia*, aggiungendo tratti di impatto opprimente e difficoltà di resistenza. Nel materiale analizzato emerge spesso con nomi legati a bombardamento (*cross, tiri*), giudizio massivo (*critiche*), nonché situazione in cui qualcuno si trova sotto qualcosa:

(16)
«Proprio un sinistro velenoso dell'ex Roma (attento Musso) al 5' costituisce il primo e unico squillo degli emiliani, presto schiacciati nella propria trequarti e sotto un diluvio di cross, con Missori e soprattutto Ceide che non hanno il passo per giocare a tutta fascia, per la gioia di Zappacosta e Holm».

Notiamo che in questo caso l'uso della preposizione *sotto* è cruciale, dal momento che la costruzione spaziale intensifica l'effetto di subire l'azione. La squadra si trova sotto una pressione che le scende addosso. La metafora costruisce anche un quadro esperienziale, perché non è solo una pioggia di cross, qua si rimane "schiacciati", come se fosse impossibile respirare.

(17)
«Per il resto è un diluvio di critiche, "È una delle pagine più nere nella storia recente del rapporto tra tifoserie organizzate e società" sostiene Valerio Iafrate, mentre Inter Victims spiega: "Nessuno deve permettersi di atteggiarsi a padrone di un luogo pubblico e costringere ad andarsene chi ha pagato il biglietto e vuole vedere la partita"».

In (17) invece vengono accentuate la quantità e lapervasività, in quanto le critiche sembrano un continuum che travolge. Come vediamo, a differenza di *pioggia*, *diluvio* nel materiale esaminato è connotato negativamente, implica una minaccia. Infatti, è difficile immaginare *un diluvio di applausi*. Per di più, in chiave culturale, *diluvio* attiva un archetipo occidentale di catastrofe e prova collettiva (*il Diluvio universale*) e con ciò l'acqua percepita come un archetipo di forza distruttrice.

4.3. "ondata" di N: ciclicità, ritorno, propagazione, energia collettiva

In base alle occorrenze raccolte, si può costatare che *ondata* è un classificatore che rappresenta non solo fenomeni a fasi (*prima/seconda ondata*) e dinamiche propagative (*si diffonde*), ma anche energia collettiva (*entusiasmo/odio*). Vediamo gli esempi seguenti:

(18)
la nuova ondata d'entusiasmo

Come vediamo, *ondata* proietta il tratto di ripetitività, l'entusiasmo è costruito come movimento che ritorna e si rinnova. L'intensificatore in questione non implica una quantità statica, bensì un insieme dinamico.
Spesso con quel classificatore si registrano aggettivi ordinali che collocano un dato fenomeno o elemento all'interno di una serie ordinata:

(19)
la seconda ondata di processi sportivi
(20)
la prima ondata della coppia Vlahovic-Chiesa
(21)
la prima ondata di Eroi
(22)
la seconda ondata di carte

In (23) *ondata* risulta anche accompagnata dall'aggettivo:

(23)
l'incomprensibile ondata di odio

Notiamo che l'odio è un movimento collettivo che cresce e investe. Inoltre, l'aggettivo "incomprensibile" sottolinea la percezione di un fenomeno che sfugge al controllo razionale.

4.4. "marea" di N: massa, invasione, incontenibilità, superamento dei confini

Un altro classificatore metaforico rinvenuto nel corpus è *marea.* Esso appare in contesti che mettono in scena folla e tifoserie, entusiasmo collettivo, occasioni/azioni in gran numero, nonché pressione che "schiaccia", non lasciando spazio:

(24)
«a quel punto la marea nerazzurra diventa incontenibile».

In (24) viene enfatizzato il tratto di espansione, poiché sia l'intensificatore *marea* sia l'aggettivo *incontenibile* rievocano l'immagine di un collettivo che supera qualunque argine. In (25) si ha un processo di mappatura metaforica simile, anche se rafforzato:

(25)
«La marea interista sembra inarrestabile».

Se ne evince che *marea* appare come un qualcosa che non si ferma e che, al contempo, non può essere fermato.

(26)
«fu complicato anche per il bus scoperto trovare spazio nella marea di tifosi».

In (26) la metafora implica anche una certa densità, materiale denso che occupa lo spazio fino a impedire il movimento di un oggetto fisico. Quell'esempio dimostra come il classificatore proietti densità e saturazione dello spazio.

(27)
«ha visto sibilare una marea di tiri»

In (27) notiamo che la massa liquida (marea) viene accostata al suono tipico di proiettili o colpi. Ne consegue che la quantità enorme di tiri viene percepita come un rumore continuo, pertanto *marea* in questo caso denota non solo numerosità, ma anche persistenza.

(28)
«Una marea di entusiasmo… un'onda lunga continuata per tutta l'estate»

Nell'esempio in questione viene costruito un continuum temporale: *la marea* (massa) esplode e poi diventa *un'onda lunga* (durata).

4.5. "fiume" di N: continuità, direzionalità, attraversamento dello spazio

Nel materiale esaminato il classificatore metaforico *fiume* è presente sia in senso letterale (*Secchia*) sia come immagine discorsiva ([un fiume] di N]) e fornisce tracce di un modello concettuale importante: flusso orientato. Effettivamente, *un fiume di…* raffigura una grande quantità che forma un flusso in movimento e attraversa uno spazio in modo compatto e continuo. Consideriamo che quel tratto distingue *fiume* da *marea*: il fiume ha un verso, una canalizzazione, una traiettoria:

(29)
«un fiume di appassionati e turisti di ogni tipo scorre in questi giorni dalle vie di Brera alla Statale»

(30)
«fiume di gente che si allontana lento dal luogo del delitto»

Vediamo che in ambedue i casi *fiume* codifica la direzionalità (*scorre dalle vie X a Y; si allontana*).

4.6. "tsunami" di N: evento-limite, caos, rottura, immediatezza distruttiva

Seppur con una sola occorrenza nel corpus, *tsunami* compare come metafora di crisi (sportiva o disciplinare), con un chiaro valore di catastrofe improvvisa:

(31)
«quando la Signora era in mezzo allo tsunami delle penalizzazioni»

Qui *tsunami* è presentato come un evento che travolge e ridisegna lo scenario. Inoltre, l'effetto distruttivo è rafforzato dal sintagma "in mezzo", che contribuisce a raffigurare la squadra come un soggetto immerso nella catastrofe, privo di qualsiasi possibilità di controllo.
Le metafore analizzate mostrano come l'acqua venga percepita nella cultura italiana come una forza ambivalente: da un lato generatrice e aggregante, dall'altro difficile da arginare e potenzialmente devastante. Questa ambivalenza emerge chiaramente nelle cronache di calcio, dove l'acqua funge da sfondo simbolico per rappresentare emozioni collettive, pressioni mediatiche e dinamiche di massa.

5. Considerazioni conclusive

L'analisi condotta ha messo in evidenza come le metafore acquatiche impiegate nel giornalismo calcistico italiano non si configurino come semplici espedienti retorici di intensificazione, bensì come strumenti concettuali sistematici attraverso cui vengono organizzate e valutate esperienze collettive complesse, quali la numerosità, la pressione emotiva e le dinamiche di massa. In particolare, le costruzioni [[N1] di N2] con classificatori dal campo semantico dell'acqua si rivelano parte di un sistema coerente di gradazione semantica, in cui l'intensità non è misurata esclusivamente in termini quantitativi, ma anche spaziali, dinamici e valutativi. Difatti, la scala metaforica *pioggia -> diluvio -> tsunami* evidenzia un progressivo aumento dell'impatto emotivo e della percezione di minaccia, riflettendo una concezione culturalmente radicata dell'acqua come forza ambivalente: al tempo stesso generativa, aggregante e potenzialmente devastante. Tale ambivalenza emerge con particolare chiarezza nel contesto calcistico, dove l'acqua funge da dominio privilegiato per rappresentare fenomeni collettivi improvvisi, difficilmente controllabili e carichi di valore affettivo, come proteste, polemiche o ondate di entusiasmo.
L'attenzione alle micro-scale semantiche interne al corpus consente inoltre di osservare come i giornalisti "misurino" l'intensità attraverso opposizioni lessicali precise (*pioggia* vs *diluvio*, *ondata* vs *marea*, *marea* vs *fiume*), che rinviano a diversi modelli di distribuzione spaziale e temporale della numerosità. Ciò dimostra che l'intensificazione metaforica non riguarda soltanto il grado, ma anche la forma del dispiegarsi del fenomeno: seriale, continuo, invasivo o direzionale.
In più, alla luce delle *Blue Humanities*, le metafore esaminate possono essere lette come espressione di un rapporto profondo e storicamente stratificato con l'ambiente acquatico, che continua a strutturare l'immaginario linguistico e mediatico contemporaneo. La naturalizzazione del sociale, la rappresentazione dell'emozione come forza ambientale e l'inquadramento della crisi come catastrofe idrica contribuiscono a costruire un frame discorsivo in cui la collettività appare al tempo stesso protagonista e vittima di dinamiche percepite come inevitabili.
Per di più, vista la ricchezza delle mappature metaforiche e della loro frequenza nel materiale analizzato, l'acqua può essere considerata un *culturema concettuale* dell'area linguistico-culturale italiana.
Nel complesso, il contributo conferma la fecondità dell'integrazione tra linguistica cognitiva, linguistica culturale e *Blue Humanities*, mostrando come l'analisi delle metafore acquatiche permetta di cogliere non solo meccanismi linguistici, ma anche modelli culturali di interpretazione del mondo. In prospettiva, tale approccio apre a ulteriori sviluppi comparativi (ad esempio con altre lingue e tradizioni culturali) e applicativi, in particolare nell'ambito della didattica dell'italiano L2/LS e dell'educazione linguistica interculturale, dove la

riflessione sulle metafore può favorire una maggiore consapevolezza dei legami tra lingua, cultura e ambiente.

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II.
Metaphors, Phraseology & Culture

Chapter 12.
American Politics and the Albanian Language – an Ocean apart. Aspects of Translating Political Terminology

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Abstract

While acknowledging the fact that non-literary translation has gained prominence in a world dominated by politics, this study will provide some insight on how technical translation, despite being distinguished from other forms of translation by terminology, the latter usually only accounts for only 5-10% of a text. The American politics and its terminology are strongly linked to the culture of the system they represent. Therefore, translation is not a mere transposition of messages devoid of the long-standing cultural tradition of the elephant and the donkey, the White House and the Capitol, the smoke-filled rooms and whistle-stop tours. As translators struggle to "build the bridge over the pond", culture, "this *belle infidèle*", tends to play tricks and make the road much more slippery.
The terms under analysis are part of the Political Terminology Translation course as taught to III-year bachelor students of the Translation and Interpreting Branch, Faculty of Foreign Languages.

Keywords: Technical translation, political discourse, terminology, culture.

1. Introduction

The times we live are both comprehensive and individual. From Buenos Aires to Omsk, nations have never been so geographically and politically independent, even as communication and exchange irreversibly bring down borders. We are steadily moving closer to becoming a "global village". By the early 16th century, there were about 500 political entities in Europe – a number that dwindled to 23 in the 20th century (most established after the Second World War). These historical shifts were driven by economic developments and political agendas. Today, if economy is the world's new "global language", politics at various levels wither cements or breaks down borders. In this context, it is worth considering political terminology as one of the pillars of an aspiring translator's background knowledge. This article will briefly present the

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Albanian situation in terms of language and terminology, aiming to shed light on the chaotic state of the Albanian political lexicon – its abundant resources but limited capacity to regenerate itself. To better understand this phenomenon and consider potential solutions, it is necessary to examine the underlying causes that may pose barriers to improvement.

2. Theoretical framework: Translation, Politics and Skopos

Language and politics are deeply intertwined. As Chilton & Schäffner observe, "politics cannot be conducted without language".[1] Political language is not only a vehicle of communication but also a reflection of power relationship embedded in socio-cultural and historical contexts. Political terminology, in particular, consists of codified expressions that convey institutional ideologies (Schäffner 2004). In other words, the terms used in political discourse (for example, names of institutions, political positions, or policy concepts) carry significant ideological and cultural weight. Translating such terms is therefore a sensitive task: it requires not just linguistic substitution but careful mediation between different political and cultural realities.

Contemporary translation studies offer several frameworks to approach the translation of political terminology. One influential perspective is the *Skopos* theory, formulated by Hans J. Vermeer (2000). *Skopos* is Greek for "purpose", and *Skopos* theory posits that translation strategies should be primarily determined by the purpose of the target text in its specific context.[2] According to Vermeer, the translator is an expert who can decide how to translate a source text based on the intended function of the translation.[3] In practice, this means that when dealing with politically charged terms, a translator must ask: What is the purpose of this translation and who is the target audience? The answer will guide whether a term is translated literally, adapted, explained, or perhaps even replaced with an equivalent familiar term. For instance, a term from a foreign political system might be translated with a descriptive equivalent if the *Skopos* is to inform a general audience, whereas in a different context the same terms might be kept in original form to preserve authenticity. The translator's agency in *Skopos* theory is significant – as Vermeer explains, the translator can decide what role the source text will play in the translational action. This functional approach is especially relevant in political translation, where the intended impact on the target audience (i.e. to persuade, inform, or prompt action) can dictate translation choices.

Closely related to *Skopos* is the idea of audience design and communicative effect discussed by Newmark (1998). Peter Newmark famously drew a continuum between semantic (source-oriented) and communicative (target-oriented) translation methods (*Ibid*.: 39-48). In translating political terminology, a semantic approach would strive to preserve the precise meaning and nuances of the source term, while a communicative approach would prioritise the term's effect and understandability for target readers. Newmark stresses that the translator must analyse the intended readership and purpose of the translation to choose the appropriate strategy. He points out that if the purpose of the translation differs from that of the original text, certain direct translation strategies (i.e. a literal or "cultural substitution" of a term) might not be appropriate. For example, translating an American political term like "primary election" into a language that has no such concept might require explanatory translation rather than a blunt calque, especially if the goal is to help the target audience understand a foreign political process. If the source text's purpose is literary or rhetorical but the translation's purpose is informational (or *vice versa*), the translator should adjust their approach accordingly. Newmark's emphasis on

[1] See https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-1677-9-sample.pdf
[2] See https://www.academypublication.com/issues2/tpls/vol09/07/20.pdf
[3] See https://www.academypublication.com/issues2/tpls/vol09/07/20.pdf

contextual fidelity versus reader engagement dovetails with the *Skopos* idea that achieving the intended function sometimes necessitates deviation from word-for-word accuracy. Ultimately, as Newmark (1988) asserts, the translator should adopt whichever method – literal or free – that best secures equivalent effect for the target audience, and when a rigidly faithful translation would result in an unnatural or confusing target text, a more communicative rendition should prevail.

Another vital concept in translating culturally loaded terms (which includes many political terms) is Lawrence Venuti's dichotomy of domestication vs. foreignization. Venuti (1995) argues that translators often either domesticate a text – making it read as if it originated in the target culture – or foreignize it – deliberately preserving elements of the source culture in translation. Neither choice is neutral. Domestication can make a political term immediately accessible to the target audience but may strip away the foreign context or nuance; foreignization, on the other hand, retains the original term or a transliteration, highlighting its foreign origin but potentially requiring the reader to work harder to grasp its meaning.

Venuti (1995) highlights that translation plays a crucial role in handling "asymmetrical cultural exchanges" between dominant and less dominant cultures. Especially in diplomacy and international relations, translators' choices can either bridge or widen gaps in understanding. For example, an English term like "filibuster" (a legislative tactic) might be domesticated into an explanatory phrase in another language or foreignized by using the English word with a footnote. The decision hinges on the purpose: a news translator aiming for quick comprehension might domesticate ("procedural obstruction"), whereas a scholarly translator might keep filibuster to preserve the original term's flavour, explaining it in commentary. Venuti also underscores the power dynamics in translation – often, the more powerful culture's terms and narratives tend to dominate translations, which can lead to invisible cultural filtering. In the political realm, this can mean that translations of political texts sometimes favour the perspective or terminology of one side (usually that of the hegemonic culture). A conscientious translator, informed by Venuti's perspective, will be aware of these dynamics and make deliberate choices about whether to assimilate a political term into the target culture or signal its foreignness for the reader.

Christina Schäffner's work further illuminates the nexus of translation, politics and ideology. Schäffner observes that political texts often undergo shifts in translation that align with target-culture expectations or agendas. In fact, decisions about what gets translated and how can themselves be political. As Schäffner & Bassnett (2010) note, it is frequently politicians or institutions in power who decide which texts should be translated and into which languages. This selection is influenced by power relations – certain information is disseminated internationally while other content is withheld or localised. Moreover, Schäffner (2004) analyses how translations in the political and media domains may be purposefully manipulated to achieve specific goals. She describes how "purpose-driven" translations can serve national ideologies, for instance by toning down or amplifying aspects of the source message. An example might be a state-run news outlet translating a foreign leader's speech: the translator (under editorial guidance) might choose terms that cast the foreign leader's policy in a more positive or negative light, depending on the target audience's political stance. Such manipulative strategies mean that the translated text is not a neutral mirror of the original, but a recontextualised discourse shaped by the translator's intentions. In extreme cases, political terms might be deliberately mistranslated to evoke a certain reaction – a practice that underscores how translation can be a tool of propaganda. While our analysis does not involve propagandistic translation, it remains crucial to acknowledge this dimension: every translation of political terminology carries an ideological stance, whether explicit or implicit.

Recognising this, translators and scholars like Schäffner advocate for a critical awareness of how ideology filters through word choices in translation. For a translator, being mindful of one's choices – for example, whether to use a neutral term like "government" versus a loaded term like "regime" – is part of maintaining professional and ethical standards in political translation.

In summary, the literature on translation and political terminology highlights a few key principles. First, language is fundamental to politics, and translating political language is an exercise in cross-cultural communication laden with power and ideology. Second, the translator's purpose and audience (*Skopos*) should guide how political terms are rendered, potentially outweighing word-for-word fidelity. Third, translators navigate a spectrum from literal/semantic to free/ communicative methods (Newmark), often finding a balance that preserves essential meaning while ensuring clarity and impact for the target audience. Fourth, choices between domestication and foreignization (Venuti) determine whether a political term is adapted into familiar local terms or retained in its foreign form – a choice that affects the reader's experience and the cultural transparency of the text. Finally, power and ideology are ever-present: as Schäffner and others remind us, what we translate and how we translate it can reinforce or challenge political narratives. These theoretical insights provide a framework for analysing how Albanian political terminology has been translated (and in many cases, created or borrowed) from English. In the next sections, we will outline the methodology of our analysis and then examine specific examples, connecting these theoretical concepts to real translation choices.

3. Translation trends in the political specialized language

Human beings have been famously referred to as "social animals" (Baumeister & Leary 1995) or "emotional illiterates" (Goleman 1995) and yet their existence as a community is «largely determined by interaction and relationships, including power relationships» (Schaffner & Bassnett 2010). Politics along with its inherent elements of power and community, is undoubtedly best conveyed through language. This language functions effectively for political purposes only when tailored to ideological, historical and socio-cultural circumstances.

The case of the Albanian language is further complicated by the fall of the Communist system and the establishment of a hybrid democracy, whose frailty has largely been reflected in political discourse, among other domains. Burkhardt (1996) suggests that there are two distinct paths to follow when conveying political messages: one involves communicating about politics while the other one pertains to what the media provides. One method for enriching vocabulary is through what is known as the semantic derivation process. This process facilitates the penetration of common language words into specialised registers. It is at this stage that analogy and metaphoric use gain momentum as words then acquire the status of specialised terms.

In other languages, it is common for such meaning "movements" to occur under the influence of other languages. However, the Albanian case is somewhat unique, as most "such movements" occur like this. For example, the terminological meaning of the word "kabinet" (council of ministers) - the committee of senior ministers responsible for controlling government policy - is transferred from French. This process of transferring of a word from general use into specialised language by amplifying its semantic structure is referred to by specialists as terminologisation. Many words in the common language undergo terminologisation due to their combination with terminological elements or through transfer from other languages. When it comes to everyday language and specialised languages or jargon

on the other, they share the same phonetics and grammar. However, noticeable differences emerge when it comes to lexis.

4. Methodology: Corpus of Examples and Course Context

The analysis takes a qualitative, example-based approach to investigate the translation of political terminology from American English into Albanian. Rather than a large corpus, we have selected a small set of four representative examples that highlight common challenges and strategies in translating political terms. These examples were chosen purposively as part of a third year of a Bachelor course on "Translation of Terminology". In the practical component of this course, students and instructors analysed various English texts containing political terminology and discussed how to render these terms in Albanian. The four examples presented here were drawn from those class materials. Each example consists of a brief source text excerpt (or term) and its proposed or actual Albanian translation (target text), focusing on a key term or phrase that illustrates a particular translation issue.

The selection criteria for these examples were explicitly tied to the course's pedagogical goals on terminology translation. We aimed to cover a range of scenarios: (1) cases where the source term refers to a political concept or office that has no direct equivalent in the Albanian system, (2) instances of culture-specific references or metaphors in political discourse, and (3) examples showing terminological adaptation or borrowing into Albanian. By including different types of challenges – from structural differences between a presidential vs. parliamentary system, to metaphorical language that does not translate literally – the examples illustrate how translators must apply the theoretical principles discussed above in practice. In each case, we consider the translator's strategy (literal translation, functional equivalent, explanatory translation, borrowing, etc.) and the rationale behind it, in light of the intended meaning and the target audience's background knowledge. The course context is important: these examples were used as training exercises, so the analysis also reflects classroom discussions on why certain choices succeed or fail. This approach allows us to explicitly connect the theory to practice, demonstrating how students of translation are taught to navigate the "ocean" of differences between American political terminology and Albanian language usage.

We present each example with the source text and target text in parallel, followed by commentary and analysis for each. The commentary draws attention to the main issues and decision criteria in translating the highlighted terminology, referencing the theoretical framework where relevant.

4.1. Analysis and discussion of examples

Example 1

Source Text (EN)	Target Text (AL)
"… **ran for president** in Peru and lost."	"…*mori pjesë në zgjedhjet presidenciale* dhe humbi."

In this example, the English phrase **"ran for president"** (literally, to run as a candidate for president) is translated as *"mori pjesë në zgjedhje presidenciale" (*literally "took part in presidential elections"). This rendering reflects a functional equivalent rather than a word-for-word translation. Albanian, being a parliamentary republic, does not have an exact native idiom for "run for president" because the concept or running for a presidential office (in the sense of a direct election campaign) was not historically part of Albanian political discourse. By using the phrase "take part in presidential elections", the translator communicates the meaning

(participating as a candidate) in terms that make sense to Albanian readers. The cultural context is crucial here: the source text refers to a Peruvian scenario (Mario Vargas Llosa's presidential run in 1990). The translator must convey the significance of "ran for president" to an audience from a country where the head of state was not traditionally elected through a popular presidential race. The chosen translation effectively explains the action (participating in an election for president) without assuming the reader knows the term as a fixed idiom. Notably, this is a case where *Skopos* comes into play: if the purpose is simply to inform Albanian readers of the factual event, a transparent phrase like this is appropriate. A more literal translation (*e.g. "vrapoi për president",* which makes little sense in Albanian) is avoided because it would not fulfil the communicative purpose. The example also underscores the earlier point about terminology gaps – Albanian had to borrow or coin expressions for many post-1990 political phenomena. In this case, instead of borrowing an English term, the translator uses an Albanian descriptive construction. The commentary in class noted that the lack of a concise Albanian term for "run (for office)" indicates how language mirrors political systems: Albania's lexicon lacked this concept under one-party rule and had to adapt as new democratic practices emerged. This example demonstrates the translator balances fidelity and clarity: the translation is not literal but accurately conveys the concept in a way that Albanian readers can easily understand.

Example 2

Source Text (EN)	Target Text (AL)
"… Enva Hodja, the Albanian **strongman** who ruled the country with an iron hand…"	"…Enver Hoxha, **diktatori** shqiptar që e drejtoi vendin me dorë të hekurt."

The term of interest here is "strongman", used in English to describe a political leader who rules by force or authoritarian methods. In the source, Enver Hoxha is referred to as a strongman who ruled Albania "with an iron hand." The Albanian translation provided is "*diktator"* (dictator), which is a direct and culturally resonant equivalent. In Albanian discourse, Enver Hoxha is indeed commonly labelled a *diktator*, so the translation uses the established term that carries the same connotations of authoritarian rule. This choice exemplifies a case of terminological standardisation: rather than calquing "strongman" (which would be odd in Albanian), the translator opts for the clear, single-word equivalent that exists in the target language. The accompanying phrase "with an iron hand" is rendered as *"me dorë të hekurt",* an idiomatic expression in Albanian that exactly matches the English metaphor (both languages use the image of an "iron hand" to signify strict or harsh rule). This indicates that some cultural references are shared or easily adaptable – the metaphor did not require change because it is understandable in both contexts. The commentary from the course discussion highlighted a few additional points. First, the English text spelled Hoxha's name phonetically as "Enva Hodja," which the translator recognised and corrected to Enver Hoxha in the Albanian (target) text – a reminder that translators must also normalise or correct names/titles for the target audience. Second, using *"diktator"* for "strongman" does slightly shift the nuance: strongman in English can sometimes imply a leader who might not have an official dictator title but wields power in a dictatorial manner, whereas *diktator* in Albanian (as in English) unequivocally means a dictator. In this context, however, that nuance is not problematic because Enver Hoxha was in fact a dictator in the literal sense. Here, domestication is straight forward – the term is fully assimilated as the natural Albanian designation for such a figure. There is no loss of meaning; in fact, the translation likely has more immediate impact on an Albanian reader, since *diktator* is an unequivocal label. This example underscores how important existing terminology resources are: the translator leaned on a word that Albanian already had in its political lexicon. It demonstrates that when a strong native equivalent exists (especially one loaded with the

correct historical and emotional connotations, as *diktator* is), it is often preferable to use it rather than introduce a calque or borrowed term. The effect is a translation that feels idiomatic and clear in the target language while faithfully conveying the source message.

Example 3

Source Text (EN)	Target Text (AL)
"Henry Kissinger, former **Secretary of State** was particularly unhappy… "	Henry Kissinger, ish-**Ministër i Jashtëm**, ishte veçanërisht i pakënaqur…

This example deals with translating the title "Secretary of State." In the U.S. political system, the Secretary of State is the top foreign affairs official (a member of the executive cabinet, equivalent to a foreign minister in many other countries). The Albanian translation given is "*Ministër i Jashtëm,"* which literally means "Minister of External [Affairs]," *i.e.* Foreign Minister. This is a functional equivalent strategy: rather than translating Secretary as *sekretar* (which would be a literal approach), the translator renders the role in terms familiar within Albania's governmental framework. In Albania (especially in the socialist era before the 1990s), the word "*sekretar*" had different connotations – it commonly referred to party positions, such as *Sekretari Parë* ("First Secretary," the Communist Party leader) or *Sekretari Përgjithshëm* ("General Secretary") of an organization. As the analysis in the paper notes, these usages of *sekretar* fall under a different sense of the word (Albanian dictionaries list *sekretar* also as a clerical/ administrative role, and as a leader of a political organisation). Importantly, *sekretar* in Albanian would not be immediately understood as a government minister in charge of foreign affairs. Thus, if one translated "Secretary of State" as "*Sekretari i Shtetit",* it could confuse Albanian readers, possibly implying a different office (or not conveying the ministerial rank). The chosen translation *Ministër i Jashtëm* leverages the fact that in Albania and many countries, the Foreign Affairs minister is the analogous position to the U.S. Secretary of State. This aligns with Newmark's communicative approach: using the term that will be readily acceptable and comprehensible to the target audience. It sacrifices the literal form of "Secretary" but preserves the function.

The course discussion around this example highlighted how political and administrative titles often require adaptation. Students examined the dictionary entry for *sekretar* and noted that only one of the listed meanings – *"anëtari qe verisë (në disa vende)"* (member of the government in some countries) – comes close to the sense of Secretary of State. That definition is not widely known in everyday Albanian usage, whereas Minister is immediately clear. In terms of *Skopos*, if the purpose of the translation is to inform readers (for instance, in a news article) about Kissinger's role, *Ministër i Jashtëm* fulfils that purpose succinctly.

Another layer to consider is the historical context. During the communist period, Albania did not have a "Secretary of State" position, but it did have a Foreign Minister; after the 1990s, Albanian media and official translations routinely interpret U.S. "Secretary of State" as *Ministër i Jashtëm*. Thus, translation practice has established this equivalent. The example illustrates the importance of standardised terminology in political translation: using the accepted equivalent title ensures the translation is both accurate and authoritative. It also ties back to the idea of domestication: the foreign title is essentially domesticated to a title that Albanian readers recognise within their own governmental vocabulary. In doing so, the translator maintains clarity without diminishing the stature of the position being described.

Example 4

Source Text (EN)	Target Text (AL)
"On his **campaign trail** he is followed by people dressed in chicken costumes."	"Gjatë **turite elektoral** atë e ndjekin njerëztë veshursi pula."

The term under focus is "campaign trail". In the English source, campaign trail refers to the series of events and travels a politician undertakes during an election campaign. The Albanian translation given is "*tur elektoral*," literally "electoral tour". This is a concise and effective translation that has become a commonly used phrase in Albanian political language to denote an election campaign circuit. It demonstrates a case of either a calque or neologism that has been adopted into Albanian: tur (tour) captures the sense of moving from place to place, and *elektoral* (electoral) specifies the context. The straightforwardness of this translation might suggest a simple equivalence, but the surrounding context reveals a deeper cultural translation challenge. The full situation described in the source text is that the politician is perceived as afraid of his opponent, and as a result, people in chicken costumes follow him on the campaign trail to mock him (calling someone a "chicken" in English slang means they are coward). The commentary notes that this presents a translation dilemma that goes beyond a single term: in Albanian culture, the equivalent slang for a coward is *"lepur"* (rabbit). A direct translation of the situation – if it were only in text – could replace the metaphor of a chicken with that ofa rabbit to convey the insult (for example, saying the candidate is being followed by "people dressed as rabbits"). However, because this likely comes from a real news story or anecdote (possibly accompanied by photographs of people in chicken suits), the translator cannot simply substitute rabbit for chicken. This is an example of a phrase that is on the verge of untranslatability due to cultural specificity reinforced by visual reality. The translator has to make a choice: either explain the joke or find some creative work around. In a news context, one might translate it literally and then add an explanation in parentheses or a footnote about the English connotation of "chicken".

In the class discussion, this example was used to illustrate how multimodal context (the fact that images accompanied the text) can constrain translation choices. The term "campaign trail" → "tur elektoral" itself is handled well – it shows how Albanian has developed a term for a modern political concept via borrowing (tur from common usage, and *elektoral* likely from international Latin-based vocabulary). But the idiomatic insult (chicken = coward) does not translate so neatly. This highlights a broader point in terminology translation: not only must individual terms be translated, but any cultural or metaphorical meanings attached to them must be conveyed, which sometimes requires explicitation or compensation. If one were to fully translate the spirit of the example, one might say something like, "people dressed in chicken costumes (a reference to cowardice in Anglophone culture)" for an Albanian audience, or use an Albanian equivalent expression elsewhere in the text to get the idea across.

In summary, Example 4 encapsulates multiple translation challenges: a successfully translated term (campaign trail as *tur elektoral*, demonstrating adaptation of terminology into Albanian) alongside a tricky cultural reference (the "chicken" metaphor) that does not have a direct correspondence in the target culture's political idioms. It serves as a reminder that a translator must be attentive not just to terminology in isolation but to how language and culture interact in the political narrative. In light of our theoretical framework, this example underscores the need for pragmatic adaptation – aligning with *Skopos* (what does the translation need to achieve?) and potentially using a mix of domesticating and foreignizing tactics; domesticating the term campaign trail to an Albanian equivalent, but perhaps foreignizing the "chicken" element by retaining and explaining it, since visual evidence prevents a full cultural substitution.

After examining these four examples, several important observations can be made. First, political terminology does not exist in a vacuum; it is tightly interwoven with the cultural and institutional fabric of the country whose political system it represents. Each term carries assumptions about governance, history, and society. The Albanian examples show a language coping with an influx of foreign political concepts by either (a) preserving some older native terms (relics of pre-1990s usage), or (b) borrowing new terms outright, sometimes without fully adapting them to Albanian phonology or grammar. Consequently, even as the Albanian political lexicon expands and modernises, there is a simultaneous drift away from purely Albanian linguistic roots, as the language ventures into "unknown territories" of calques and loans from vastly different languages and political systems. This tension between embracing new terminology and maintaining linguistic identity is a central theme in Albanian terminology development since the 1990s.

Renowned Albanian translator and researcher Ardian Vehbiu (2017) has commented on the unprecedented pressure of English on the Albanian language in this domain. He notes that the influence of English today endangers Albanian's grammatical and structural integrity far more than earlier influences from languages like Italian or French did. The crux of the problem, Vehbiu argues, is that Albanian lacks strategies to systematically absorb English borrowings, not just in spelling but in morphological and gender adaptation. For example, when an English term like "mouse" (the computer device) enters Albanian, there is confusion even over something as basic as grammatical gender – by default, Albanian tends to assign masculine gender (*mausi* for "the mouse"), but there is no established convention and such issues are debated. While Vehbiu's observation is about general language, it is equally applicable to political terminology. Many English (and other foreign) political terms have entered Albanian with minimal adaptation, leading to hybrid usages. Often, Albanians will use a borrowed term but attach to it a meaning that diverges from the original, due to local interpretations or partial understanding.

In light of this, the next part of our analysis (Section 2) will take a closer look at how Albanian political terminology has evolved since the fall of the totalitarian regime. With the establishment of new institutions, organisations, and roles in the post-1990 era, the language had to expand its lexicon rapidly. We will examine groups of terms to see patterns in how they were translated or integrated, and how translators and language planners navigated the challenges outlined above. Gerard-René De Groot's (1988) comparative framework for legal translation is instructive here, as it can be analogously applied to political-administrative terms. De groot categorises scenarios based on the relationship between systems and languages, for example:

- Systems and languages are closely related – e.g. two countries with similar political systems and related languages (such as France and Portugal, both semi-presidential republics with Romance languages). Translation of terms here is relatively straightforward, as many concepts align and terminology may even share Latin roots.
- Systems are closely related, but languages are not – *e.g.* Austria and Bulgaria (both parliamentary republics, but Germanic vs. Slavic languages). Conceptual equivalence might exist for political roles, but linguistic form will differ, requiring careful rendering of terms into an unrelated language family.
- Systems are different, but languages are related – *e.g.* Italy and France (different government structures – one parliamentary, one semi-presidential – but both languages are Romance languages). Here, cognate terms might mislead (false friends) because the languages resemble each other, yet the political realities diverge. The translator must ensure that a familiar-sounding term in the related language truly matches the concept (e.g. "ministro" in

Italian vs "minister" in French might not cover exactly the same institutional role if the systems differ).

- Systems and languages are both unrelated – *e.g.* the USA and Albania (a federal presidential system with an English language, versus a unitary parliamentary system with an Indo-European but unique language). This is the most challenging scenario for thetranslation of terminology. Virtually every term may lack an equivalent, and one must often either borrow terms or create neologisms. The cultural gap is wide, and translators must often provide extra explanation or use analogies.

Post-communist Albania translating American political terminology squarely falls into that last, most challenging category. It often requires a combination of strategies: borrowing some terms as-is (transcription), adapting others, and sometimes explaining through descriptive phrases. In the sections that follow, we categorise the influx of political terms into groups (*e.g.,* universals, borrowings, hybrids) to see how each category has been handled. By doing so, we connect the specific translation decisions back to broader translation strategies – for instance, when was a domesticating approach (finding an Albanian equivalent) favoured, and when did translators resort to foreignizing (importing the term)? How does *Skopos* play into the standardisation of certain terms for official use? The analysis aims to illuminate not just what choices were made, but why – linking the observed outcomes to the theoretical positions outlined earlier. Ultimately, this will shed light on the evolving Albanian political lexicon and what it tells us about the interplay between language, culture, and translation in the political domain.
What follows is a detailed analysis of Albanian political terminology grouped by origin and adaptation, followed by the conclusion.

Group A – The Universals

As in any other sphere of human activity, there are certain aspects that pertain to all of humanity. In the Albanian case, terms belonging to this group have entered the Albanian political terminology without prejudice to the language they originate from. These terms have been accommodated into the Albanian language observing the spelling rules, though they have often presented certain grammatical deviations.

Source Text (EN)	Target Text (AL)
candidate[4]	kandidat[5]
delegate[6]	delegate[7]
disinformation[8]	dezinformim[9]
round[10]	raund[11]

Tab.1: The Universals.

[4] See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/candidate

[5] See http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/ - a person who is nominated or proposed to be elected for public office, to be admitted in an organization, to carry out a task or job; the one elected to be part of an executive forum with no prior membership (literal translation)

[6] See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/delegate

[7]See http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/ - a representative chosen by an organization, personnel etc., to take part in a convention or conference.

[8]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disinformation

[9]N/A in the Albaniandictionary

[10]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/round

[11]N/A in the Albaniandictionary

Group B-The Problematic ones

The second category of terms under analysis comprises terms that denote one thing in the original, but take on a different meaning in the Albanian political sphere. The meaning of the terms is found in the respective footnote.

Source Text (EN)	Target Text (AL)
manifesto[12]	manifest[13]
convention[14]	konventë[15]
legislature[16]	legjislaturë[17]
presidency[18]	presidencë[19]

Tab. 2: The problematic ones.

Group C – The Challenging ones

The last group consists of the terms which carry a strong cultural nuance so intrinsic in the source culture that it becomes impossible to render it as it is in the target language. The solution in such a case is either keeping it as it is and using footnotes or transposing it, thus running the risk of not bridging the cultural gap, as in the following cases.

Whistle-stop tour[20] is a practice of making political speeches or appearances in many different towns during a short period of time. Although it has lost some of its necessity in the information and digital age, it is nevertheless unknown to Albanian electorate due to the very small size of the country.

Smoke filled rooms is an expression which denotes a situation where politicians or other powerful individuals gather in a private, enclosed space to make important decisions or negotiations without public scrutiny.[21] Its equivalent in Albanian is *"takim me dyer të mbyllura"*– meeting behind closed doors, which bears the importance of being without public or media scrutiny but no figurative language is observed.

Dream ticket refers to the ideal combination of two politicians working for one party in an election,[22] mainly the candidate duo for president and vice-president of the United States. The fact that the Albanian political system is not a presidential one, that the president is proposed to the Parliament for approval, and that there is no race for the vice-president, makes it for the expression to go lost, culturally speaking. The only way for the translator to solve the problem is through componential analysis.

[12]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/manifesto

[13]See http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/ - (a writtenstatement, in the format of a program, by meansofwhich a party or otherpoliticalorganization, literary or artisticstream, philosoficalschool, groupofresearchersetc., announcestheirfundamentalprinciples or objectives.)

[14]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/convention

[15]See http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/ - (an agreementbetweentwo or more statesforcommercial or cultural or other kind ofexchange.)

[16]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/legislature

[17]See http://www.fjalori.shkenca.org/

[18]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/presidency

[19] No entry in the AlbanianDictionary. Nevertheless, the meaning it conveys is that of the office/building of the president.

[20] See https://media.cbs8.com/assets/KFMB/images/6c3c1bf2-670b-4758-a2d8-af087752f4c4/6c3c1bf2-670b-4758-a2d8-af087752f4c4_1920x1080.jpg

[21]See https://politicaldictionary.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/smoke-filled-room-728x530.jpg.webp

[22]See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dream-ticket

Teflon president refers to a president whose image seems so protected by any harm or dirt thrown at them and who has a seemingly magical ability to avoid blame.[23] The "Teflon" coating seems to be a little outdated by the new more sophisticated non-stick materials, it is nonetheless still used in American political English. In Albanian it is translated by making use of a medical term: "an immunised political figure", thus the terminologisation process takes the lead.
Watergate/-gate refers to the scandal, and from 1972 to any scandal involving abuses of office, skul-duggery and a cover-up.[24] The "-gate" has now prevailed in being attached as a suffix to any scandal.

> Last week the French wine industry was in ferment over the disclosure of a fraudulent scheme to peddle cheap wine as expensive Bordeaux… You will think it's exaggerating to say this, but the U.S had Watergate and now we have our **winegate**" – Newsweek, 10 September 1973
>
> The suspects allegedly falsified records, fed incriminating evidence through a paper shredder and conducted a cover-up so pervasive that one investigator calls it **"Ice Cream Gate"** – Time, 18 August 1975
>
> **Minxhozi: Pango-Gate** vë në në vështirësi maxhorencën." – Top Channel, 6 March 2009
>
> **Skandali Katar-Gate** / Zyrtarët e PE i heq imunitetit deputetit të dyshuar për korrupsion"[25] – BalkanWeb, 2 February 2023

An interesting phenomenon in the Albanian case is the use of the suffix '-gate'. While it inherently signifies a scandal, its foreign origin in the Albanian context compels journalists to include the word 'skandal' (which is directly translated to "scandal") to ensure clarity for readers. As a result, expressions such as "The Katar-Scandal Scandal" emerge.

5. Conclusion

The translation of political terminology between American English and Albanian highlights the deep interconnection between language and culture, emphasising the importance of both linguistic accuracy and cultural understanding. The analysis presented above reveals several key findings:
Cultural and Linguistic Challenges: Translating political terms often involves navigating cultural nuances that are deeply embedded in the source language but lack direct equivalents in the target language. These challenges frequently result in either the adoption of borrowed terms or the development of new, localised expressions to convey similar meanings. Translators must be alert to connotations and adjust their strategies (literal, functional, descriptive) to bridge conceptual gaps.
Terminologisation and Borrowing: A significant proportion of new political terminology in Albanian since the 1990s originates from foreign languages - particularly English, but also other influential languages like French and Italian. These terms undergo a process of terminologisation, whereby they are gradually adapted to Albanian phonology, morphology, and usage rules. However, this adaptation is not always smooth or complete, often the borrowed

[23]See https://politicaldictionary.com/words/teflon-president/
[24]See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Watergate
[25]See https://www.balkanweb.com/skandali-katar-gate-zyrtare-pe-i-heq-imunitetin-deputeteve-te-dyshuar-per-korrupsion/#gsc.tab=0 – The Qatar-Gate scandal/ It'sofficial: the EuropeanParliamentlifts the immunityoftwoMPslinked to corruption.

terms diverge from their original semantic context. We observed cases where an English term was calqued or transliterated and then took on a slightly different meaning in Albanian political discourse. This creates a gap between linguistic precision (faithfulness to the source concept) and cultural resonance (how well the term fits into Albanian discourse). Effective translation in this realm may require conscious standardisation efforts – agreeing on one Albanian equivalent for a foreign term – to avoid confusion in public communication.

Evolving Political Discourse: The rapid political and social changes in post-communist Albania have led to a chaotic linguistic landscape where terminology struggles to keep pace with new political realities. In the span of a few decades, Albanians were introduced to concepts of multi-party democracy, free elections, new governmental institutions, and a globalised political dialogue. The language had to expand quickly, often by importing foreign terminology. This rapid evolution has resulted in inconsistencies and instabilities in usage. Some older terms (from the socialist era) persist, sometimes with adjusted meanings, while many new terms are used alongside or instead of them. The detachment from traditional Albanian linguistic roots – noted by Vehbiu and others – suggests that without careful cultivation, the political lexicon risks becoming an amalgam of borrowed words that many citizens find alien. In response, there have been calls within Albania for a more thoughtful approach to terminology development (*e.g.*, creating genuine Albanian neologisms or thoroughly nativising loans), underscoring that language planning is an integral part of accommodating political change.

Translators' Strategies and Training: For translators, the findings reinforce that translating political terminology demands more than dictionary knowledge – it requires contextual savvy and often, creativity. As illustrated in the course context, teaching translation of terminology involves training students to conduct terminological research, to understand the source and target political systems, and to evaluate multiple translation options. A term might have a "standard" translation, but the translator should know when that standard fits, and when a different approach is warranted. The Examples also show the value of critical thinking – questioning whether a literal translation truly communicates the meaning, or whether an idiom can cross cultures unchanged. Integrating cultural and functional analysis into translation training can better prepare students to bridge the "ocean" of differences between systems like those of the United States and Albania. In essence, translation pedagogy for political terminology must combine linguistic competence with cultural-literary insight and an appreciation of real-world usage.

In conclusion, the exploration of American political terminology and its Albanian translations reveals a microcosm of the broader translation challenges at the intersection of language, politics, and culture. Albanian's case is a vivid example of a language in transition, expanding its vocabulary to accommodate new political realities. Through the lens of *Skopos* theory and the insights of scholars like Newmark, Venuti & Schäffner, we see that every term's journey from source to target involves choices that have communicative and ideological consequences. The translator acts as a mediator – not just between words, but between worlds. Ensuring that meaning is carried across accurately while respecting the target culture's norms and the source culture's intent is a delicate balancing act. By studying cases such as these and grounding our approach in solid theoretical principles, we move toward translations that are not only linguistically sound but also culturally and functionally effective. In doing so, we contribute to a richer and more precise political discourse in the target language, empowering readers to engage with international political ideas without losing the nuances that those ideas carry.

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Chapter 13.
Metafore antropomorfiche nelle descrizioni del paesaggio in *Cenere* di Grazia Deledda e nelle traduzioni polacche

Anthropomorphic Metaphors in the Landscape Descriptions in *Cenere* by Grazia Deledda and in its Polish Translations

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Abstract

Il presente articolo analizza l'uso delle metafore antropomorfiche nelle descrizioni del paesaggio nel romanzo *Cenere* di Grazia Deledda e nelle sue due traduzioni polacche, entrambe risalenti al 1906, rispettivamente di Wilhelmina Zyndram-Kościałkowska e Karolina Dzieduszycka. L'analisi si concentra sulle figure retoriche classificate da Michele Prandi (2019) come vive, conflittuali o creative, escludendo quelle convenzionali, ed esamina esempi legati a paesaggi interiori, alla Sardegna e ai corpi celesti. Attraverso un approccio comparativo che impiega anche la tipologia delle strategie traduttive di Edyta Bocian (2009), lo studio investiga le modalità di resa di tali figure. I risultati evidenziano differenze significative: Dzieduszycka mostra una maggiore fedeltà all'originale, preferendo la traduzione letterale, mentre Zyndram-Kościałkowska tende a ridurre o eliminare l'immaginario figurativo. Tali approcci si allineano con osservazioni relative ad altri aspetti del loro lavoro.
Sebbene l'attenzione principale sia rivolta alle metafore, l'articolo considera anche le similitudini, che spesso le accompagnano o sostituiscono nel processo traduttivo. Infine, si sottolinea l'importanza di un'indagine ecocritica delle traduzioni deleddiane per comprendere meglio l'interazione tra l'uomo e l'ambiente, elemento caratteristico dell'opera dell'autrice.

Parole chiave: Grazia Deledda, *Cenere*, descrizioni del paesaggio, metafore antropomorfiche, traduzioni polacche.

Abstract

This article analyses the use of anthropomorphic metaphors in the landscape descriptions of Grazia Deledda's novel *Cenere* and its two Polish translations, both from 1906, produced respectively by Wilhelmina Zyndram-

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Kościałkowska and Karolina Dzieduszycka. The analysis focuses on rhetorical figures classified by Michele Prandi (2019) as live, conflicting, or creative, excluding conventional ones, and examines examples tied to inner landscapes, Sardinia, and celestial bodies. Through a comparative approach that also employs Edyta Bocian's (2009) typology of translation strategies, the study investigates how these figures are rendered. The findings highlight significant differences: Dzieduszycka demonstrates greater fidelity to the original, preferring literal translation, while Zyndram-Kościałkowska tends to reduce or eliminate the figurative imagery. These approaches align with observations regarding other aspects of their work. Although the primary focus is on metaphors, the article also considers similes, which often accompany or replace them during the translation process. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of examining the Deledda translations also through an ecocritical lens to better understand the interplay between humans and the environment that characterizes the author's work.

Keywords: Grazia Deledda, *Cenere*, landscape descriptions, anthropomorphic metaphors, Polish translations.

1. Introduzione

Cenere di Grazia Deledda fu inizialmente pubblicato a puntate sulla rivista «Nuova Antologia» nel 1903. L'anno seguente inaugurò la collana della stessa rivista (Deledda 1904a), e nel 1910 uscì presso l'editore Treves (Chessa 2022: 101). Seguendo l'esempio della traduzione francese (Deledda 1905), nel 1906 apparvero due traduzioni polacche di questo romanzo, una a Varsavia, l'altra a Kiev.

Quella data alle stampe a Varsavia (Deledda 1906a) la dobbiamo a Wilhelmina Zyndram-Kościałkowska (1844-1926), già traduttrice di *Dopo il divorzio* (Deledda 1904b), la prima opera della scrittrice nuorese tradotta in polacco. Zyndram-Kościałkowska, che tradusse poi anche *La giustizia* (Deledda 1909), dedicò al futuro premio Nobel sia brevi introduzioni alle edizioni polacche di *Dopo il divorzio* e *Cenere*, paragonando quest'ultimo romanzo a *David Copperfield* e lodando Deledda per il suo sentire la natura in sé e in relazione alle persone (Deledda 1906a, I: 4-5), sia parte di un saggio apparso nel 1913 sulla rivista letteraria «Sfinks», in cui Deledda è «apprezza[ta] soprattutto per le sue opere sarde, per aver introdotto nella letteratura italiana nuovi ambienti, nuovi tipi umani e nuovi paesaggi creati con grande sensibilità cromatica» (Miszalska 2022: 516-517). Zyndram-Kościałkowska firmò anche le traduzioni di autori quali Dickens, D'Annunzio o Loti, oltre che raccolte di racconti e studi letterari. La seconda traduzione di *Cenere* (Deledda 1906b) fu pubblicata a puntate sul «Dziennik Kijowski», un quotidiano fondato nel 1906 dalla minoranza polacca di Kiev. L'autrice di questa versione, Karolina Dzieduszycka (vissuta presumibilmente negli anni 1872-1937), meno nota, dal 1905 al 1910 tradusse anche due opere di Gerolamo Rovetta (il dramma *Il re burlone* e il romanzo *La moglie di sua eccellenza*), nonché *Dopo il perdono* di Matilde Serao. *Cenere* è uno dei dieci romanzi deleddiani tradotti in polacco prima della Seconda guerra mondiale, insieme a undici novelle (Łukaszewicz 2024).

Questo studio si concentra sull'approccio verso le metafore antropomorfiche presenti nelle descrizioni paesaggistiche di *Cenere* adottato dalle due rispettive traduttrici. Le versioni polacche vengono messe a confronto tra loro e analizzate rispetto alla versione originale pubblicata nel 1904. Tenendo conto dall'analisi comparativa delle due prime edizioni del romanzo svolta da Maddalena Rasera (2014), si può affermare che entrambe le traduttrici utilizzarono questa edizione piuttosto che quella a puntate del 1903.

Mi soffermo sulle metafore che Michele Prandi (2019) chiama *vive*, *conflittuali* o *creatrici*, escludendo quelle *convenzionali* (*coerenti*). Le metafore vive «sfidano il nostro pensiero» e «mettono in luce con maggiore forza la capacità di far interagire concetti estranei», mentre le metafore convenzionali sono «integrate nel nostro pensiero condiviso e fatte proprie dal lessico della lingua» (come *l'ala dell'edificio* o *il denaro liquido*) (Prandi & Raschini, 2009: 22). Nel

corpus analizzato metafore convenzionali sono contenute ad esempio nella frase d'apertura del romanzo: «Cadeva la notte di San Giovanni» (Deledda 1904a: 5) e in una delle immagini del monte tanto caro alla scrittrice: «Anania guardava dalla sua finestruola il lento sorgere della luna fra i denti neri dell'Orthobene» (*Ibid*.: 108).
Mi sono ispirata all'approccio di Eleonora Fois che ha analizzato le metafore antropomorfiche ne *La madre* e in una traduzione inglese di questo romanzo, partendo dalle premesse secondo cui «il paesaggio è un costrutto culturale», «la nostra relazione con il paesaggio è mediata dalla nostra capacità di creare metafore» e «traduzione dello spazio costituisce una sfida per i traduttori» (Fois 2022: 1). Mi avvalgo anche della tipologia di strategie traduttive descritte da Edyta Bocian (2009), che comprende la traduzione letterale della metafora (riproduzione parola per parola), la demetaforizzazione (perdita della dimensione figurativa attraverso la riformulazione), l'abolizione della metafora (soppressione tanto del dominio di partenza quanto di quello di arrivo ovvero dei due concetti che contribuiscono alla nascita dell'immagine metaforica; omissione dell'intero brano contenente la metafora) e la traduzione letteraria (cambiamento del dominio di partenza). Esamino metafore che descrivono un paesaggio interiore (ovvero uno stato d'animo), i paesaggi sardi, l'isola intera e i corpi celesti. L'ultimo brano analizzato è stato scelto in virtù di una sua componente metatestuale relativa all'uso di figure stilistiche.
La riflessione, pur essendo focalizzata sulle metafore, tocca anche la questione delle similitudini che accompagnano metafore nel testo o si sostituiscono a esse nel processo traduttivo. È perciò utile fare una netta distinzione tra le due figure: «La metafora promuove l'interazione trasferendo un concetto in un ambito estraneo», mentre nella similitudine, che «attenua l'interazione», «ogni concetto rimane saldamente ancorato al suo ambito di pertinenza» (Prandi & Raskini 2009: 28, 23).

2. *Cenere*

Prima di addentrarmi nell'analisi delle metafore paesaggistiche, ritengo opportuno richiamare brevemente la trama e il significato simbolico del titolo, intimamente legato all'inizio e alla conclusione del romanzo.
Il romanzo narra la storia di Olì (Rosalia) Derios, sedotta e ingannata da un uomo sposato, e di Anania, nato da questa unione. Dopo i primi anni trascorsi a Fonni, il bambino viene abbandonato dalla madre e cresciuto a Nuoro dal padre e dalla moglie di quest'ultimo. Anania diventa un ottimo studente che, dopo aver completato il ginnasio di Nuoro, si trasferisce prima a Cagliari per gli anni liceali e i primi anni universitari, poi a Roma dove si iscrive alla facoltà di legge alla Sapienza. Si innamora, ricambiato, della bella figlia del padrino, ma, spinto da una forza travolgente, si strugge nella ricerca della madre. Quando la ritrova, scopre che ha vissuto ai margini della società e vuole imporle una vita regolare con il suo aiuto economico, negandole però ogni affetto. Manda all'aria i propri progetti di matrimonio, perché è determinato a non lasciarla, mentre la fidanzata rifiuta di condividere casa con una donna di cattiva reputazione. Olì si suicida per disperazione e in sacrificio per il figlio. Nel finale, Anania contempla il mucchietto di cenere contenuta nel sacchettino-amuleto chiamato *rezetta* che la madre gli aveva chiesto di portare sempre con sé.

> Cenere!
> Anania palpò parecchie volte, con entrambe le mani, quella cenere nera che forse era l'avanzo di qualche ricordo d'amore di sua madre; quella cenere che aveva posato lungamente sul suo petto, sentendone i palpiti più profondi.

> E in quell'ora memoranda della sua vita, della quale sentiva di non sentire ancora tutta la solenne significazione, gli parve che quel mucchiettino di cenere fosse un simbolo del destino. Sì, tutto era cenere: la vita, la morte, l'uomo; il destino stesso che la produceva.
> Eppure, in quell'ora suprema, vigilato dalla figura della vecchia fatale che sembrava la Morte in attesa, e davanti alla spoglia della più misera delle creature umane, che era morta per il bene altrui, dopo aver fatto e sofferto il male in tutte le sue manifestazioni, egli sentì che fra la cenere cova la scintilla, seme della fiamma luminosa e purificatrice, e sperò, e amò ancora la vita (Deledda 1904a: 361).

Il passaggio finale contiene cinque occorrenze della parola chiave *cenere* e due metafore costruite attorno a questo concetto («tutto era cenere...», «fra la cenere cova la scintilla...»). Entrambe le traduzioni polacche portano il titolo *Popiół* (cenere). Tuttavia, le traduttrici adottano strategie diverse per rendere la parola *cenere*. Dzieduszycka utilizza sistematicamente il termine *popiół*, mentre Zyndram-Kościałkowska, probabilmente influenzata dalla frase biblica «Ricordati che sei polvere e in polvere tornerai», usa quattro volte il traducente *proch* (polvere), alla fine però opta per il sostantivo *popiół*, poiché la scintilla si associa meglio alla cenere (*popiół*) che alla polvere (*proch*).

3. Paesaggio interiore

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
–Sì, – pensava lo studente, – la vita è nel moto. E gli pareva di sentire la forza gioconda dell'acqua agitata, mentre fino a quel giorno **la sua anima era stata una piccola palude con le sponde soffocate da erbe fetide**. (p. 125)	– Tak jest – myślał student – życie tkwi w nieustannym ruchu. I zdawało mu się, że czuje w sobie siłę niespokojnej wody wówczas, kiedy do dnia dzisiejszego **dusza jego była bagnem o brzegach, zarosłych cuchnącą trawą**. (n. 53, 7.04.1906/ 20.04.1906)	– Tak – myślał student – ruch jest życiem – myślał i czuł w sobie ruch i siłę płynącej wody, nad biegiem której **dziecięca jego duszyczka stała dotąd niby źdźbło trawy, uwięzionej w bagnie**. (vol. I, p. 134)

Tab. 1: Il paesaggio interiore.

In questo brano la descrizione di un paesaggio immaginario («una piccola palude con le sponde soffocate da erbe fetidi») serve per esplicitare la vita interiore del protagonista. Dzieduszycka rende quasi letteralmente la metafora, omettendo solo l'aggettivo *piccola*. Zyndram-Kościałkowska, invece, sostituisce la metafora con una similitudine (la relazione tra i due concetti è operata tramite la congiunzione *niby*, 'quasi'), «attenuando [in questo modo] l'impatto tra i concetti eterogenei» (Prandi & Raschini 2009). Inoltre, nella seconda versione, l'anima del protagonista, descritta come infantile (*dziecięca*) e piccola (*duszyczka*, diminutivo di *dusza,* «anima»), è paragonata a un filo d'erba intrappolato in una palude. Al centro del paesaggio sta dunque un filo d'erba, non una palude. In questa traduzione viene meno anche l'opposizione, evidente nell'originale, tra l'acqua agitata e l'acqua stagnante, visto che il paesaggio è stato reso come segue: «[...] sentì dentro di sé il movimento e la forza dell'acqua che scorre, sul cui corso la sua animuccia infantile finora si ergeva come un filo d'erba intrappolato in una palude».

4. Paesaggio sardo

Un altro esempio significativo di metafora antropomorfica riguarda la descrizione della strada che porta il giovane protagonista da Fonni a Nuoro:

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
Anania si sentì battere il cuoricino: quella strada grigia, **vigilata** dalle ultime case di Fonni i cui tetti di scheggie **parevano** grandi ali nerastre spennacchiate, quella strada che **scendeva** continuamente verso un abisso ignoto colmo di nebbia, era la strada per Nuoro. (pp. 38-39)	Serce dziecka biło gwałtownie: ta szara droga, **jakby strzeżona** ostatniemi domami Fonni, których łupkowe dachy **wydawały się** wulkanami czarnymi, rozpiętemi skrzydłami; ta droga, którą się ciągle **schodziło** do nieznanej przepaści, przykrytej mgłą, to była droga do Nuoro. (n. 6, 8.02.1906/21.02.1906)	Serce mu biło gwałtownie, a droga szara, **wilgotna**, po za którą pozostały lepianki Fonni, **wznosząca się wyżej, coraz wyżej**, była, wiedział to, drogą, wiodącą do Nuoro! (vol. I, p. 35)

Tab. 2: Il paesaggio sardo.

Nella traduzione di questo brano Dzieduszycka introduce un'attenuazione (*jakby* significa «quasi, come se»), trasformando la metafora della strada *vigilata* dalle case in una similitudine, e modifica il paragone che descrive i tetti delle case *vigilanti*: le *grandi ali nerastre spennacchiate* sono rese con *wulkanami czarnymi, rozpiętemi skrzydłami* (vulcani neri, ali spiegate). Zyndram-Kościałkowska elimina sia la metafora che il paragone e addirittura altera la direzione della strada, facendola salire invece di scendere. Quest'ultima modifica è particolarmente rilevante, poiché contrasta sia con il testo originale sia con la realtà geografica extratestuale. Non è escluso che l'aggettivo *wilgotna* (umida) che descrive la strada nella versione di Zyndram-Kościałkowska sia dovuto a un fraintendimento della parola *vigilata*, alla quale si avvicina foneticamente.

Il verbo «vigilare» è utilizzato da Deledda per creare altre metafore antropomorfiche, in particolare nelle descrizioni di corpi celesti. Esempi significativi si trovano in frasi come: «Si era addormentato in un tetro paese di dolore, fra onde livide **vigilate** da una luna sanguigna» (Deledda 1904a: 181); «[...] ricordava [...] il mistero dei viali **vigilati** dal puro sguardo delle stelle» (*Ibid*.: 201).

Dzieduszycka traduce queste metafore quasi letteralmente:

> «Usnął był w smutnej krainie boleści, wśród bladych fal, **strzeżonych** krwawym księżycem» (Deledda 1906b, n. 59, 14.04.1906/27.04.1906);
> «wspominał […] tajemnicę gór, **strzeżonych** czystym wzrokiem gwiazd» (Deledda1906b, n. 63, 19.04.1906/2.05.1906).

Nella traduzione di Zyndram-Kościałkowska, invece, la prima metafora viene eliminata, mentre l'immagine della luna diventa non solo più complessa, ma anche poco comprensibile («si era addormentato [...] sotto una luna che sprofondava pesantemente in vortici e riverberi color ruggine»): «Usnął w ponurem państwie smutku, pod miesiącem, zapadającym ciężko w rdzawe jakieś odmęty i brzaski» (Deledda1906a, II: 10). Per quanto riguarda la seconda metafora, essa

viene parzialmente conservata ma modificata, con l'introduzione dell'espressione «sotto l'occhio delle stelle»: «myślał o tajemniczych szmerach dolin **pod okiem jeno gwiazd** drżących na nieboskłonie» (Deledda 1906a, II: 28).
Da notare che in entrambe le versioni il traducente di *viali* risulta inadeguato: laddove Dzieduszycka lo rende con *góry* (montagne), Zyndram-Kościałkowska lo traduce come *doliny* (valli). Il paesaggio descritto nelle traduzioni conserva sì dei tratti antropomorfici, ma è alterato nella sua sostanza.

5. Primavera sarda

Una complessa visione antropomorfica emerge dalla descrizione della primavera sarda, che si contrappone alla primavera romana nei ricordi nostalgici di Anania. L'antropomorfismo della stagione si costruisce attraverso un sostantivo (*giovinetta*), due aggettivi (*selvaggia*, *pura*) e quattro verbi (*scorazzava*, *cantava*, *scherzava*, *si addormentava*), ciascuno dei quali introduce un diverso aspetto del quadro paesaggistico.

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
La primavera palpitava al di là dell'orizzonte; **giovinetta selvaggia e pura** ella **scorazzava** nelle tancas coperte d'erba alta e fluttuante, e **cantava** con gli uccelli palustri in riva ai solitarî torrenti, e **scherzava** coi mufloni e con le lepri saltellanti fra i ciclamini, sotto le immense quercie sacre ai vecchi pastori della Barbagia, e si **addormentava** all'ombra delle roccie fiorite di musco, nei voluttuosi meriggi, mentre intorno al suo letto di felci e di pervinche gli insetti dorati ronzavano amandosi, e le api suggevano le rose canine estraendone il miele amaro; amaro e dolce come anima sarda. (p. 202)	**Wiosna** drgała tam... daleko... poza horyzontem **młodziutka, dzika i czysta**, **dostawała się** do chat ukrytych w wysokich falujących trawach, **śpiewała** z błotnem ptactwem na brzegach samotnych potoków, **igrała** z muflonami i zającami skaczącemi wśród cyklamenów, pod cieniem olbrzymich dębów będących świętością dla starych pasterzy z Barbaryi, i **usypiała** w cieniu skał, pokrytych mchem, w rozkosznych godzinach południa, kiedy wokoło jej łoża z paproci i barwinku złote owady w miłosnych brzęczały gonitwach, a pszczoły z dzikich róż sok wysysały, biorąc z nich gorzki miód... gorzki i słodki, jak sardyńska dusza. (n. 63, 19.04.1906/2.05.1906)	Jakże inaczej bywało tam, daleko, za morzem, na Zachód. Anania przypomniał sobie **dzieciństwo** swe sielskie, pastwisko, porosłe wysoką, chwiejną trawą, ptaszki, kwilące w gąszczu krzaków, cichy szmer strumieni, rwący szum górskich potoków, tańce i susy cieląt i jagniąt, źrebiąt i zajączków na miedzy w cieniu olbrzymich dębów, czczonych jak bożyszcza przez owczarzy Barbagii. Przypominał drzemki słodkie w zagłębieniu skał, okrytych mchem miękkim, w znojne południe, na posłaniu z pierwiosnków i paproci, czombrów i mięty, przy żurczeniu miliardów kryjących się w trawach żuczków, brzęczeniu miriad pszczół zawieszonych na słońca promieniu, nad zakwieconym zielem,

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
		z którego czerpią miody wonne i gorzkawe, jak sama istota ducha Sardynii. (vol. II, p. 29)

Tab. 3: La primavera sarda.

Solo Dzieduszycka mantiene la metafora, pur riducendo leggermente l'antropomorfismo con l'introduzione di un aggettivo (*młodziutka*, molto giovane) al posto del sostantivo *giovinetta*. Zyndram-Kościałkowska, invece, sostituisce l'intera metafora con un ricordo dell'infanzia (*dzieciństwo*) del protagonista, eliminando completamente l'antropomorfismo della primavera. Nella sua versione, le azioni attribuite alla primavera nel testo originale vengono trasferite agli animali o al protagonista stesso.
La descrizione della Sardegna primaverile contiene una serie di riferimenti alla sardità: *tancas* (vasti terreni recintati adibiti a pascolo), mufloni, querce sacre, pastori della Barbagia e anima sarda. Nella traduzione di Dzieduszycka si perde solo il termine *tancas*, mentre nella versione di Zyndram-Kościałkowska scompaiono sia *tancas* che mufloni.
L'antropomorfizzazione della primavera è presente già nelle prime pagine del romanzo. Qui, le metafore che risultano dall'incrocio dei domini della morte e del regno con quello della primavera – «Nella campagna intorno **moriva** la selvaggia primavera sarda [...]» (Deledda 1904a: 6), «La primavera **regnava** nella campagna selvaggia [...]» (Deledda 1904a: 13) – sono tradotte alla lettera da Zyndram-Kościałkowska. Dzieduszycka nel secondo caso neutralizza l'antropomorfizzazione.

6. Isola

La Sardegna è descritta con tratti umani nel commiato che Anania rivolge alla sua terra natia quando parte per Roma:

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
Addio dunque, terra natia, isola **triste**, **antica madre amata ma non abbastanza** perché una voce potente d'oltre mare non strappi i tuoi **figli** migliori dal tuo **grembo** tiepido, come il vento chiama gli aquilotti incitandoli a disertare il nido della roccia solitaria. (p. 176)	A więc żegnaj, ziemio rodzinna, **smutna** wyspo, starożytna, **ukochana matko, jednak nie dość ukochana**, by potężny głos z za morza nie wyrwał najlepszych twych **synów** z **objęć** twoich, tak, jak wicher woła orlęta, by opuszczały gniazdo, tam, na samotnej uczepione skale. (n. 58, 13.04.1906/ 26.04.1906)	Żegnaj ziemio rodzima! Wyspo cicha, **kolebko** luba, lecz nie wystarczająca, gdyż oblewające cię ruchomą falą morze, od ciepłego twego **łona** odrywa najlepszych twych **synów**, jak wiatr, co na nadbrzeżnem gnieździe wzdyma zaledwie opierzonych orląt skrzydła. (II, p. 6)

Tab. 4: L'isola.

Dzieduszycka rende fedelmente la metafora, mantenendo l'immagine della madre, rinforzata con le nozioni del grembo e dei figli. Zyndram-Kościałkowska, invece, riduce l'antropomorfismo, sostituendo la *madre* con la *culla* (*kolebka*).

7. Corpi celesti

In questo romanzo il campo semantico dei corpi celesti (il sole, la luna e le stelle) è particolarmente ricco di metafore e similitudini. La personificazione della luna è un elemento ricorrente non solo in *Cenere* (Fois 2022). Un esempio particolarmente ricco di metafore e similitudini si trova nel passaggio in cui Anania scrive all'innamorata una lettera da Cagliari:

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
«Mentre scrivo sento le rane gracidare ancora negli orti lontani, e vedo **la luna** salire come un **volto** d'alabastro sul cielo verdognolo del crepuscolo tiepido. È la stessa **luna** che vedevo salire sul solitario orizzonte nuorese, è lo stesso **viso rotondo e melancolico** che vedevo **affacciarsi** alle rocce dell'Orthobene, ma come ora mi sembra più dolce, diverso, quasi **sorridente**!». (p. 159)	«Kiedy to piszę, słyszę w dalekich ogrodach skrzeczenie żab i widzę, jak **księżyc** wschodzi jako **wielkie** alabastrowe **oblicze** na zielonawem niebie ciepłego zmierzchu. To ten sam **księżyc**, który na naszym samotnym horyzoncie wschodził, i to samo **oblicze okrągłe i smętne**, które widziałem na tle Orthobene, ale jakżeż teraz wydaje mi się ono słodkie, inne, prawie **uśmiechnięte**». (n. 54, 8.04.1906/21.04.1906)	«Gdy piszę – pisał – żabki skrzeczą w ogrodach, a **miesiąc** wznosi się na niebie, podobny do **kuli** z alabastru, po nad ciemnemi szafirami morza. Ten sam to miesiąc, którego **twarz blada** przyświeca w Nuoro i wznosi się **smętnie** nad Orthobene... Czemuż zdaje mi się dziś bardziej lubym, łaskawszym, **uśmiechniętym**». (I, p. 137)

Tab. 5: I corpi celesti (prima parte).

Il paragone della luna al volto d'alabastro prepara la metafora della luna antropomorfizzata (viso rotondo e melancolico, affacciarsi, sorridente). Dzieduszycka rende le due figure quasi letteralmente, limitandosi ad amplificare leggermente l'immagine con l'aggiunta dell'aggettivo *wielkie*, «immenso», per caratterizzare il volto). Zyndram-Kościałkowska riduce invece l'effetto figurativo, sostituendo nella similitudine il *volto* con una *palla* d'alabastro (*kula z alabastru*).

Per quanto riguarda le stelle, pensiamo alla metafora «viali vigilati dal puro sguardo delle stelle» ricordata, alla metafora: «La luce delle **stelle sorridenti**» (Deledda1904a: 18), mantenuta da Dzieduszycka ed eliminata da Zyndram-Kościałkowska oppure al paragone: «**Stelle e pianeti**, infiniti **come le lagrime umane**, oscillavano sul cielo senza confine [...]» (Deledda1904a: 119-120), reso da Dzieduszycka in modo letterale e da Zyndram-Kościałkowska attraverso l'omissione dei pianeti.

Un pianeta associato simbolicamente all'amore diventa protagonista di una complessa immagine metaforica in cui viene trattato allo stesso tempo come una stella e una donna:

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
[...] Venere splendeva sull'orizzonte roseo, **sola e ridente**, quasi **affacciatasi** prima delle altre stelle per **godersi** la dolcezza della sera senza essere disturbata. **A che pensava la solitaria stella? Aveva un amante lontano?** Anania osò rassomigliarsi all'astro radioso, così solo nel cielo come egli era solo nella pineta. (p. 171)	Wenera świeciła na różowem horyzoncie, **sama** i **uśmiechnięta**, jakby **się** chciała była **ukazać** przed innemi gwiazdami, by się, bez przeszkody **nasycić słodyczą** cudnego wieczoru. **O czem myślała samotna gwiazda? Czy miała dalekiego kochanka?** Ani ośmielił się porównać siebie do promienistej gwiazdy, tak samo na niebie samotnej, jak on był samotnym w sośninie. (n. 57, 12.04.1906/25.04.1906)	Na niebie Wenus **samotna** wyprzedziła **siostry-gwiazdy**, by **się napawać** urokiem zmierzchu zapadającego szybko na opalowe wody, na skalne, bogato dzierzgane wybrzeża. **O czem tak się zadumała gwiazda szczytna? Czy o nieobecnym kochanku**, o Adonisie bladym? Anania porównywał siebie do tej samotnej na nieboskłonach gwiazdy, samotnej na firmamencie, jak on samotny był na ziemi. (I, 147)

Tab. 6: I corpi celesti (seconda parte).

L'antropomorfizzazione di Venere (sola, ridente, solitaria, affacciarsi, pensare, godersi, avere un amante) è resa letteralmente da Dzieduszycka e – con qualche modifica – anche da Zyndram-Kościałkowska che gomma le azioni di sorridere e affacciarsi, ma introduce la nozione di stelle sorelle (*siostry-gwiazdy*).

8. Creatore di paragoni

Per concludere, è interessante soffermarsi su un brano che evidenzia l'importanza delle figure retoriche nella narrazione deleddiana. Un elemento di carattere metatestuale («Questi paragoni [...]») è introdotto da una serie di immagini (metafore e paragoni) che coinvolgono, tra l'altro, la luna.

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
Attaccò le mani fredde alle guancie ardenti, con gli occhi fissi al **viso melanconico della luna**, e rabbrividì. Ricordava un freddo e luminoso plenilunio d'inverno, la vergogna e la rivelazione del furto delle cento lire, **la figura di**	Przyłożył zimne ręce do palących policzków, wpatrzony w **smętną tarczę księżyca** i zadrżał. Przypomniał sobie zimną i jasną zimową pełń księżyca, wstyd i przyznanie się do kradzieży stu lirów i **postać Małgosi stojącej przed nim jak cień kwiatu, na złotej tarczy księżyca**. Ach! może **miłość** jego od tego	Jak lód zimne dłonie tulił do płonących policzków, do ócz zapatrzonych w **srebrną tarczę miesiąca**. Przypomniała mu się pełnia księżyca pewnej zimy. Kradzież stu lirów i przyznanie się do winy. Na **srebrnej tarczy księżyca** rysowała mu się

Deledda (1904a)	**Dzieduszycka** (1906)	**Zyndram-Kościałkowska** (1906)
Margherita sorta davanti lui come l'ombra d'un fiore sul disco d'oro della luna. Ah, forse il suo **amore** datava da quella sera; ma soltanto ora, dopo anni ed anni, scaturiva **rompendo la pietra sotto la quale era stato finora sepolto**, **a guisa di una sorgente che non vuole più scorrere sotterra. Questi paragoni**, - del fiore davanti alla luna, e della sorgente improvvisa, - **venivano fatti da Anania**; **che si compiaceva dei suoi pensieri poetici**, ma non cancellava con essi la vergogna ed il rimorso che lo tormentavano. (p. 109)	wieczora się zaczęła; ale dopiero teraz po latach i latach, wytryskała **gruchocząc skałę, pod którą dotąd pogrze baną była, jak to źródło, które już pod ziemią płynąć się wzbrania**! **To porównanie** kwiatu rzucającego cień na księżyc i źródła wytryskającego niespodziewanie z pod skały, **były pomysłu Ania**; **lubował się on w swoich poetycznych myślach**; nie koiły one jednak jego wstydu i wyrzutów sumienia. (n. 39, 18.03.1906/31.03.1906)	postać Małgosi. Kto wie, czy nie od tamtego to, zimowego wieczoru datowała się miłość jego dla niej, lecz teraz dopiero, po leciech wielu, nabierał pełnej jej świadomości, **jak kwiat nagle wykwitły z długo w ziemi i cieniu kiełkującego ziarna**. **Porównania te nasuwały mu się na myśl**, **podobały swą poetycznością, lubował się niemi**, lecz nie głuszyły wstydu i żalu, jaki odczuwał. (I, 94)

Tab. 7: Il creatore di paragoni.

L'antropomorfizzazione della luna («al viso melancolico della luna») viene fortemente ridotta o abolita nelle traduzioni: solo Dzieduszycka mantiene la melancolia; entrambe le traduttrici, però, sostituiscono il *viso* con il *disco*, che nell'originale compare solo in un secondo momento. Inoltre, nella traduzione di Zyndram-Kościałkowska il «disco d'oro della luna» diventa il «disco d'argento della luna», alterando ulteriormente l'immagine originale.

La visione di Margherita legata alla luna è resa come similitudine nella versione di Dzieduszycka, che segue fedelmente il testo originale. Questo paragone scompare invece nella traduzione di Zyndram-Kościałkowska. Anche il paragone «della sorgente improvvisa» che rompe la pietra è tradotto letteralmente da Dzieduszycka, mentre Zyndram-Kościałkowska lo sostituisce con l'immagine di un fiore che sboccia dopo una lunga germinazione sottoterra e all'ombra.

Ancora una volta, Zyndram-Kościałkowska opera con interventi più marcati nelle parti figurative. Tuttavia, entrambe le traduttrici rendono l'idea della compiacenza di Anania «dei suoi pensieri poetici».

Conclusioni

La critica ha riconosciuto che il paesaggio nella poetica deleddiana svolge un ruolo fondamentale. Le descrizioni paesaggistiche non sono semplici sfondi, ma partecipano attivamente alla narrazione, interagendo con i personaggi e riflettendo sia le loro emozioni sia le tematiche principali (cf. Ross 2022: 240-245). Come rilevato da Michela Murgia nell'introduzione a una recente edizione di *Cenere*, nelle opere di Deledda «il paesaggio aspro e continuamente sconvolto dagli eventi meteorologici è sempre un ulteriore personaggio, metafora della natura umana in balìa di forze dalle quali può trovare solo temporanei ripari» (Deledda 2021: 9). L'antropomorfizzazione della natura, già osservata da Elena Gagliardi (2010) nei romanzi cervesi di Deledda, emerge con forza anche in *Cenere*.

L'analisi delle traduzioni di Dzieduszycka e Zyndram-Kościałkowska mette in luce approcci differenti. Dzieduszycka si distingue per la cura nel preservare le metafore originali, confermando così l'accuratezza riconosciutale da un critico in relazione alla traduzione di un altro romanzo, quello di Rovetta («Przegląd Bibliograficzny Księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa w Warszawie» 1909: 157). Zyndram-Kościałkowska, invece, tende a ridurre o eliminare le metafore, in linea con la sua propensione a commettere errori di traduzione, già osservata nel corso di ricerche precedenti (Łukaszewicz 2022, Przybysz 2023). Questi difetti sono in parte bilanciati dall'attenzione che dedica al plurilinguismo delle opere deleddiane e dalle informazioni su Deledda e sulla cultura sarda incluse nei paratesti (Łukaszewicz 2022). L'approccio disinvolto di Zyndram-Kościałkowska, che la porta a volte alla demetaforizzazione, sembra dipendere più dal suo stile personale che da vincoli linguistici o culturali, visto che l'altra traduttrice di *Cenere* è riuscita quasi sempre a rendere le immagini metaforiche attraverso una traduzione letterale, pur trasformando talvolta una metafora in una similitudine.

Secondo Gagliardi (2010: 50), «le figure più frequenti nella produzione della Deledda sono [...] i paragoni, mentre le metafore sono piuttosto rare»; tuttavia, in *Cenere* le metafore sono sì meno frequenti di paragoni, ma comunque abbondanti. Una costante nella tecnica figurativa della scrittrice è il paragone tra uomini e animali, spesso impiegato per descrivere i personaggi umani (*Ibid*.: 58) anche in *Cenere*: «uomini forti come il vento e astuti come le volpi» (Deledda 1904a: 28), «stanchi come asini» (*Ibid.*: 42), «aggirarsi come un gattino affamato» (*Ibid.*: 78), «essere agile e leggero come il passero sull'estremità della fronda» (*Ibid.*: 260). Queste similitudini costituiscono uno dei numerosi aspetti delle strette relazioni tra l'uomo e l'ambiente che si riscontrano nelle opere deleddiane e che sarebbe opportuno studiare da una prospettiva ecocritica, in particolare mettendo a confronto originali e traduzioni.

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Chapter 14.
Perché *ci tocca in sorte*? Le metafore della casualità e i verbi di percezione tattile tra latino e italiano

Why *ci tocca in sorte*? Metaphors of Chance and Tactile Verbs between Latin and Italian

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Abstract

Sin dagli anni Ottanta, si è assistito a un notevole incremento degli studi riguardanti i verbi di percezione, soprattutto in relazione al grado elevato di polisemia che li caratterizza e che è stato spesso spiegato come risultato di estensioni metaforiche o metonimiche. Il presente contributo, collocandosi in questo ambito di studi, si propone di individuare le motivazioni semantiche e, in particolare, le metafore concettuali che sono alla base dell'uso di verbi di percezione tattile per esprimere eventi casuali, con speciale attenzione alla locuzione dell'italiano *toccare in sorte a* (*qualcuno*). Ai fini di una migliore comprensione del fenomeno indagato, verranno considerati in primo luogo i dati della lingua latina relativi a espressioni di eventi casuali, considerando i verbi attestati con l'ablativo *sorte*; quindi, saranno esaminate le prime attestazioni di *toccare in sorte a* ed espressioni comparabili nell'italiano delle origini, per poi passare all'analisi dei dati relativi all'italiano contemporaneo. I dati saranno raccolti da opere lessicografiche e *corpora* digitali relativi alle differenti varietà linguistiche considerate. L'approccio teorico adottato sarà quello della linguistica cognitiva e, in particolare, della teoria della metafora concettuale, pur usandone l'apparato formale ai fini della descrizione del fenomeno indagato solo in modo limitato. In conclusione all'analisi, verranno individuate due metafore concettuali che si ritiene possano spiegare la concettualizzazione alla base dell'espressione in esame.

Parole chiave: percezione tattile, casualità, *sorte*, metafora concettuale, latino, italiano.

Abstract

Since the 1980s, perception verbs have been the subject of several studies mainly due to the high degree of polysemy that characterizes some of them. This has often been explained on the basis of metaphorical or

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metonymic extensions. The present paper belongs to this field of research and its aim is to identify the semantic motivations and, more specifically, the conceptual metaphors that underlie the use of tactile verbs to express "chance events". In this respect, particular attention is given to the Italian locution *toccare in sorte a* (*qualcuno*), which roughly translates as 'to befall (someone)'. In order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, firstly data from Latin on the expression of chance events will be considered, taking into account verbs attested with the ablative *sorte*; then, the earliest attestations of *toccare in sorte a* and comparable expressions in early Italian will be examined before moving on to an analysis of data relating to contemporary Italian. Data will be collected from lexicographical works and digital corpora pertaining to the different language varieties under consideration. The theoretical approach chosen is that of cognitive linguistics, particularly Conceptual Metaphor Theory, albeit with a restricted use of its formal tools in the description of the phenomenon studied. The analysis will conclude by identifying two conceptual metaphors that appear to explain the conceptualization underpinning the expression in question.

Keywords: tactile verbs, chance, *sorte*, conceptual metaphor, Latin, Italian.

1. Introduzione

Il presente contributo si propone di individuare le motivazioni semantiche e, in particolare, le metafore concettuali alla base dell'uso di verbi di percezione tattile per esprimere eventi casuali, con speciale attenzione alla locuzione dell'italiano *toccare in sorte a* (*qualcuno*). Per una migliore comprensione del fenomeno, dopo una breve introduzione dedicata ad alcune premesse teoriche e allo stato degli studi (§1), verranno considerati sinteticamente i dati della lingua latina relativi alle espressioni di eventi casuali che coinvolgono l'ablativo *sorte* (§2); quindi, saranno prese in esame le prime attestazioni di *toccare in sorte a* e costruzioni comparabili in italiano antico (§3), per poi analizzare i dati dell'italiano contemporaneo (§4); l'ultimo paragrafo prima delle *Conclusioni* sarà dedicato all'individuazione delle metafore soggiacenti all'espressione in esame (§5). L'approccio teorico adottato è quello della linguistica cognitiva e, in particolare, la teoria della metafora concettuale, pur usandone l'apparato formale solo in modo limitato (cf. Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 2003 [1980[1]]; Kövecses 2005, tra gli altri).

Sin dagli anni Ottanta, si è assistito a un notevole incremento degli studi sui verbi di percezione, vale a dire, quei predicati che esprimono l'acquisizione o l'ingresso di informazione attraverso uno dei cinque sensi individuati tradizionalmente nella cultura occidentale. Fra i fenomeni che hanno destato maggiormente l'interesse dei linguisti troviamo il grado elevato di polisemia che caratterizza i verbi di percezione e, in particolare, i meccanismi alla base dei mutamenti semantico-lessicali.[1] Questi sono stati spesso ricondotti a processi metaforici o metonimici che, secondo l'approccio della linguistica cognitiva, si fondano su basi bio-esperienziali. In particolare, il senso del tatto è stato messo in relazione con vari ambiti concreti e, per quanto riguarda le sfere cognitiva ed emotiva, ne è stato evidenziato il legame con le emozioni (e non con la sfera intellettiva) già dal lavoro pioneristico di Sweetser sui verbi di percezione (1990: 47, *passim*). Si tratta di un dato interessante per il fenomeno che stiamo analizzando, in quanto le emozioni spesso implicano l'assenza di controllo dell'esperiente sull'evento emotivo, tratto che caratterizza anche il coinvolgimento degli esseri umani negli eventi casuali. Le ricerche successive hanno visto il prodursi di vari studi su verbi che significano 'toccare' in lingue diverse. Tra quelli in cui è adottato l'approccio della linguistica cognitiva, si menzionano i numerosi lavori di Ibarretxe-

[1] Tra i primi lavori sui verbi di percezione vanno menzionati gli studi in prospettiva tipologica di Viberg (ad esempio, 1984) e il contributo di Sweetser (1990) dedicato all'analisi delle estensioni semantiche nei verbi di percezione di lingue indoeuropee in prospettiva diacronica e adottando un approccio cognitivo.

Antuñano, a partire dalla tesi di dottorato del 1999, e un articolo di Fernández Jaén (2014), tutti incentrati sull'analisi della polisemia dei verbi di questo tipo.

Il principale verbo italiano di percezione tattile è *toccare*, parola di probabile origine onomatopeica, attestata dalla metà del XIII secolo (cf. *Nuovo De Mauro*, s.v. *toccare*), usato sia in costruzioni transitive che intransitive, subentrato al verbo latino *tango* con cui condivide vari significati. *Toccare* è caratterizzato da un grado di polisemia notevole, come si evince dal testo riportato qui di seguito, una versione decisamente abbreviata del lemma *toccare* nel *Nuovo De Mauro* (https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/toccare):

> 1a. v.tr., avvicinare la mano o un'altra parte del corpo, o anche un oggetto che si regge o manovra con la mano, a qcn. o qcs. stabilendo un contatto […]; 1b. v.tr., di soggetti inanimati, essere a contatto con qcs. […]; 2. v.tr., usare, manomettere […]; 3. v.tr., modificare, ritoccare nell'intento di migliorare […]; 4. v.tr., raggiungere un punto, un'altezza, una distanza e sim. […]; 9. v.intr. (*essere*) FO capitare, venire in sorte: *ti è toccata una bella fortuna, tutte le disgrazie toccano a me*; 10. v.intr. (*essere*) FO impers., essere o sentirsi costretto […]; 11. v.intr. (*essere*) FO spettare per diritto o per dovere, per precedenza, per turno […].

L'espressione *toccare in sorte a* si collega a uno degli usi intransitivi di *toccare* e relativa accezione, vale a dire a quanto riportato al punto 9: «v.intr. (*essere*) FO capitare, venire in sorte (…)». Con questo significato, quindi, *toccare* esprime un evento fortuito che, come si vede dagli esempi citati, secondo 'ciò che capita' può essere positivo (*una bella fortuna*) o negativo (*tutte le disgrazie*). Gli elementi della costruzione sono i seguenti: (a) qualcosa che *tocca* (il soggetto sintattico di *toccare*); (b) una forma del verbo *toccare*; (c) un essere umano coinvolto dall'evento fortuito, codificato con il pronome personale atono dativo o con il sintagma preposizionale "*a* + nome/pronome". Rispetto a quella appena descritta, a livello formale, la costruzione *toccare in sorte a*, anch'essa intransitiva, prevede la presenza del sintagma preposizionale *in sorte*. Lo stesso tipo di costruzione di *toccare in sorte a* è attestato per le locuzioni *essere dato in sorte a* e *venire in sorte a*; differentemente, in *avere in sorte*, l'entità umana coinvolta è il soggetto sintattico, mentre 'ciò che capita in sorte' è l'oggetto diretto (cf. *infra* § 4).

Nonostante la letteratura sui verbi di percezione tattile non comprenda – almeno per quanto mi è noto – studi incentrati sulla relazione tra questo tipo di predicati e la sfera della casualità, vi sono comunque due aspetti meritevoli di attenzione in relazione all'analisi di *toccare in sorte a*. In primo luogo, partendo dalla considerazione di ordine generale che il tatto, per molti aspetti, è differente dagli altri sensi,[2] c'è una caratteristica particolarmente interessante che lo contraddistingue e che è universale poiché deriva dalla nostra corporeità, vale a dire il fatto che il senso del tatto è l'unico a essere caratterizzato da 'bipolarità' (*bipolarity of touch*), come osservato in Trojszczak (2019: 211 e riferimenti ivi citati). L'esperienza tattile, infatti, coinvolge almeno due entità: il nostro corpo e uno o più elementi esterni, che possono essere, a loro volta, animati. Un essere umano, quindi, può essere coinvolto attivamente o passivamente in un'esperienza tattile: nel primo caso è prevista un'esplorazione manuale attiva di oggetti da parte del percipiente; differentemente, un'esperienza passiva «is the perception of the condition of one's own body that does not involve goal-oriented actions» (Trojszczak 2019: 211).

In secondo luogo, va menzionata la tassonomia proposta da Fernández Jaén (2014) nel suo articolo sullo spagnolo *tocar*. Lo studioso, infatti, per spiegare la polisemia di questo verbo,

[2] Si pensi, ad esempio, a come il tatto, differentemente dagli altri sensi, non sembri implicare un singolo organo sensoriale ma coinvolga, in un certo qual modo, tutto il corpo, poiché nelle esperienze tattili vengono attivati recettori diversi della pelle, dei muscoli e degli organi interni. Per una rassegna degli studi sul tatto in ambito filosofico e delle scienze cognitive si rimanda a Fulkerson (2024).

anche in prospettiva diacronica, teorizza degli schemi concettuali (*imagenes quemática*) che applica in modo sistematico alle varie accezioni di *tocar*. A loro volta, i quattro tipi di schemi concettuali (*esquema agentivo, esquema de movimento vectorial, esquema de flujo invertidopasivo, esquema de flujo invertido reactivo*) sono posti alla base di una serie di concettualizzazioni metaforiche. L'aspetto più rilevante, a mio avviso, è che la tassonomia proposta da Fernández Jaén riflette adeguatamente, a livello descrittivo, la 'bipolarità del tatto' menzionata sopra. In particolare, l'assenza di una componente dell'azione orientata a uno scopo e la 'passività' dell'entità umana espressa dal dativo, come teorizzate dallo studioso per lo *esquema de flujo invertido pasivo*, sono caratteristiche che ritroveremo nell'analisi dell'espressione *toccare in sorte a* (e *toccare a*), sia a livello semantico che sintattico.
Veniamo adesso all'analisi dei dati, cominciando con una descrizione sintetica della situazione osservabile nei testi in latino.

2. I dati del latino

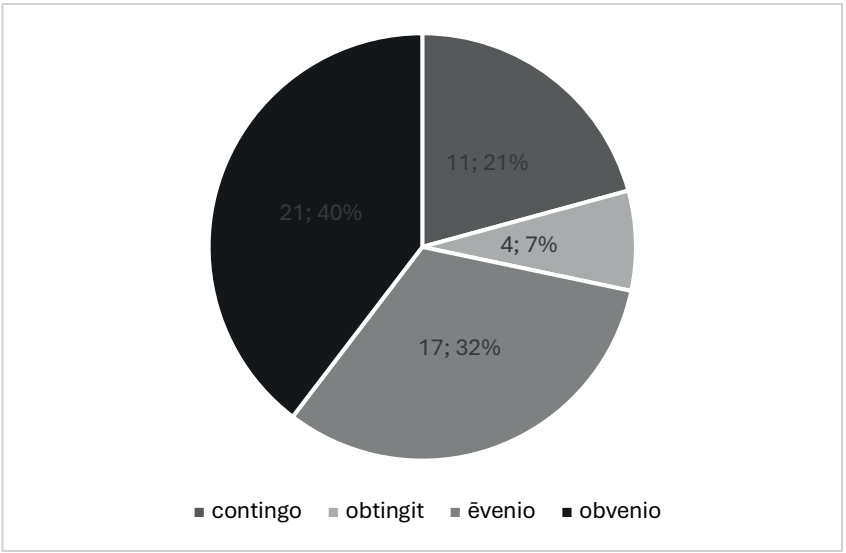
I dati sono stati ricavati da opere lessicografiche, dal *TLL online*[3] limitatamente ai lemmi disponibili e dalla *Library of Latin Texts* (*LLT-O*, http://www.brepolis.net). Sono state cercate le co-occorrenze dell'ablativo *sorte*, confrontabile con l'italiano *in sorte*, con verbi di percezione tattile e, secondariamente, con verbi di moto direzionato esprimenti eventi casuali.
Quanto al latino *sors*, è un termine polisemico che in origine indicava la 'tavoletta di legno' usata per tirare a sorte a scopi diversi. Da questo primo significato si sono sviluppate le altre accezioni del termine: 'sorteggio', 'oracolo', 'decisione della sorte', 'destino, caso, sorte', 'sorte stabilita per ogni persona', 'condizione, grado, sorta' (Ernout & Meillet 1994: 637-638, s.v. *sors, -tis*; Cortelazzo & Zolli 1988: 1233). Per *sors*, quindi, si può ipotizzare verosimilmente uno sviluppo semantico in più fasi del tipo seguente: 1) strumento del sorteggio; 2) evento del sorteggio; 3) nuova condizione/stato in cui qualcuno si viene a trovare in seguito agli esiti positivi o negativi del sorteggio che si configura come cambiamento nella sua 'sorte'; 4) sorte/destino/caso che determina il risultato. Il dato significativo è che il sorteggio è un procedimento che affida al caso o, in altre culture, al volere degli dei una decisione o una scelta. Si tratta, quindi, di qualcosa che è al di fuori del controllo diretto degli esseri umani. E proprio questa caratteristica deve avere svolto un ruolo di primo piano nel mutamento semantico cha ha coinvolto *sors*. Una conferma a quanto osservato si rinviene nella diacronia di termini che indicavano originariamente una forma di gioco d'azzardo e che successivamente hanno acquisito un significato appartenente all'ambito della 'casualità', come il francese *hasard* 'caso' o *chance* 'fortuna, occasione, possibilità, probabilità', da cui è derivato l'inglese *chance*, termine polisemico tra le cui accezioni sono incluse 'caso, sorte, fortuna'. Anche per questo tipo di mutamento, infatti, sono fondamentali l'assenza di controllo e, soprattutto, l'imprevedibilità che caratterizzano il gioco d'azzardo, così come il sorteggio.
Da una prima ricognizione delle occorrenze dell'ablativo *sorte* nei testi latini dalle origini sino all'VIII secolo d.C. è emerso quanto segue:
a) le accezioni 'destino, caso, sorte', 'sorte stabilita per ogni persona' sono relativamente meno frequenti rispetto a 'tavoletta di legno (per il sorteggio)' e 'sorteggio';
b) l'ablativo *sorte* in tutte le sue accezioni può co-occorrere con vari verbi che denotano eventi casuali. In particolare, sono state considerate le attestazioni di *contingo* e *obtingit*, i due

[3] Cfr. https://thesaurus.badw.de/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html/.

verbi di percezione tattile con cui *sorte* occorre, e di *ēvenio* e *obvenio*, due verbi di moto direzionato, che sono quelli con cui *sorte* è attestata più frequentemente.
Nella *tabella 1* è indicato quanto segue: nella seconda colonna, il numero complessivo delle occorrenze di ciascun verbo; nella terza, il numero delle co-occorrenze di ciascun verbo con *sorte*; nella quarta,il valore percentuale corrispondente al valore della colonna III. Emerge chiaramente che le attestazioni dei verbi con l'ablativo *sorte* costituiscono una percentuale irrisoria rispetto al totale delle occorrenze di ciascun verbo, tranne nel caso di *obvenio* (7,420%). Inoltre, come si può osservare dal *grafico 1*, rispetto al numero complessivo delle co-occorrenze dei verbi considerati con *sorte* (53 occorrenze), i più frequenti sono *obvenio* (21 occorrenze) ed *ēvenio* (17 occorrenze), seguiti da *contingo* (11 occorrenze) e *obtingit* (4 occorrenze).

I	II	III	IV
contingo	6881	11	0,159%
obtingit	164	4	2,439%
ēvenio	4892	17	0,347%
obvenio	283	21	7,420%
	12.220	53	

Tab. 1: Attestazioni dei verbi esprimenti un evento casuale dalle origini all'VIII sec. d.C.



Graf. 1: Occorrenze di verbi esprimenti eventi casuali con abl. *sorte.*

Contingo e *obtingit* sono composti di *tango* 'toccare'. Tra i due, *contingo* presenta un grado maggiore di polisemia, potendo significare 'toccare, prendere, raggiungere', 'concernere, essere in rapporto', 'toccare in sorte, capitare, accadere, giungere opportuno'. Quando denota un evento casuale, *contingo* è costruito intransitivamente con il dativo della persona cui 'capita' qualcosa, mentre il soggetto – in nominativo o una proposizione – esprime'ciò che

capita'. Le prime attestazioni di *contingo* con questo significato e in questa costruzione sono già in Ennio (*Tieste* 360) e, più volte, nelle commedie di Plauto, ad esempio in *Cistellaria* 497 riportato in (1) (*TLL online*, s.v. *contingo*, col. 717).

(1) *Quodcumque optes, tibi velim contingere.*
'Vorrei che ti accadesse veramente tutto quello che ti auguri'.[4]

La prima attestazione di *contingo* con *sorte* 'con un sorteggio', invece, è più tarda e, secondo la *LLT-O*, risalirebbe alla *In Milonianam* di Quinto Asconio Pediano (I sec. d.C.). L'attestazione successiva è in Sant'Agostino (*De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*; *quaestio 45*), dove *sorte* significa 'per caso, per un evento fortuito'.
Il verbo intransitivo *obtingit* presenta un grado di polisemia decisamente inferiore rispetto a *contingo* ed è usato principalmente per esprimere eventi casuali con le accezioni 'capitare, succedere, toccare in sorte'. La costruzione è la medesima osservata per *contingo*, con il dativo della persona coinvolta, come *lenoni* e *vobis* in (2), dal *Poenulus* di Plauto (vv. 1326-1328), tra le prime attestazioni di *obtingit* con significato 'accadere, capitare' (*TLL online*, s.v. *obtingo*, col. 290).

(2) […] *Gaudeo et volup est mihi si quid lenoni | optigit magni mali, quomque e virtute vobis fortuna optigit.*
'[…] Sono contento e provo un grande piacere, se il lenone piglia una grossa buscherata e se la fortuna vi ha favoriti come meritate'.

Come per *contingo*, la prima occorrenza di *obtingit* con *sorte* è più tarda ed è attestata in Cicerone (*In C. Verre morationes sex*, *actio secunda*, liber 5, par. 38,) dove *sorte* sembra significare 'con un sorteggio'.
Quanto a *ēvenio* e *obvenio*, che vanno considerati per la loro frequenza relativamente elevata con *sorte,* sono due composti di *venio* che esprimono primariamente 'moto direzionato': *ēvenio* ha varie accezioni, tra cui 'avvenire, capitare, accadere, succedere'; *obvenio*, tra i vari sensi, include 'accadere, toccare in sorte'. Entrambi i verbi sono costruiti con il dativo della persona coinvolta nell'evento casuale. Per quanto riguarda la loro prima attestazione con *sorte*, *ēvenio* occorre per la prima volta e frequentemente in Tito Livio (13 occorrenze su un totale di 17), mentre *obvenio* è attestato con *sorte* in Cicerone (*In C. Verre morationes sex*, *actio secunda*, liber 2, par. 17). In tutti i passi menzionati il significato di *sorte* è 'con un sorteggio'. Si noti che, anche in questo caso, si tratta di attestazioni cronologicamente successive all'uso dei soli *ēvenio* e *obvenio* per esprimere eventi casuali che risale, per lo meno, a Plauto: ad esempio, *ēvenio* in *Amphitruo* 938 e *obvenio* in *Asinaria* 281.
Da quanto osservato, possiamo trarre delle conclusioni, sebbene parziali. In primo luogo, è emerso che in latino non si sono formate locuzioni con *sorte* e i verbi considerati, almeno sino all'VIII secolo d.C. Inoltre, se si considera che le attestazioni di questi verbi per esprimere un evento casuale sono cronologicamente antecedenti a quelle in cui co-occorrono con *sorte* e che *sorte* nelle attestazioni più antiche significa 'sorteggio', è verosimile che proprio questo sia stato il contesto associativo originario tra questo tipo di verbi e l'ablativo *sorte*, dove *sorte* specificava il mezzo con cui l'evento fortuito si verificava, vale a dire 'per mezzo del sorteggio'.

[4] Testo latino e traduzione degli esempi (1) e (2) sono tratti da *Le commedie di Tito Maccio Plauto*, a cura di Giuseppe Augello, 3 voll., Torino, UTET, 1982-1987-1991.

3. I dati dell'italiano antico

Passiamo ora a considerare i dati dell'italiano, a partire da una breve rassegna delle prime attestazioni in italiano antico.
Per quanto riguarda l'italiano antico, sono stati esaminati i dati sino alla fine del XIV secolo, raccolti consultando il *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* (*GDLI* https://www.gdli.it/), sotto le voci *toccare* e *sorte*,[5] e grazie a una ricerca condotta su due *corpora*: il *Corpus OVI dell'italiano antico* (http://www.ovi.cnr.it/), interrogato inserendo il lemma *sorte* (incluse *sort, sorta, sorti, sorto, suorto, xorti, xorte*),[6] al fine di individuare le occorrenze del sintagma preposizionale *in sorte* o varianti; il *corpus Biblioteca italiana,* inserendo la forma *sorte*. (http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/ ricerca Testuale),
Dall'analisi è emerso che il sintagma *in sorte* è attestato dal XIV secolo e alterna con il sintagma *per sorte*, in questa fase proporzionalmente più frequente; peraltro, entrambi i sintagmi, il cui significato prevalente è 'per mezzo di un sorteggio', continuano verosimilmente l'ablativo latino *sorte*.[7] Il sintagma *in sorte*, in particolare, è attestato con i verbi *avere, dare, toccare* e *venire* (*GDLI*, vol. XIX, p. 507). Fra questi, *toccare in sorte a, venire in sorte a* ed *essere dato in sorte a* hanno la stessa costruzione sintattica, che continua quella attestata in latino per i verbi considerati nel paragrafo precedente: l'elemento fortuito è il soggetto sintattico con cui si accorda il verbo, mentre il partecipante umano è espresso dal pronome dativo o da un sintagma preposizionale con *a*.
Per quanto riguarda, specificamente, *toccare*, dalla ricerca sull'*OVI* sono risultate 12 occorrenze di *toccare per sorte a* e 9 di *toccare in sorte a*. Tralasciando le attestazioni in cui *sorte* significa 'sorteggio', frequenti soprattutto nei volgarizzamenti, la prima occorrenza di *toccare in sorte a* con il significato di 'capitare per caso', nel *Decameron* II-6 (1-IV-146) (*GDLI* s.v. *sorte*, p. 507),[8] sembra essere anche l'unica di questo periodo (esempio 3).[9] Peraltro, il significato di *sorte* in questa attestazione non mi pare del tutto esente da dubbi interpretativi: la presenza dell'espressione *per avventura* così come il contesto in cui si narra di un sorteggio, infatti, non consentono di escludere che *in sorte* significhi 'per/in un sorteggio'. Ma certamente la questione va chiarita conducendo un'analisi testuale e filologica approfondita.

> (3) I corsari, li quali avevano a Ponzo preso il legno sopra il quale madama Beritola venuta era […]; e quivi tra' padroni della galea divisa la preda, toccò per avventura, tra l'altre cose, in sorte a un messer Guasparrin Doria la balia di madama Beritola e i due fanciulli con lei […].

L'attestazione successiva parrebbe essere nel XV secolo, negli *Strambotti* (195) di Serafino Aquilano in (4).

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[5] Ringrazio Vincenzo Faraoni, Irene Iocca e Monica Storini per gli utili suggerimenti. Ogni responsabilità per eventuali inesattezze resta, ovviamente, mia.

[6] Dalla ricerca sono risultate 1098 occorrenze della forma *sorte* e 317 occorrenze delle varianti, per un totale di 1415 occorrenze (http://gattoweb.ovi.cnr.it/(S(cf5bkkt4p4gd420ny1d5vuji))/CatForm21.aspx).

[7] Quasi tutte le accezioni del latino *sors* sono attestate in italiano antico, pur se in proporzioni differenti (cf. *GDLI*, s.v. s*òrte,* pp.507-510). Anche in questa fase della lingua italiana, il significato 'sorteggio' prevale largamente su 'sorte, destino'; frequente è anche l'accezione 'tipo', 'specie'. Nell'italiano contemporaneo la situazione è differente (cf. il *Nuovo De Mauro*, s.v.[1] *sorte*, e la voce *sòrte*[1] del *Vocabolario Treccani online*), verosimilmente soprattutto in seguito alla diffusione del termine *sorteggio*, entrato nell'italiano nel XIX secolo (*Nuovo De Mauro*, s.v. *sorteggio*).

[8] Cf. anche *Vocabolario Treccani online*, s.v. *sòrte*[1], punto 2.

[9] I testi degli esempi da 3 a 6 sono tratti da http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/.

(4) Se pur per fé morir mi tocca in sorte,
La fé mi honorerà in vita et post morte.

Analogamente, le attestazioni relativamente certe di *essere dato/venire in sorte a* con il significato di 'capitare per caso' sono complessivamente solo 4. In particolare, sono attestate: 2 occorrenze di *essere dato in sorte a* (Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, CCLIII e CCCLVII) e 2 occorrenze di *venire in sorte a* (Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, CCCLII; Nadal, *Leandre ride*). Per quanto riguarda i soggetti delle occorrenze considerate sinora, ciò che *è dato/viene/tocca in sorte* può essere concreto (la balia, la donna amata) o astratto (un evento).
Per concludere, notiamo che l'uso intransitivo di *toccare* nella costruzione *toccare a* e con il significato 'essere destinato in sorte; essere attribuito in modo casuale' (*GDLI*, s.v. *toccare*, accezione 65, p. 1095), in modo analogo a quanto si verifica in latino, è attestato prima di *toccare in sorte a*. Il *GDLI* come prima attestazione di *toccare a* con questa accezione cita Dante, *Rime* (a. 1321), canz. 13, riportata in (5):

(5) piangano gli occhi e dogliasi la bocca / degli uomini a cui tocca, / che sono a' raggi dico tal ciel giunti.

Dall'esame - anche se cursorio - delle occorrenze dell'espressione *toccare a* mi sembra che questa accezione possa essere leggermente retrodatata, come emerge dal passo riportato in (6), dove *tocchi a* ha come soggetto sintattico *sorte* (*Rime dall'Archivio Notarile* di Bologna, v. 38; c. 1291-1300).

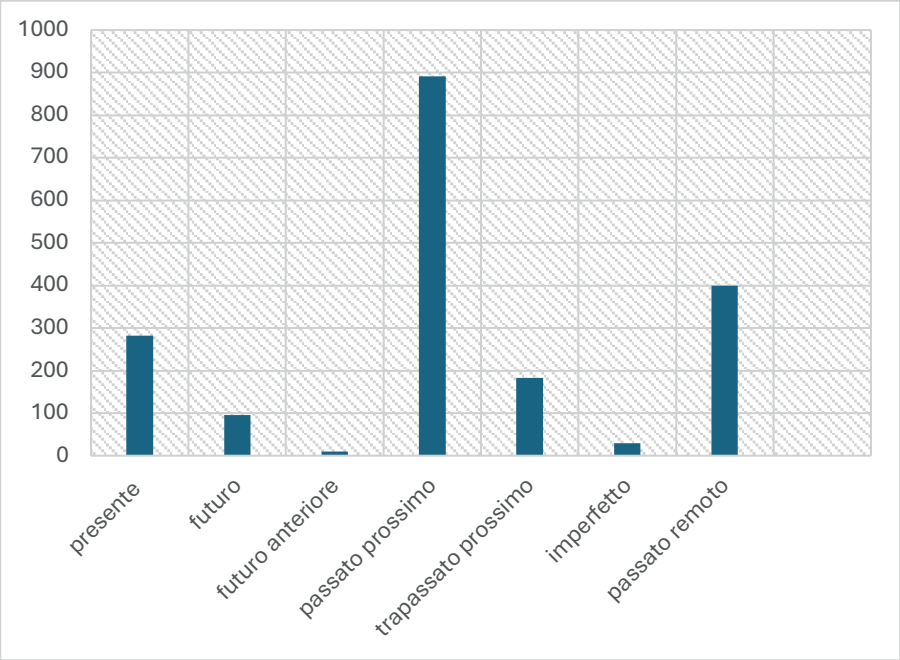
(6) e del tormento ch'è ssí duro e forte / che no nde tocchi a llei alcuna sorte.

4. I dati dell'italiano contemporaneo

Nell'italiano contemporaneo l'espressione *toccare in sorte a* significa che qualcosa capita a qualcuno per un concorso di congiunture casuali o comunque indipendenti dalla sua volontà, come indicato nel *Vocabolario Treccani online*, al punto 2 del lemma *sòrte,*[1] dedicato alla locuzione *avere* o *avere avuto in sorte* e a quelle a essa collegate – *esser dato, toccare, venire in sorte* –, considerate frequenti.
Quanto agli elementi che costituiscono la locuzione *toccare in sorte a*, *toccare* è stato già trattato all'inizio del contributo. Per quanto riguarda *sorte*, è un sostantivo polisemico, caratterizzato da enantiosemia – una *vox media* nella classificazione di Basile (2006) – perché la sorte può essere *buona* o *favorevole*, ma anche *cattiva* o *avversa* se non, addirittura, una *malasorte*.
Per avere un quadro preciso dell'uso di *toccare in sorte a* nell'italiano contemporaneo sono stati esaminati dati ricavati dalle opere lessicografiche già menzionate e da *corpora* digitali di parlato e scritto. In una prima fase, sono stati interrogati per il lemma *sorte* i due *corpora* dell'italiano parlato *KIParla* (https://kiparla.it/) e *VoLIP* (https://www.volip.it/), che non hanno prodotto nessuna occorrenza del sintagma *in sorte*. Si tratta di un dato significativo che costituisce un primo possibile indizio del fatto che l'uso di questa locuzione è relativamente limitato e connotato sia diafasicamente sia diamesicamente.
In una seconda fase della ricerca sono state raccolte le co-occorrenze delle varie forme del lemma *toccare* e del sintagma *in sorte*, interrogando il corpus *itTenTen* 2020.[10] Ne sono risultate 2533 occorrenze (0.00001745% rispetto all'intero *corpus*), per lo più in contesti di

[10] Per una descrizione del *corpus* si rimanda al sito https://www.sketchengine.eu/ittenten-italian-corpus/.

scrittura e parlato sorvegliato, dato che sembra confermare quanto ipotizzato circa l'uso relativamente circoscritto della locuzione in esame.
Qui di seguito sono presentati sinteticamente alcuni dati utili all'analisi in corso. Innanzitutto, si noti che, su un totale di circa 1900 occorrenze al modo indicativo, circa 280 sono al presente, poco più di 100 al futuro (semplice e anteriore), mentre le restanti occorrenze (circa 1500) sono in un tempo passato, con un deciso prevalere dell'aspetto perfettivo sull'imperfettivo. In particolare, è elevato il numero di occorrenze di forme di passato e trapassato prossimo. Anche se il prevalere di tempi passati può essere spiegato quale conseguenza della tipologia di alcuni testi (narrazioni storiche, mitologiche ecc.), la percentuale è comunque elevata e costituisce verosimilmente un indizio del fatto che l'italiano *in sorte* rimanda prevalentemente a qualcosa di già accaduto e non a qualcosa che si pensa possa accadere.[11]



Graf. 2: Indicativo dei tempi verbali.

A livello sintattico non ci sono variazioni significative rispetto a quanto già descritto. Un dato interessante è che le forme di *toccare* e il sintagma *in sorte* non sono separati da altre parole se non in una trentina di occorrenze, a conferma dell'ipotesi che nell'italiano contemporaneo *toccare in sorte* costituisca una locuzione, anche se non molto frequente. Un altro elemento rilevante è che, in oltre un quinto delle occorrenze, l'entità coinvolta dall'evento fortuito è codificata da un pronome e che, se si tratta di un pronome personale, spesso è la forma atona. Le forme pronominali atone, come è noto, a livello pragmatico-discorsivo denotano entità già menzionate nel discorso e che non sono nel focus ma topicali; ad essere nel focus è, invece, ciò che *tocca in sorte*.
A livello semantico, l'analisi di un campione costituito da circa 250 occorrenze ha confermato che l'entità 'toccata' dall'evento casuale è costituita, tranne rare eccezioni, da esseri umani. Il

[11] Coerentemente con questi dati, Wierzbicka (1992: 84-88) osserva che i termini dell'italiano *sorte* e *destino* costituirebbero due modi alternativi di vedere l'esistenza degli uomini, in quanto «*sorte* is an empirical concept, which refers to what has actually happened, and it cannot be used to refer to something which is 'meant to happen'», differentemente da *destino*. Questo perché, continua la studiosa, «*sorte*, in contrast to *destino*, is seen largely as a domain of chance».

soggetto sintattico – ciò che *tocca in sorte* – può denotare tanto qualcosa di positivo (*pace, protezione, futuro migliore, ruolo migliore, nulla di tragico…*) quanto di negativo (*guerra, tragedia, compito beffardo, ruolo di cavia, un colpo basso…*) ed è prevalentemente un nome astratto o una proposizione. Solo in circa un quarto delle occorrenze si tratta di entità concrete: parenti, luoghi, beni, benefit… In questo gruppo di attestazioni, peraltro, rientrano anche alcuni casi in cui la locuzione è usata nel senso originario di 'toccare a qualcuno per mezzo di un sorteggio', per lo più in testi o siti che trattano di temi di storia antica, religiosi o mitologici.

5. Metafore concettuali e *toccare in sorte a*

Preliminarmente è opportuno soffermarci brevemente su alcune caratteristiche della costruzione utili a comprendere i tipi di concettualizzazione soggiacenti, prima fra tutte l'uso del dativo o del sintagma preposizionale con *a* con funzione sintattica di oggetto indiretto per esprimere l'entità cui qualcosa *tocca in sorte.* Il dativo, come è noto, è un caso cui è associata un'ampia gamma di ruoli e funzioni e che, soprattutto con verbi biargomentali, è usato quando l'entità animata che partecipa all'evento vi è coinvolta in modo marginale (*indirect affectedness*) e non ha controllo sull'evento (cf. fra gli altri, Wierzbicka 1992: 114). Il dato fondamentale che spiega l'uso di questa costruzione, non solo per *toccare in sorte a* ma anche per *essere dato/venire in sorte a*, è che l'evento è concettualizzato come al di fuori dal controllo dell'uomo e quindi, per lui, imprevedibile: è un qualcosa di casuale che *viene* all'uomo, che lo *tocca* o che gli *è dato* per poi divenire parte della sua *sorte*, non è l'uomo a impadronirsene, il che è coerente con l'uso interlinguisticamente frequente di costruzioni intransitive per questo tipo di eventi (cf., tra gli altri, Wierzbicka 1992: 114 a proposito del russo). Nelle locuzioni considerate, inoltre, la persona denotata dal dativo o dal sintagma preposizionale è concettualizzata, oltre che come 'meta', come possessore di ciò che gli è *toccato in sorte*, interpretazione rafforzata non solo dalla presenza del sintagma *in sorte* (cf. *infra*), ma anche dal dato, noto in linguistica cognitiva, che l'espressione della vicinanza spaziale tra due entità può favorire lo sviluppo dell'idea di 'possesso' (Fernández Jaén 2014: 110-111). L'entrare in possesso di qualcosa, anche se capitato 'per caso', costituisce, conseguentemente, un cambiamento nello stato (nella *sorte*) dell'individuo coinvolto nell'evento. Tutte queste caratteristiche sono concettualizzate tramite metafore.

La prima metafora che possiamo individuare alla base dell'espressione *toccare in sorte a* è la cosiddetta «Event Structure Metaphor» (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 2003 [1980]: 258). La Struttura dell'Evento è una metafora complessa «in cui gli aspetti di un evento (stati, cambiamenti, processi, azioni, cause, scopi, mezzi) sono metaforizzati in termini di spazio, movimento e forze» (Casadei 1996: 168). In quanto metafora complessa coinvolge più metafore primarie o semplici contemporaneamente, ad esempio, STATES ARE LOCATIONS o CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS (Lakoff 1993: 219-220); inoltre, è una delle metafore considerate generalmente universali (Kövecses 2005: 47).

Nel nostro caso, poiché *toccare in sorte a* è una costruzione intransitiva, dove l'elemento fortuito è il soggetto sintattico, mentre l'essere umano, privo di controllo sull'evento, è una sorta di 'meta', e poiché lo stato del partecipante umano cambia in qualche modo conseguentemente al verificarsi dell'evento stesso, possiamo ipotizzare alla base di questo tipo di evento le metafore seguenti, seguendo il modello di Casadei (1996: 209), a sua volta fondato su Lakoff (1993): I CAMBIAMENTI SONO MOVIMENTI, da cui deriva AVERE CONTROLLO SULL'EVENTO È AVERECONTROLLO SUL MOVIMENTO, o meglio,

nel nostro caso, in relazione alla condizione del partecipante animato, NON AVERE CONTROLLO SULL'EVENTO È NON AVERE CONTROLLO SUL MOVIMENTO.
Ora, se questa metafora si presta a spiegare tutte e tre le locuzioni menzionate che coinvolgono un dativo/sintagma preposizionale (*essere dato/venire/toccare in sorte a*), cerchiamo di individuare che cosa motiva specificamente l'uso di *toccare* per esprimere un evento casuale. Se consideriamo il significato concreto di *toccare*, quale verbo di percezione tattile indica un contatto tra più entità in seguito a un movimento che può essere volontario – e, quindi, diretto intenzionalmente verso ciò che si vuole toccare – o involontario; comunque, perché ci sia un contatto, una o tutte le entità coinvolte si devono muovere. Tuttavia, differentemente da un verbo come *venire* che ha come elemento saliente della sua semantica la componente del 'moto direzionato', nella concettualizzazione di *toccare* ad essere fondamentale è il momento del contatto tra due o più entità, mentre il moto rimane sullo sfondo. Questa caratteristica fa sì che *toccare* sia un verbo particolarmente adatto a esprimere un evento casuale e fuori dal controllo dell'entità umana coinvolta. Nelle espressioni *toccare a* e *toccare in sorte a*, infatti, il partecipante umano si accorge di quanto arriva *in sorte* solo nel momento in cui ne è *toccato*; in altre parole, *toccare* esprime fondamentalmente il momento del realizzarsi dell'evento casuale, quando viene coinvolto (*toccato*) un essere umano che ne ha 'percezione passiva', mettendo così in risalto l'imprevedibilità dell'evento stesso,[12] anche se poi le conseguenze permangono nel tempo, nella *sorte* di chi è 'toccato'. L'imprevedibilità della casualità, quindi, in questo caso è concettualizzabile metaforicamente ed esprimibile grazie alla 'percezione bipolare' che caratterizza esclusivamente i verbi di tatto, come *toccare.* In conclusione, una metafora concettuale complessa che si potrebbe proporre non solo per *toccare in sorte a* ma anche in relazione ad altre espressioni della casualità che coinvolgano verbi di contatto potrebbe essere UN EVENTO FORTUITO È UN TOCCO IMPROVVISO. Oppure, parafrasando quanto proposto da Casadei (1996: 230) a proposito di *cadere*, GLI EVENTI FORTUITI SONO OGGETTI CHE TOCCANO ALL'IMPROVVISO.
Per quanto riguarda, infine, il sintagma preposizionale *in sorte*, la SORTE – intesa come stato risultante dall'evento fortuito – È UN CONTENITORE nel quale si trova l'insieme degli eventi o delle entità compresi nel destino di un individuo – quanto 'gli è toccato in sorte' – ed è parte della sfera personale dell'individuo stesso.

6. Conclusioni

Dall'analisi è emerso che i verbi di percezione tattile polisemici che comprendono le accezioni 'capitare, accadere' e simili sono attestati in latino e in italiano sin dalle origini (XIV sec.) con costruzioni intransitive analoghe; in particolare, l'essere umano coinvolto nell'evento casuale è codificato dal dativo o da un sintagma preposizionale con *a*. Per quanto riguarda le co-occorrenze di questi verbi con l'ablativo latino *sorte* o con il sintagma *in sorte* in italiano, sono rare in latino e in italiano antico dove *sorte* e *in sorte/per sorte* hanno prevalentemente il significato di 'per mezzo di un sorteggio', così che possiamo affermare con certezza che non si era ancora formata una locuzione. Differentemente, in italiano contemporaneo *toccare in sorte a* costituisce una locuzione usata per esprimere eventi casuali

[12] L'ipotesi che la componente semantica saliente di *toccare* in questa concettualizzazione sia il contatto improvviso con qualcosa di imprevedibile è confermata non solo da polirematiche come *colpo di fortuna* o *stroke of luck*, ma anche da espressioni che troviamo in altri ambiti, come il francese *coup de foudre* o l'italiano *colpo di genio*, *colpo di testa*, *di colpo* ecc., tutte caratterizzate come eventi 'improvvisi' o simili nel dizionario (cf. *Nuovo De Mauro*, polirematiche s.v. *colpo*).

sia positivi che negativi, il cui uso è limitato per lo più a contesti di scritto e parlato controllato.
Per quanto riguarda le metafore concettuali soggiacenti a *toccare in sorte a*, sono state proposte due differenti metafore. La prima è la metafora complessa GLI EVENTI FORTUITI SONO OGGETTI CHE TOCCANO ALL'IMPROVVISO, nella quale ha un ruolo di primo piano la 'percezione bipolare' che caratterizza esclusivamente i verbi di percezione tattile e che rende saliente il momento del 'contatto' tra l'elemento/evento fortuito e l'entità umana. La seconda metafora è LA SORTE È UN CONTENITORE, che 'colloca' il nuovo evento casuale nella *sorte* (insieme di eventi casuali) di un individuo, implicando il permanere degli effetti dell'evento e rafforzando così l'idea di possesso che emerge sia dalla componente di vicinanza spaziale implicita in *toccare*, sia dall'uso del dativo o del sintagma preposizionale con *a*.

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Chapter 15.
Exploring the rich imagery encoded in the lexical structure of some idioms in Albanian and their English counterparts

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Abstract

Idioms with colourful literal meanings seem to lend themselves to mental pictures, which may contribute to understanding why they mean what they mean. This paper investigates a number of idioms in Albanian and their English counterparts which are rich in mental imagery (as defined in Lakoff 1987) associated with their literal readings. There are many instances of such idioms that achieve (functional) equivalence at the semantic level but differ in the lexical structure, which bears a national imprint. It is this category of idioms which can manifest both universal features and a nation's individuality that this paper focuses on, discussing examples from Albanian and English, two languages which are genetically unrelated.
Through a comparative and contrastive analysis, this paper aims at: 1) Addressing the imagery evoked by the lexical structure (Dobrovol'skij 2016) for the correct interpretation of motivating links between the literal reading and the actual meaning such idioms convey in both languages; 2) Exploring some cognitive mechanisms (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) at play which motivate the idioms, as well as types of semantic motivation (Piirainen and Dobrovol'skij 2005) at play.
The idioms under consideration are collected from idiomatic dictionaries in both languages and analyzed in terms of how the literal meanings and the different mental images encoded in the different lexical items contribute to the actual meanings idioms convey.

Keywords: idioms, culture, image(s), lexical constituents, literal/actual meaning

1. Introduction

According to Nunberg *et al.* (1994: 492), 'idiom' is applied to a fuzzy category of peculiar linguistic constructions which do not lend themselves to a straightforward definition. The

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broad linguistic spectrum is reflected in an abundance of terms[1] that are used to refer to this linguistic phenomenon: multi-word items (Moon 1997), fixed expressions (Carter 1998), phraseology (Howarth 1998), idiom (McCarthy 1998), phraseological unit (Gläser: 1984). However , in this paper we adopt the term 'idiom', as the most traditional and well-known one, based on the Anglo-Saxon tradition. In Albanian, the term 'phraseological unit' is used instead, according to the Eastern European linguistic tradition. We use this term as it was defined by Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005): «Idioms must be fixed in their lexical structure (however, this does not exclude a certain limited variation), and they must be, at the same time, semantically reinterpreted units (i.e. they do not point to the target concept directly but via a source concept) and/or semantically opaque».
There seems to be a growing interest in discovering and discussing widespread idioms across as many languages as possible. Several projects have been completed and many others are underway, inspired by Elisabeth Piirainen's groundbreaking work «Widespread idioms in Europe and Beyond» (2012). There are idioms with the same or a very similar lexical and semantic structure that are traceable across many languages. The cross-linguistic lexical-semantic "similarities" of these idioms across different languages have only recently been studied systematically and explanations for the uniformity have been provided and their narrative sources established. However, little attention has been given to idioms that achieve (functional) equivalence at the semantic level but differ in the lexical structure. Since idioms can manifest both universal features and a nation's individuality, it is really interesting to explore the way in which different cultures have made similar observations and created their own idioms based on their specific cultural experience and knowledge. There is a considerable number of such idioms (estimated to be over 150) in English and Albanian, despite the cultural differences between our two cultures. As Taylor (1995) puts it «since ...
certain experiences are presumably common to all normal, healthy human beings, ... it comes as no surprise that we find both considerable cross-language similarity in metaphorical expression, as well as cross-language diversity». Wierzbicka (1999) points out that almost everything in language reveals a certain degree of cultural specifics and we intend to explore those culture-specific features which make these two languages and their corresponding model of the world more or less unique despite the remarkable similarities in understanding and responding to reality.

2. Cross-linguistic specifics of idioms with the same or highly similar semantic structures but different lexical structures in English and Albanian

The linguistic knowledge is, most of the times, a metaphorical knowledge, a knowledge through images, and which, most often is oriented in the same direction, a fact that makes us think of a certain universal unity, beyond idiomatic, ethnic or cultural differences. Eugenio Coseriu (2000-2001)

We can safely say that, for the majority of the idioms which convey the same idea but differ in the lexical structure, whether analyzable and/or decomposable[2] or not, there is a motivating link between the literal reading and the actual meaning. The meanings of these idioms are built from different images underlying the actual meaning of idioms and it is these mental images that serve as a motivating link between them. Lakoff (1987) calls them imageable

[1] For a discussion of the terminology and typology of phraseological units, see Cowie (1998), Moon (1998: 2–5).

[2] As regards the notion of analyzability compare Dobrovol'skij 1982, 1997, 2000; Gibbs 1989; Fellbaum 1993; Cacciari & Tabossi 1993; Nunberg 1994; Titone & Connine 1999; Abel 2003.

idioms and thinks that, in many cases, the meaning of idioms is not hard to infer. This view is different from the traditional view that considers them as arbitrary and non-compositional at all. The image component being "a specific conceptual structure mediating between the lexical structure and the actual meaning of figurative units" (Dobrovol'skiij and Piirainen 2005) is very important in terms of their content.

There are contrasting views on the effects of mental imagery or the literal meaning of individual constituents on idiom comprehension. Gibbs and O'Brien (1990) claimed that the images that people associate with everyday idioms reflect the deep conceptual metaphors that underlie the meanings of those idioms. However, Cacciari & Glucksberg (1991) claimed that the images refer to the literal meanings of idiomatic strings rather than to their idiomatic meanings and that imagery interfered with comprehension. Titone and Connine (1994) argued that if the idiomatic expression is ambiguous, that is, it has a possible literal meaning available, and the prior context is not biasing towards either interpretation, the literal meaning of the words remain activated until enough context is available to determine either the literal or idiomatic interpretation. This problem exists when an entire idiom can be interpreted literally. However, in the case of literally implausible idioms, the activation of the literal meaning of the words will be immediately suppressed, since it contradicts the language user's world knowledge.

There is no denying that people have two kinds of meanings available when they encounter idioms in discourse: the actual meaning of the idiomatic expression, and the meaning(s) of the linguistic constituents (cf. Bobrow & Bell 1973; Cacciari & Tabossi 1988; Gibbs 1986; Glucksberg & Cacciari 1994; Swinney & Cutler 1979) and people tend to form images of an idiom's literal rather than figurative meaning. According to Gibbs and O'Brien, the images associated with idioms spring directly from the conceptual metaphors that are automatically activated whenever an idiom is heard or read. Even though idiom processing studies suggest that people cannot bypass the meanings of an idiom's constituents en route to accessing (or generating) an idiom's figurative meaning (Cacciari & Glucksberg 1991; Cacciari & Tabossi 1988; Flores d'Arcais 1993; Tabossi & Zardon 1993), the automatic activation of lexical meanings does not necessarily hinder access to idiomatic meanings via activation of conceptual metaphors as suggested by Gibbs and O'Brien (1990), as it is the concrete-literal that forms the basis for the abstract-figurative. The visual images for idioms are meaning correlates for those idioms.

The abstract-figurative interpretation of an idiom is made possible via the image which tends to reflect the concrete actions and events denoted by an idiom's constituent words and phrases. We can safely say that images that are literal do reflect subtle conceptual analogies which facilitate idiom comprehension if people are not already familiar with the meanings of idioms. Theorists such as Harris, Lahey and Marsalek (1980) suggest that imagery underlies people's comprehension of a broad range of figurative expressions.

While many idioms are a linguistic realization of conceptual metaphors[3], others are motivated at the less abstract level of rich images. Let us now explore some near-synonymous idioms in English and Albanian at the level of rich mental images. We have limited our analysis to 11 out of 31 items included in the table below, whose actual meanings can be figured out based on the rich imagery evoked by their literal meanings, due to the space limitation.

[3] A conceptual metaphor is a mapping between two domains of experience; usually the more abstract target domain is understood in terms of the more concrete source domain (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

No.	English idiom	Albanian idiom	Literal Translation in English
1.	fiddle while Rome burns	- Tjetrit i digjet mjekra, ai kërkon të ndezë cigare; - Fshati (Stambolli) digjet, kurva krihet	- sb's beard is on fire and he wants to light a cigarette; - the village/Istanbul is burning and the bitch combs her hair
2.	(build) castles in the air	- (ndërtoj) kështjella prej rëre/ kështjella prej letre; - (shoh) ëndrra me sy hapur; - ëndrra në diell; - (bëj) petulla me ujë	- build sand castles/paper castles; - (have) dreams with the eyes open; - dreams in the sun; - (make (ie fry)) doughnuts with water
3.	- cry/ask for the moon; - seek a hare in a hen's nest	- kërkoj qiqra në hell; - kërkoj kallëza në borë; - kërkoj thana në shëndre/dimër	- ask for chickpeas in a skewer; - look for wheat spikes in the snow; - ask for cornelian cherries in winter
4.	carrot and stick	- me kulaç e me kërbaç; - me shajak e me dajak	- by unleavened bread and by whip; - by homespun wool cloak and by club/stick
5.	(be) a pain in the neck; (be) a thorn in somebody's side/flesh	(m'u bë) gur në opingë	(be) a pebble in one's moccassin
6.	go (jump) out of the frying pan and into the fire	(bie) nga shiu në breshër	(fall) from rain to hail
7.	throw the baby out with the bath-water	djeg të njomin bashkë me të thatin	burn the fresh grass together with the dry one
8.	when pigs fly; when hell freezes	- kur të bëhen dy ditë bashkë; - kur të bëhet deti kos; - kur të qethen dhentë e kuqe; - kur të hipë derri në fik; - kur të bëjë qarri arra; - kur të bashkohet qielli me tokën; - kur të pjellë mushka; - kur të shohësh veshët (qafën/majën e veshit) pa pasqyrë	- when two days become one; - when the sea turns into youghurt; - when the red sheep are shorn; - when the pig climbs the fig tree; - when the oak tree produces walnuts; - when the sky and the earth come together/meet; - when the mule gives birth/ reproduces; - when you see your ears (neck/the top of your ear) without a mirror
9.	a stone's throw away	- një vrap pele; - dy hapa larg	- a mare's run; - two steps away
10.	to be wet behind the ears	i ka buzët me qumësht	to have breastmilk on one's lips
11.	teach your grandmother to suck eggs	- i tregon babait arat; - meson veza pulën	- show the lands to your father; - the egg teaching the chicken
12.	the tail wagging the dog	- ngrihen këmbët e i bien kokës; - më i rëndë bishti se sqepari	- the feet rise to beat the head; - the handle (of the claw

			hammer) being heavier than the head)
13.	make a mountain out of a molehill	- e bën qimen tra; - e bën mizën/pleshtin buall/ka	- make a beam out of a hair; - make a buffalo/ox out of a fly/flea
14.	the fox guarding the henhouse	- i var ujkut mëlçitë në qafë; - vë ujkun të ruajë dhentë/delet	- hang liver on the wolf's neck; - get the wolf to guard the sheep
15.	like peas in a pod	si dy pika uji	like two water drops
16.	all sizzle and no steak	fjalë të mira e gurë në trastë	good words but rocks in the bag
17.	to bite the hand that feeds you	- ha bukën e përmbys kupën; - Kalova lumin, të dhjefsha kalin	- (sb) finishes the bread (meal) and then flips over the cup; - (Now that I) crossed the river, (I) shit on your horse
18.	between the devil and the deep blue sea	mes dy zjarresh	between two fires
19.	bury/stick/hide your head in the sand	fshihem pas gishtit	to hide behind the finger
20.	to wait till the cows come home; don't hold your breath	- prit gomar të mbijë bar; - lagu sot e rruhu mot	- wait, donkey, till the grass grows; - wet (your beard) today and shave next year
21.	to bite off more than you can chew	të mbash dy kunguj nën një sqetull	to hold two pumpkins under one armpit
22.	Jack of all trades	Ç'i sheh syri ia bën dora	What one sees one's hand does/fixes
23.	- not know your arse from your elbow; - couldn't pour water out of a boot (with the instructions on the heel)	nuk di nga lidhet gomari	not know how to tie a donkey
24	(fall for sth) hook, line and sinker	e ha/merr sapunin për djathë;	(sb) eats/takes the soap for cheese
25.	tan somebody's hide	ia bëj kurrizin më të butë se barkun	make someone's back softer than their belly
26.	close the stable/barn door after the horse has bolted/gone	vjen si kofini pas së vjeli	come like the basket after the harvest is brought in
27.	- separate the wheat (grain) from the chaff; - separate the sheeps from the goats	ndaj shapin nga sheqeri	separate the mineral salt from sugar
28	- thick in the head; - dead from the neck up	copë mishi me dy sy	a piece of meat with two eyes
29.	to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar	për një gozhdë, shkoi patkoi	lose the horseshoe for a nail
30.	catch sb red-handed	kap me presh në dorë	catch sb with leeks in their hand
31.	have your back to/against the wall	e ka lakun/litarin në qafë/grykë	have a noose/rope around the neck/throat

Table 1: Idioms in English and Albanian.

Cross-cultural idioms often highlight themes which are universally relevant but often evoke distinct images rooted in local experiences, beliefs, and traditions. They provide insights into the way different societies conceptualize and articulate common human experiences. While the specific imagery may differ, the underlying messages often align closely and, in many

cases, the metaphorical meaning can be easily deduced as the different mental image does not always clash with the other culture. However, a literal mental image of an idiom can facilitate the comprehension process if it refers to a well-known situation, or if it requires reasoning, applying knowledge, or making associations.
Comparing idioms with similar meanings but different imagery in English and Albanian can provide a real insight into how language encodes culture and reflects local traditions, environments, and worldviews. The natural world, domestic life, social relationships and historical backgrounds of each society all play a role in determining the metaphors each culture finds most salient, offering a glimpse into the lived experiences that shape language.
Both languages incorporate rural life, agricultural society and nature by drawing on animals, daily life & traditions, reflecting a different set of everyday experiences, nevertheless.The imagery they use often reflects the cultural, historical, and environmental contexts of their respective languages.
English is an idiomatic language and idioms are versatile linguistic tools which appear across various registers, genres, and contexts depending on their tone and formality. Their Albanian counterparts do not always match them in the sense that there are contextual restrictions that apply, even though the idioms convey basically the same meaning.
Bearing this in mind, let us analyze some idioms in English and Albanian that reflect common themes but reveal different cultural information through their vivid and specific imagery tied to daily life practices and/or experiences:

Upside-down Hierarchy/ Reversal of Roles

English: **the tail wagging the dog**
Albanian: 1. **ngrihen këmbët e i bien kokës**
(literally:the feet rise to beat the head)
2. më i rëndë bishti se sqepari
(literally: the handle (of the claw hammer) being heavier than the head)

The theme underlying these vivid idioms is a reversal of proper roles and influence. They highlight absurdity or dysfunction, often in contexts like power dynamics and/or decision-making.
The idioms are not difficult to interpret. Picturing the situation, one can easily get to the figurative meaning of these idioms which anthropomorphize animals (dog) and parts of the body (head, feet) or make use of objects (claw hammer) to render the idea of inversion of control and reverse hierarchy. They suggest the absurdity of the situation and even folly, which is unacceptable.
They both demonstrate society's awareness of hierarchical dynamics. In sociological terms, a hierarchy exists with elders and other persons of respect and authority occupying the highest level. The idioms humorously criticize misplaced authority. There is a hint of irony in the Albanian idioms.
They display different structures. In English it is a noun phrase, in Albanian the first one has a sentence-like structure whereas the second is an adjective phrase.
Along the same lines, we also have the following idioms:

Presumption/ Misplaced Advice/ Arrogance

English: **teach your grandmother to suck eggs**
Albanian: **1. mëson veza pulën**

(literally: the egg teaching thechicken)
2. i tregon babait arat
(literally: show where the lands areto your father)

In both languages the idioms highlight the absurdity of trying to teach someone with more experience or knowledge about something they are already well-versed in (grandmother/father/ chicken). The idioms humorously imply arrogance or ignorance on the part of the speaker, who assumes they know better than an elder or expert.
It's interesting to find that in one of the Albanian counterparts ('mëson veza pulën'), the verb *teach* and the noun *egg* are also used as lexical components, but in Albanian it's the famous egg and chicken, part of the old riddle that's sparked many arguments through the ages, perhaps: was it the chicken or the egg that came first. Apparently, Albanians have solved the riddle and it is the chicken that came first, which gives the chicken the status of authority and deserving of respect. The grandmother is a source of wisdom, knowledge and experience, you learn from and not teach to.
Albanian culture is a patriarchal culture and the father evokes an image of his role as an authority figure who cannot be questioned, let alone taught by his offspring.
The idioms are semantically transparent. They employ irony and/or sharp humour to criticize overconfidence and misplaced advice.

Carelessness

English: **throw the baby out with the bath-water**
Albanian: **djeg të njomin bashkë me të thatin;**
(literally: burn the fresh grass together with the dry one)
Digjet i njomi bashkë me të thatin
(literally: the dry grass gets burnt together with the fresh one)

The theme underlying the idioms in both languages is recklessness. It refers to the mistake of discarding something valuable or important while trying to get rid of something undesirable. The idiom warns against making hasty decisions or sweeping changes that result in unintended negative consequences.
Even though the images differ, the meaning is not difficult to infer due to the rich imagery. The relevant motivating link for these idioms is provided at the basic level of rich images, evoked by the lexical structure of the idioms. The English idiom refers to the bathing practice, whereas the Albanian one(s) to the practice of burning dry grass. One could picture the situations to oneself, when the baby gets thrown out with the bath water or the fresh grass is burnt along with the dry one, the images serving as bases of inference. The idea that throwing out of the baby or the burning of fresh grass happen by accident or non-voluntarily is behind both even though this is understood in the context in which they are used rather than from the expression itself. The Albanian version is more true to life than the English one and refers to a rural context whereas the English one refers to domestic life.

Crime

English: **catch sb red-handed**
Albanian: **kap me presh në dorë** (literally: catch sb with leeks in the hand)

Both idioms mean to catch somebody at the moment when they are doing something wrong with undeniable evidence of their guilt, where being found with blood on one's hands or holding leeks was literal proof of guilt. It is a metaphor for being caught in any incriminating situation.
We can make sense of both idioms if we activate the knowledge that we have of historical contexts in which the situations depicted make sense. The expressions 'catch red-handed' and 'kap me presh në dorë" are readily understood; that is, people can comprehend the relation between the literal meanings of the idiom's lexical constituents (the words ''catch'' and "red-handed/holding leeks") and the figurative meaning. The verb 'catch' used in both languages retains its literal meaning and facilitates the idiom comprehension.
The idioms have different crime references: killing in English vs. stealing in Albanian. The English idiom likely stems from historical contexts of crime detection, catching someone during a violent act (e.g., murder/poaching), whereas the Albanian one incorporates a vivid, concrete image tied to theft in rural markets, emphasizing rural or agrarian contexts. It could be that stealing (suggesting poverty) was more common in Albania than violent acts implied by the idiom in English.

Annoyance

English: **(be) a pain in the neck/ a thorn in somebody's side/flesh**
Albanian: **(m'u bë) gur në opingë** (literally: (be) a pebble in sb's moccassin

The theme underlying these idioms is persistent annoyance or trouble. What Albanians consider to be annoying is a pebble in the (traditional Albanian) moccasin rather than a pain or thorn. Moccassins bear a local imprint. The noun phrases display the same syntactic structure. There is a direct relationship between the idiomatic expression and the intended meaning. Even though the images differ, the meaning is not difficult to infer due to the rich imagery.
'A pain in the neck' is a more casual and commonly used phrase for something or someone that is irritating but not necessarily harmful. 'A thorn in somebody's side/flesh' carries a slightly stronger tone, suggesting a chronic, long-term source of discomfort or conflict. The phrase often implies a deeper nuisance that one cannot easily get rid of. Thus, they differ slightly in intensity and context. The Albanian idiom is closer in meaning to the second idiom. The word 'opingë' bears a national imprint since they are typical Albanian shoes, reflecting traditional Albanian clothing.

Absurdity/ Impossibility/ Unlikely Scenarios/ Disbelief

English: **when pigs fly;**
when hell freezes over;
Albanian: **kur të bëhet deti kos** (literally: when the sea turns into youghurt);
kur të bëhen dy ditë bashkë (literally: when two days become one);
kur të qethen dhentë e kuqe (literally: when the red sheep are shorn);
kur të hipë derri në fik (literally: when the pig climbs the fig tree);
kur të bëjë qarri arra (literally: when the oak tree produces walnuts);
kur të bashkohet qielli me tokën (literally: when the sky and the earth come together);
kur të pjellë mushka (literally: when the mule reproduces);

kur të shohësh veshët (qafën/majën e veshit) pa pasqyrë
(literally: when you manage to see your ears (neck/the top part of your ear) without a mirror)

The specific images evoked, exaggerated and surreal, differ based on cultural perceptions of absurdity. The differences reflect how each culture uses familiar, everyday life elements to communicate absurdity or impossibility of these things happening or dismiss something as completely out of the question.
The idioms make use of the same syntactic structure (time clauses) which is a fun way to express impossibilities. They are semantically transparent due to the structure employed, as well. The meaning is not hard to infer since pigs, being flightless, will obviously never fly or climb a fig tree, and all the other conditions will never be met. The idioms rely on animals, objects or settings commonly associated with each culture.

Unrealistic Expectations

English: **cry/ask for the moon;**
seek a hare in a hen's nest
Albanian: **kërkoj qiqra në hell;**
(literally: ask for chickpeas (cooked) in a skewer)
kërkoj kallëza në borë;
(literally: look for wheat spikes in the snow)
kërkoj thana në shëndre/dimër
(literally: ask/look for cornelian cherries in winter)

The theme underlying these idioms all revolve around unrealistic expectations or futility. What is asked for or looked for in both cultures is something that cannot be attained, so far beyond reach that it is absurd to even ask for them.
Even though the images differ, the meaning is not difficult to infer due to the rich imagery. The interpretation of these idioms depends on the combination of the meanings of the constituent words. Separately they don't contribute to the overall meaning but combined idiomatically, they do. Chickpeas and skewers[4], wheat spikes and snow, cornelian cherries and winter, the moon or a hare and a hen's nest cannot be considered as metaphors on their own, but they can be logically interpreted only by combining them. We can say that these idioms are motivated since the hidden meaning in their lexical structure provides a clear basis to understand them metaphorically. Conventional knowledge[5] that chickpeas are not cooked in a skewer, that there are are no wheat spikes in the snow or cornelian cherries in the winter or hares in a hen's nest comes into play.
The verbs employed are the same or synonyms but the noun constituents change, which reflects different settings. In English it is a celestial body or an animal, in Albanian it's a legume, a plant or a fruit.

Idioms About Escalating Problems

English: **go (jump) out of the frying pan and into the fire**
Albanian: **bie nga shiu në breshër** (literally: fall from the rain to hail)

[4]A long pointed wooden stick or iron rod to cook meat over a fire by slowly rotating it over fire.
[5] Conventional knowledge, which is a cognitive mechanism, implies the shared info that people belonging to the same culture have about a conceptual field.

Both idioms mean escaping one bad situation only to end up in an even worse one. The English idiom imagery is cooking-related, common in English idioms, most likely reflecting the domestic experience, whereas the Albanian idiom imagery is weather-related, reflecting a rural or agrarian lifestyle, where people are more exposed to and dependent on weather patterns. The concrete images fixed in the lexical structure of the idioms in English and Albanian suggest that someone finds themselves in a situation which only becomes worse.

Reward and Punishment Approach

English: **carrot and stick**
Albanian: **me kulaç e me kërbaç** (literally: with unleavened bread and whip)
me shajak e me dajak (literally: with homespun wool cloak and club)

The theme underlying these idioms is motivating behavior through a combination of rewards (carrot, kulaç, shajak) and punishments (stick, whip, club) to induce a desired behaviour.
These idioms are interesting to discuss, as well. Even though the images differ, the meaning is not difficult to infer due to the rich imagery. They are semantically analyzable in both languages in that their meaning can be fully deduced based on the knowledge about the meanings of the constituents and the ability to identify and use the underlying rhetorical structure as a means of deduction. We can trace the link between the two levels of the meaning (literal and figurative). Separate meanings can be given to 'carrot', 'kulaç' and 'shajak' (as '*good things*') and 'stick', 'kërbaç' and 'dajak' (as '*bad things*'). In this case we deal with a kind of homomorphism between the structure of the meaning they have and the underlying metaphor.
In English, the idiom evokes the image of a donkey being enticed or punished, whereas in Albanian it's people who are rewarded or punished.
As regards the syntactic function, the English idiom is used as an adjective (generally accompanied by 'approach'), whereas in Albanian it is used as an adverb (functioning as an adverbial).

Impossibility and Unrealistic Expectations/ Impracticality

English: **(build) castles in the air**
Albanian: **(ndërtoj) kështjella prej rëre; kështjella prej letre**
(literally: build sand castles/paper castles)
(shoh) ëndrra në diell; ëndrra me sy hapur
(literally: have dreams with your eyes open)
i bëj petullat me ujë
(literally: make (i.e. fry) doughnuts with water)

The theme underlying these idioms is unrealistic dreams, fantasies, or plans that are unlikely to come true, pointing to fanciful thinking that is not grounded in reality**.**
These idioms are not analysable, given that their constituent parts cannot be considered as metaphors on their own. However, they are motivated since the hidden meaning in their lexical structure provides a clear basis to understand them metaphorically. The constituents contribute to the overall meaning of the idioms only by combining them. Truth conditions are not met and you can easily interpret them as referring to something that is impossible to do: if castles were built in the air (in English) they would not stand or if they were made of sand or

paper (in Albanian) they wouldn't last, you cannot dream with your eyes open, and conventional knowledge tells us that you cannot make (i.e. fry) doughnuts with water (they require oil). These things are disconnected from reality.

Negligence or indifference in the face of a crisis

English: **fiddle while Rome burns**
Albanian: **Fshati (Stambolli) digjet, kurva krihet**
(literally: the village/Instanbul is burning and the bitch combs her hair)
Tjetrit i digjet mjekra, ai kërkon të ndezë cigare;
(literally: sb's beard is on fire and he wants to light a cigarette;

These idioms focus on negligence or acting with disregard during a crisis. The English one is linked to Roman Emperor Nero's apocryphal indifference. According to legend, he played the fiddle (or lyre) while Rome was engulfed in flames during a great fire in AD 64. Whether or not Nero actually did this, the phrase has come to symbolize apathy or the wrong focus during a time of disaster.
The Albanian idioms emphasize selfish disregard for others' suffering, portraying (lack of) communal values. The lexical constituent 'village' reflects a rural context, whereas the use of the proper noun 'Istanbul' indicates ties to the Turkish influence on the Albanian language since Albania was under the Ottoman Empire for centuries. It is interesting how this idiom comes so close to the English one in terms of the lexical structure in addition to the semantic one, but each preserving their own cultural realities or historical contexts.
The Albanian idioms tend to be more concrete, rooted in rural life (vs urban in English), depicting vivid real-life situations and social practices.

3. Conclusions

The cross-linguistic comparison of idioms between English and Albanian reveals that there is a certain degree of similarity in the way in which people conceptualize the world around them, which results in shared idiomatic structures. While idiomatic expressions may convey similar meanings across languages, the specific imagery and lexical choices often differ, reflecting distinct historical, social, and environmental contexts.
Despite differences in imagery, many idioms in both languages reflect universally comprehensible themes rooted in common human experiences that transcend specific linguistic and cultural boundaries, such as absurdity, hierarchy, and carelessness. The differences at the surface level, ie the choice of words, can be ascribed either to the different perspectives from which a phenomenon may be viewed, or to cultural and/or environmental differences.
The variety of images evoked for the same content in idioms is evidence of the fact that idioms mirror the language which is shaped and influenced by culture. The image component provides relevant links between the lexical form of the idiom and its actual meaning.
This study challenges the notion that idioms lack rationale, highlighting instead the cognitive and metaphorical motivations behind their construction. The motivation often makes idioms partially predictable based on their lexical structure.

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Chapter 16.
Estensioni semantiche e metafora: il caso di 'prendere' nelle costruzioni a verbo supporto

Semantic Extensions and Metaphor: the Case of 'prendere' in Italian Light Verb Constructions

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Abstract

Il contributo si pone l'obiettivo di approfondire la polisemia dei significanti esprimenti il concetto di 'prendere' in riferimento al loro utilizzo all'interno delle *costruzioni a verbo supporto*, strutture formate di norma da un verbo di significato generico e da un sintagma nominale con valore predicativo (ad es. FR. *prendre une douche* 'fare una doccia', IT. *prendere una decisione*). Contrariamente alla concezione tradizionale dei verbi supporto come elementi desemantizzati, all'interno della linguistica cognitiva essi sono considerati come estensioni semantiche che si realizzano a partire dal significato lessicalmente pieno del verbo, attraverso mutamenti di dominio (*domain shifts*) e un sostanziale impoverimento della matrice. In questa prospettiva, i verbi che esprimono il concetto di 'prendere' sono stati analizzati in letteratura principalmente come conversi di 'dare', con spostamento della focalizzazione della prospettiva dall'Agente al Ricevente (ad es. IT. *dare fuoco ~ prendere fuoco*), ma la semantica del 'prendere' rivela una maggiore complessità, arrivando a esprimere valori che sembrano totalmente grammaticalizzati in senso diatetico (in forme medie quali il FR. *prendre une douche* 'fare una doccia' o l'ING. *take a walk* 'fare una passeggiata') o in senso azionale (IT. *prendere fuoco*). A partire dalla matrice di domini ascrivibile ai verbi di 'prendere', nell'articolo se ne analizza il graduale svuotamento in termini di percorsi metaforici, sulla base dell'interazione con la semantica del nome che cooccorre. Il lavoro riguarda principalmente l'italiano, con alcune osservazioni sulle lingue romanze e la considerazione dell'inglese, dato l'amplissimo uso dei *taking verbs* nelle

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costruzioni a verbo supporto. La chiave contrastiva permette di porre in rilievo le diversità concettuali alla base di scelte interlinguisticamente diverse (ad es. FR. *prendre une douche* ~ IT. *fare una doccia*).

Parole chiave: verbi supporto, estensioni metaforiche, italiano, lingue romanze, inglese.

Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the polysemy of signifiers expressing the notion of 'take', with a particular focus on their use in light verb constructions. These constructions are typically formed with a verb of generic meaning and a noun phrase with predicative value (e.g., FR. *prendre une douche* 'take a shower', IT. *prendere una decisione* 'take a decision'). Traditionally, light verbs have been considered as semantically bleached items. On the other hand, cognitive linguistics considers them as semantic extensions. From this perspective, the light value of these verbs develops from their lexically full meaning, through domain shifts and the reduction of the domain matrix. Verbs expressing the concept of 'take' have mainly been analysed as the converse of verbs that express the notion of 'give', shifting the focus from the perspective of the Agent to that of the Recipient (e.g., IT. *dare fuoco* lit. 'give fire' ~ *prendere fuoco* lit. 'take fire'). However, the semantics of 'take' is much more complex, and some grammaticalised uses of these verbs can express both diathetic values (e.g., middle values in FR. *prendre une douche* or ENG. *take a walk*) and actional ones (e.g., in IT. *prendere fuoco*). Starting from the domains matrix of taking verbs, this paper analyses the gradual emptying of such domains in terms of metaphorical paths, even taking into account the interaction with the semantics of the co-occurring nouns. The work primarily focuses on the Italian language, though it also provides observations about Romance languages as well as English, due to its extensive use of taking verbs in light verb constructions. The contrastive approach is useful for highlighting the conceptual differences underlying different choices across languages (e.g., FR. *prendre une douche* ~ IT. *fare una doccia* 'take a shower').

Keywords: light verbs, metaphorical extensions, Italian, Romance languages, English.

1. Introduzione

Scopo di questo articolo è un approfondimento della polisemia dei significanti che esprimono il concetto di 'prendere', con particolare riferimento al loro utilizzo all'interno delle cosiddette *costruzioni a verbo supporto* (d'ora in poi CVS). Per CVS si intendono delle strutture formate da un verbo di significato generico e da un sintagma di norma nominale con valore predicativo:[1]

(1)
IT. *avere freddo*
FR. *faire un bond* 'fare un salto'
SP. *dar un paseo* 'fare una passeggiata'
INGL. *take a shower* 'fare una doccia'

A partire da Jespersen (1942: 117), il verbo è stato considerato semanticamente *light* (*insignificant verb*) in costruzioni inglesi come *have a wash* 'darsi una lavata', *give a look* 'dare un'occhiata', *take a shower* 'fare una doccia'. Il termine italiano *verbo supporto* deriva, invece, dalla scuola francese, in cui si è parlato di *verbe support* sin dalla seconda metà del secolo scorso (Ibrahim 1996). In questa ottica, le CVS risultano caratterizzate da una netta distinzione di funzioni tra verbo e nome: il verbo, svuotato della sua semantica lessicale, risulta limitato a un mero 'supporto' grammaticale, finalizzato a codificare i tratti TAM e l'accordo della

[1] Questo studio è il risultato di una ricerca condotta nell'ambito del progetto PRIN 2020 "VerbACxSS: su verbi analitici, complessità, verbi sintetici, e semplificazione. Per l'accessibilità" (Prot. 2020BJKB9M), finanziato dal MUR. Il lavoro è stato concepito e scritto in maniera condivisa; ai meri fini accademici, i §§ 1, 3.1 e 4 sono da attribuirsi ad Anna Pompei, mentre i §§ 2, 3 e 3.2 a David Nicoletti.

persona; il nome, invece, viene considerato il nucleo semantico della predicazione (Gross 2004: 167).
Contrariamente a questa concezione tradizionale delle CVS, in alcuni approcci sono state ipotizzate configurazioni differenti degli elementi che le compongono, attribuendo al verbo supporto un maggior peso semantico. Tali proposte attribuiscono alla costruzione una semantica più articolata e prevedono dei meccanismi in grado di spiegare e rappresentare polisemie e slittamenti semantici. Nella prospettiva della linguistica cognitiva, in particolare, i verbi supporto possono essere trattati come estensioni metaforiche. L’estensione si realizza a partire dal significato del verbo lessicalmente pieno, attraverso mutamenti di dominio (*domain shift*) e un sostanziale impoverimento della matrice costituita dai diversi domini (*domain matrix*). In questo quadro teorico, gli studi si sono concentrati prevalentemente sui significanti esprimenti il concetto di ‘dare’ (Newman 1996; Brugman 2001; Palancar 2003, Pompei 2023): in una frase come INGL. *She gave him a punch* ‘Gli ha dato un pugno’, ad esempio, l’azione intenzionale diretta ad altre persone può essere spiegata nei termini di una metafora del trasferimento di un’entità fisica (Goldberg 1995: 149).
Questo contributo è, invece, dedicato ai verbi esprimenti il concetto di ‘prendere’, che sono stati meno indagati (Norvig & Lakoff 1987) rispetto a quelli di ‘dare’, ma non risultano meno interessanti. Essi presentano, anzitutto, uno stretto legame con ‘dare’, così come con ‘avere’ (ed ‘essere’), nella realizzazione di configurazioni che esprimono lessicalmente la diatesi causativa (2a, 3a), anticausativa (2b, 3b) e stativa (2c, 3c) (García Hernández 1998):

(2)
a. IT. *dare sonno*
b. IT. *prendere sonno*
c. IT. *avere sonno* (*essere assonnati*)

(3)
a. IT. *dare coraggio*
b. IT. *prendere coraggio*
c. IT. *avere coraggio* (*essere coraggiosi*)

La semantica dei verbi che esprimono il ‘prendere’, tuttavia, è più complessa del mero converso dei verbi che esprimono il ‘dare’, fino a valori che sembrano totalmente grammaticalizzati in senso diatetico, come forme medie (4):[2]

(4)
a. FR. *prendre une douche* PORT. *tomar duche* ‘fare una doccia’
b. INGL. *take a walk* ‘fare una camminata’

In questo ultimo caso, è interessante notare come nelle altre lingue romanze possano essere selezionati, accanto ai significanti per ‘fare’ (5a-5b), anche quelli per ‘dare’ (6a-6b):

(5)
a. IT. *fare una doccia* ROM. *a face duș*
b. IT. *fare una passeggiata* FR. *faire une promenade* ROM. *a face o plimbare*

[2] La diatesi media ha come tratto distintivo il coinvolgimento del soggetto (Kemmer 1993); cfr. Pompei e Piunno (2023) per l’applicazione del concetto di diatesi media ai verbi per ‘prendere’ nella CVS.

(6)
a. SP. *darse una ducha*
b. SP. *dar un paseo* PORT. *dar um passeio*

I significanti per 'prendere', dunque, possono esprimere i) da una parte, il converso di 'dare', come forma anticausativa con uno stesso nome e all'interno della stessa lingua (2b, 3b); ii) dall'altra, un equivalente di 'dare', con nomi parimenti equivalenti, in lingue diverse (4, 6) o, addirittura, all'interno della stessa lingua (7-8):

(7)
LATINO
a. *capere fugam* 'prendere la fuga'
b. *dare fugam* 'darsi alla fuga'

(8)
ITALIANO ANTICO
a. Prese un salto*, e fussi gittato dall'altra parte* (Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 6, 9)
b. *Ma pure ti veggio* dato avere un salto *fuori del mare* (Giovanni dalle Celle, *Lettere*, 7)

2. Valore semantico di 'prendere' *vs*. 'dare'

È cosa nota che 'prendere' e 'dare' operino come conversi, rappresentando due prospettive speculari della stessa relazione di trasferimento di possesso.Nei termini di Van Valin (2001: 33), ad esempio, sia i verbi di 'prendere' sia quelli di 'dare'«code a transfer of possession», differenziandosi soltanto «in the expression of the initiator of the transfer».
Nel suo valore concreto, la struttura logica della predicazione di 'dare' implica il trasferimento di un argomento *z* da un argomento *x* a un argomento *y* (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 102-113):

(9)
'give'
a. $Bill_x$ *gave the* $book_z$ *to* $Fred_y$
b. [**do**′ (x, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **have**′ (y, z) & BECOME NOT **have**′ (x, z)]

A questa decomposizione logica corrispondono i ruoli semantici di Agente, Tema e Ricevente, che vengono mappati in sintassi rispettivamente nelle posizioni di soggetto, oggetto diretto e oggetto indiretto, secondo lo schema riportato in (10):

(10)
'dare'

Predicato	<Agente	Tema	Ricevente>
Verbo	soggetto	oggetto diretto	oggetto indiretto

Sotto il profilo logico, la struttura argomentale di 'prendere' risulta esattamente speculare a quella di 'dare'. A parità di referenti, infatti, si osserva una configurazione inversa degli argomenti, analoga a quella riscontrabile nei conversi lessicali come *marito/moglie* in italiano o, appunto, *dare* e *prendere/ricevere*:

(11)
'take'
a. $Fred_x$ *took the* $book_z$ [*from* $Bill_y$]
b. [**do**′ (x, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **have**′ (x, z)] [& BECOME NOT **have**′ (y, z)]

In questa configurazione, il soggetto realizza semanticamente l’Agente e l’oggetto diretto il Tema. A differenza di quanto accade con ‘dare’, tuttavia, la realizzazione sintattica del terzo partecipante non è obbligatoria; esso, pertanto, si configura come un aggiunto. Dal punto di vista del valore semantico, tale terzo argomento può essere categorizzato come Fonte, ossia l’entità che possiede l’oggetto prima del trasferimento, come in (11a), o come Origine, ossia il punto fisico da cui ha inizio il trasferimento, come dimostra la piena grammaticalità di esempi quali (12):

(12)
Fred$_x$ took the book$_z$ [*from the shelf$_y$*]

Si ha, quindi, la seguente struttura semantica e sintattica:

(13)
‘take’

Predicato	<Agente	Tema	(Fonte/Origine)>
Verbo	soggetto	oggetto diretto	(aggiunto)

Come osservano Norvig e Lakoff (1987: 199), in *take* si verifica una peculiare sovrapposizione di ruoli, per cui «the agent is the recipient»:

(14)
a. *Bill$_x$ gave the book$_z$ to Fred$_y$*.
b. *Fred$_x$ took the book$_z$* [*from Bill$_y$*] / [*from the shelf$_y$*]

Il soggetto di *take*, dunque, non agisce solo come iniziatore dell’azione, ma si configura anche come la Meta (*Goal*) del movimento attraverso il quale entra in possesso del Tema. Questa relazione può essere schematizzata nei suoi tratti essenziali come segue, usando l’iperonimo *Source* per Fonte e Origine:

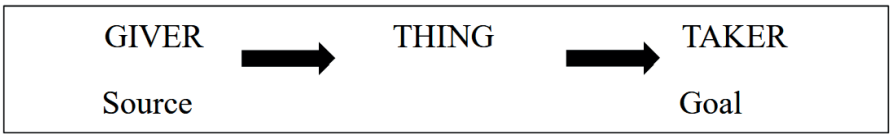


Fig. 1: rappresentazione della semantica del ‘dare’ come trasferimento di possesso.

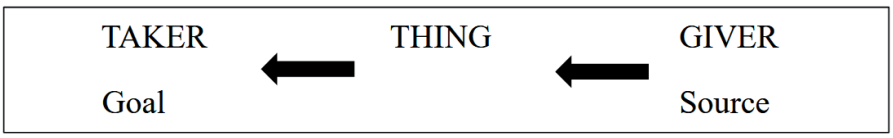


Fig. 2: rappresentazione della semantica del ‘prendere’ come trasferimento di possesso.

Seguendo l’analisi di Viberg (2010), tale relazione speculare si risolve, in ultima istanza, in un diverso orientamento del trasferimento di possesso. Dal momento che il cambio di possesso implica necessariamente lo spostamento dell’oggetto (Tema), la relazione tra i due verbi si configura come un’opposizione direzionale a parità di orientamento verso la Meta, ossia come un movimento *Source-based*, nel caso di *dare*, contrapposto a uno *Goal-based*, nel caso di *prendere*.
Questa impostazione, tuttavia, mostra evidenti limiti teorici e descrittivi, in quanto non offre una modellizzazione adeguata dei dati. Ridurre il predicato ‘prendere’ a mero converso di ‘dare’, infatti, non consente di dar conto del fatto che, in altri casi, l’uso dei due verbi in CVS sembra essere, invece, sovrapponibile (§1).

3. ‘Prendere’ (e ‘dare’) come metafore

La base empirica di questo lavoro è costituita da un *dataset* di CVS dell’italiano, costruito attraverso l’interrogazione del *corpus* PAISÀ (http://www.corpusitaliano.it). L’analisi dei dati italiani è stata condotta in due fasi. In primo luogo sono state estratte dal *corpus* tutte le occorrenze del verbo *prendere* in combinazione con un nome, mediante interrogazioni CQL. Successivamente, si è proceduto a un filtraggio manuale dei risultati per isolare esclusivamente i casi di cooccorrenza con nomi predicativi, ossia esprimenti eventi o stati. Sono state, di conseguenza, escluse dal *dataset* le combinazioni con oggetto diretto riferito a un’entità concreta, anche in caso di significati idiomatici (ad esempio *prendere un treno* o *prendere una strada*).
A partire dai *pattern* individuati in italiano, l’indagine è stata estesa, per verificare l’esistenza di strutture corrispondenti nelle principali lingue europee. Nello specifico, la validazione dei dati comparativi è stata condotta consultando risorse lessicografiche di riferimento per ciascuna lingua: l’*Oxford English Dictionary* per l’inglese, il *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* per il francese, il dizionario combinatorio *Redes* per lo spagnolo, nonché *Infopédia* e il *Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa* per il portoghese.

3.1. Estensioni semantiche di ‘dare’ come metafora

Per descrivere l’uso di *dare* in latino come verbo supporto, Pompei (2023) adotta e adatta la proposta fatta da Newman (1996) per i *giving verbs* in prospettiva tipologica. Newman (1996) non parla propriamente di CVS, ma, piuttosto, di estensioni metaforiche. In questo approccio, il significato si estende a partire dal senso concreto, fondato sull’esperienza percettiva (Langacker 1987: 99). Il significato letterale dei verbi di ‘dare’ comporta, come si è visto (§ 2), un trasferimento di possesso, che implica un trasferimento nello spazio, ossia un *transfer schema*, rappresentabile come in Figura 3:

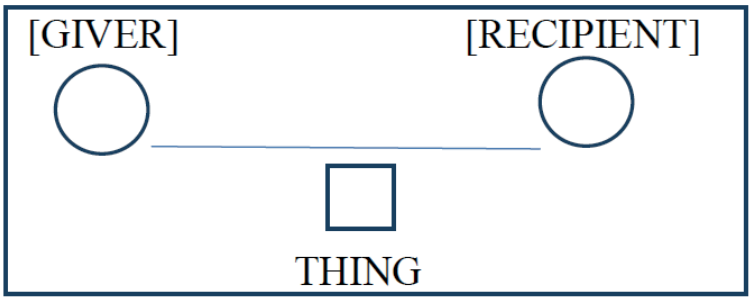


Fig. 3: ‘transfer schema’ secondo Newman (1996)
(Butt & Geuder 2001: 353).

L’estensione del senso letterale dei verbi di ‘dare’ comporta anzitutto una metafora di senso generico, ossia EVENTS ARE OBJECTS (Lakoff 1993: 220). Questa metafora permette di trattare i nomi predicativi, che esprimono uno stato di cose (SoA), come se fossero degli oggetti: ad esempio, in una frase come INGL. *She gave him a punch*, l’evento può essere trattato come metafora del trasferimento di un’entità fisica, secondo Goldberg (1995: 149; § 1).
Lo schema cognitivo di Newman (1996: 37–60) prende in considerazione quattro domini che costituiscono il *frame* del ‘dare’ nel suo valore lessicale pieno:

i) dominio spazio-temporale
ii) dominio del controllo
iii) dominio delle dinamiche di forza
iv) dominio dell'interesse personale.

Una modellizzazione complessiva di questi quattro domini può essere quella in Figura 4:

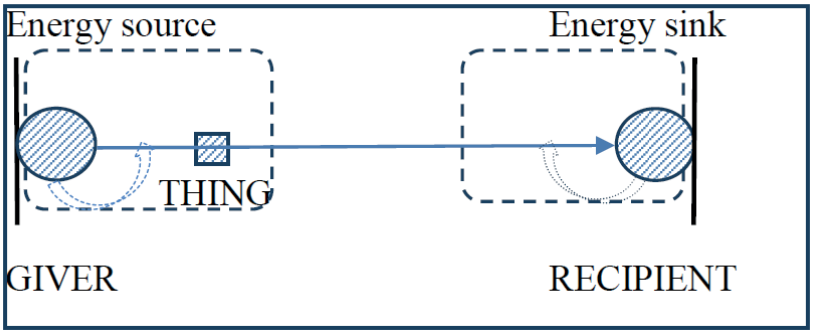


Fig. 4: matrice dei domini di 'give' (Newman 1996).

Il GIVER, il RECIPIENT e la THING costituiscono il profilo dei verbi di 'dare'. Il dominio spazio-temporale è rappresentato dalla freccia, che indica il cambiamento di posizione della THING, ossia di una cosa nello spazio o, nel caso di un evento, l'eventuale dimensione spaziale in cui esso si svolge (ad esempio nel caso di un nome di colpo, come *un pugno*), insieme al tempo necessario per il suo svolgimento (ad esempio nel caso di *dare una conferenza*). Il dominio del controllo rende conto, invece, del trasferimento di possesso della THING. Da questo punto di vista, 'dare' indica il passaggio da una sfera di controllo a un'altra, come mostrano i rettangoli tratteggiati. Il dominio delle dinamiche di forza si ispira allo schema semantico della *Force Dynamics* di Talmy (1985; 1988) e aggiunge alla rappresentazione del 'dare' l'idea di un flusso di energia che nasce da una *energy source*, il GIVER, e si esaurisce in un *energy sink*, il TAKER. Se si pensa a domini diversi che si combinano simultaneamente formando una matrice (Croft 1993), la stessa freccia che simboleggia il trasferimento nello spazio e lo scorrere del tempo può rappresentare anche il flusso di energia, con l'aggiunta di due linee verticali che simboleggiano il punto di partenza e il punto di arrivo del flusso e di frecce curve tratteggiate per rappresentare la partecipazione delle entità profilate, che è – secondo Newman (1996: 49) – più attiva nel caso del GIVER, in quanto iniziatore 'intenzionale' (linee più spesse), e minore nel caso del RECIPIENT (linee più sottili). Infine, il cosiddetto dominio dell'interesse personale concettualizza solo il fatto che un atto di 'dare' può avere degli effetti sul RECIPIENT, ossia che questo può essere *affected* dal trasferimento.
Si deve notare che tutti i domini sono presenti simultaneamente nel significato di un verbo lessicalmente pieno. La 'leggerezza' semantica di un verbo supporto rispetto alla sua controparte piena può, quindi, essere concepita come la perdita del contributo dato da uno o più domini alla matrice. Una o più entità presenti nel profilo, inoltre, possono essere lasciate non specificate, come accade, ad esempio, con la THING in una frase come *Io do alla Chiesa cattolica*, e con il RECIPIENT in una frase come *Il professore ha dato le risposte prima dell'esame*. La linguistica cognitiva considera le parti che sono effettivamente riempite in una costruzione come 'luoghi di elaborazione' (*e-sites*), e le rappresenta mediante ombreggiatura.
Nel caso del latino, in casi come *dare saltum* 'fare un salto' o *dare cursum* 'fare una corsa',in cui il RECIPIENT non è specificato, rimangono soltanto il dominio delle dinamiche di forza e, in parte ridottissima, il dominio spazio-temporale, in quanto il flusso di energia che nasce dal

GIVER, che è anche l'entità che si muove, si esaurisce essenzialmente nell'evento (Pompei 2023: 190).

3.2. 'Prendere' come metafora

Nell'analizzare i predicati formati da verbi di 'prendere', è opportuno partire dai casi in cui il verbo si comporta effettivamente come il mero converso di 'dare'. Questa specifica configurazione si manifesta in modo paradigmatico con i nomi di colpo (Tabella 1):

italiano	**inglese**	**francese**	**spagnolo**	**portoghese**
prendere un colpo	*take a hit*	*prendre un coup*	*recibir un golpe*	*levar um golpe*
prendere un pugno	*take a punch*	*prendre un coup de poing*	*recibir un puñetazo*	*levar um murro*
prendere una coltellata	*take a stab*	*prendre un coup de poignard*	*recibir una puñalada*	*levar uma facada*
prendere uno schiaffo	*take a slap*	*prendre une gifle*	*recibir una bofetada*	*levar uma bofetada/patada*

Tab. 1: 'prendere' e nomi di colpo.

In questo primo gruppo di nomi, la relazione di trasferimento presente nei verbi di 'dare' viene rovesciata in quanto l'evento, pur implicando una traiettoria spaziale e temporale, è concettualizzato dal punto di vista del TAKER. Nei termini di Viberg (2010), si assiste al passaggio da una prospettiva *Source-based* a una *Goal-based* (§2).
Sul piano vettoriale, la freccia che simboleggia il trasferimento del colpo (Figura 5) rappresenta nel contempo il flusso di energia cinetica che si scarica sul TAKER. Le entità coinvolte mostrano un'asimmetria nel controllo: mentre il GIVER, ossia l'Agente che sferra il colpo, ha pieno controllo, il TAKER subisce l'azione passivamente. Si tratta, quindi, di un 'prendere' che equivale a un 'ricevere', come risulta evidente dallo spagnolo.[3] Il dominio dell'interesse è pertinente per il TAKER, che risulta *affected* in senso marcatamente malefattivo:

[3] I dati delle altre lingue sono del tutto coerenti, con l'eccezione del portoghese che usa l'estensione *levar* 'portare'.

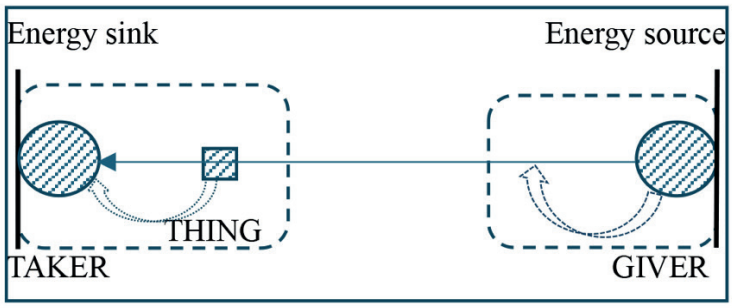


Fig. 5: matrice dei domini di ‘prendere’ con i nomi di colpo.

Come si vede dagli esempi riportati in Tabella 2, *prendere* in italiano cooccorre anche con i nomi di stato, sia fisico (*fuoco, freddo*) sia fisiologico (*sonno, raffreddore*) sia psicologico (*paura*, *coraggio*):

italiano	**inglese**	**francese**	**spagnolo**	**portoghese**
prendere sonno	*fall asleep*	*s’endomir*	*coger el sueño/ dormirse*	*adormecer*
prendere un raffreddore	*take/catch a cold*	*attraper un rhume*	*coger(se) un resfriado*	*apanhar um resfriado*
prendere fuoco	*take/catch fire*	*prendre feu*	*incendiarse*	*pegar fogo*
prendere freddo	*get/catch cold*	*prendre froid*	*coger frío*	*apanhar frio*
prendere paura	*take fright*	*prendre peur*	*coger miedo*	*ficar com medo*
prendere coraggio	*take courage*	*se donner du courage*	*coger coraje*	*ganhar coragem*

Tab. 2: ‘prendere’ e i nomi di stato fisico, fisiologico e psicologico.

Se l’italiano utilizza, in tutti questi casi, il verbo *prendere*, con qualche variante,[4] i dati delle altre lingue sono meno uniformi. Sembra esserci, anzitutto, una differenza tra valori più neutri (INGL. *take*, *get*, FR. *prendre*, PORT. *tomar* ‘prendere’) e quelli che esprimono mediante estensioni l’intensità degli effetti sul TAKER (INGL. *catch*, FR. *attraper*, PORT. *apanhar lit.* ‘acchiappare, catturare’ quindi ‘beccarsi’). In alcuni casi è disponibile soltanto il verbo sintetico, segnatamente per gli equivalenti di *prendere sonno*, anche con il pronome *-si* a sottolineare la diatesi media. In altri casi, il secondo elemento predicativo è costituito da un aggettivo, come in inglese (*fall asleep* e *get cold*).
Nelle CVS con questi nomi il GIVER subisce una progressiva defocalizzazione, come raffigurato nello schema riportato in Figura 6. Sebbene possa essere presupposto, infatti, come

[4] Va sottolineato che *paura* può cooccorrere anche con *mettersi* e *coraggio* con *farsi*, forme in cui *–si* codifica la diatesi media.

fonte causale (un raffreddore può essere trasmesso da qualcuno, così come il fuoco può essere appiccato), il suo ruolo diventa meno saliente. Al contrario, si osserva una netta focalizzazione del TAKER. Il controllo del TAKER sull'evento varia: è assente in stati fisiologici come il sonno o la malattia, ma può essere presente in stati psicologici come *prendere coraggio*. Parallelamente, la traiettoria del trasferimento è meno nitida (come mostra la freccia tratteggiata), in quanto risulta pertinente solo perché l'evento ha un'origine esterna. L'*affectedness* del TAKER, rimane centrale, assumendo valori ora malefattivi (*prendere un raffreddore*), ora benefattivi (*prendere sonno*); questo significa che il dominio dell'interesse personale rimane attivo:

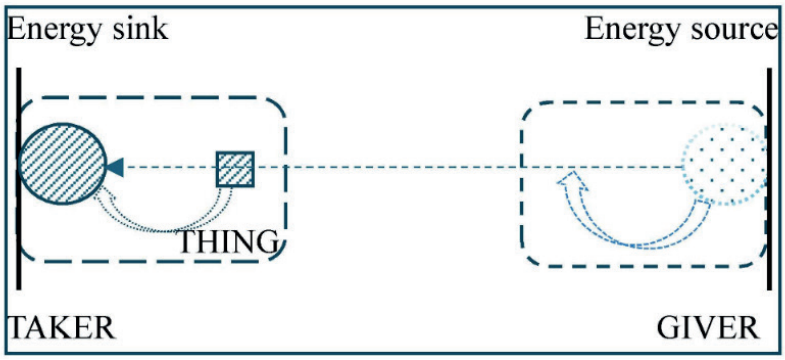


Fig. 6: matrice dei domini di 'prendere' con i nomi di stato fisico, fisiologico e psicologico.

Anche nel caso dei nomi di informazione (Tabella 3) il TAKER costituisce la prospettiva da cui è visto l'evento, laddove il GIVER, pur essendo la fonte logica dell'informazione, resta in *background*:

italiano	**inglese**	**francese**	**spagnolo**	**portoghese**
prendere un consiglio	*take advice*	*suivre conseil*	*tomar/seguir el consejo*	*seguir um conselho*
prendere informazioni	*get/gather information*	*prendre des renseignements*	*informarse*	*informar-se*
prendere esempio	*follow the example*	*prendre exemple*	*tomar ejemplo*	*seguir o exemplo*

Tab. 3: 'prendere' e i nomi di informazione.

In questo caso la selezione del verbo 'prendere' è piuttosto uniformemente diffusa, con alcune restrizioni nella penisola iberica per il ricorso alla forma sintetica (*informar*(-)*se*) o a estensioni (*seguir*). Come si vede dalla Figura 7, ciò che caratterizza i verbi di 'prendere' con questa tipologia di nomi risiede nel dominio delle dinamiche di forza, ossia nella natura del flusso energetico, dal momento che non si tratta più di una semplice ricezione passiva, ma emerge una sorta di 'energia attrattiva' esercitata dal TAKER. Questo cambio di polarità è rappresentato dall'inversione della freccia curva che collega il TAKER alla THING: il TAKER acquisisce un controllo sostanzialmente positivo sull'acquisizione dell'informazione. È, anche in questo caso, attivo il dominio dell'interesse personale, in quanto l'*affectedness* persiste, perdendo la connotazione malefattiva:

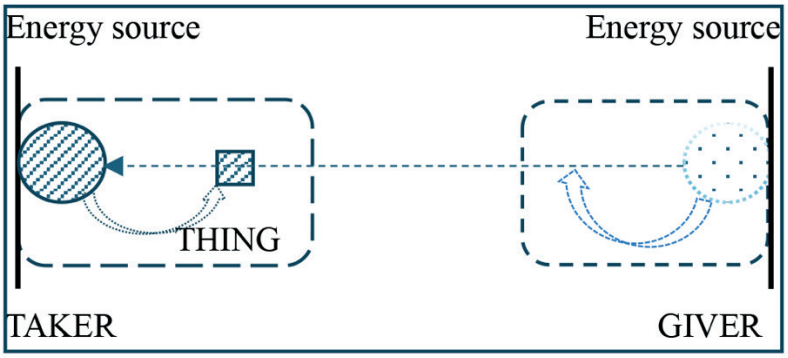


Fig. 7: matrice dei domini di ‘prendere’ con i nomi di informazione.

Con i nomi di acquisizione di funzione o di controllo (Tabella 4) il ruolo del GIVER si riduce drasticamente, limitandosi talvolta a un’entità che, sullo sfondo, concede o, più probabilmente, permette l’acquisizione (es. *prendere il controllo*), spesso scomparendo del tutto:

italiano	**inglese**	**francese**	**spagnolo**	**portoghese**
prendere il potere	*take/seize the power*	*prendre le pouvoir*	*tomar el poder*	*tomar/asumir o poder*
prendere il comando	*take control*	*prendre le commandement*	*tomar el mando*	*tomar/asumir o comando*
prendere il controllo	*take control*	*prendre le contrôle*	*tomar el control*	*tomar/asumir o control*
prendere (*il*) *possesso*	*take possession*	*prendre possession*	*tomar posesión*	*tomar posse*

Tab. 4: ‘prendere’ e i nomi di acquisizione di funzione o di controllo.

Per quanto concerne il dominio spazio-temporale, la traiettoria vettoriale è in questo caso affievolita e non vi è un flusso di energia che parta dall’esterno per scaricarsi sul soggetto (Figura 8). Al contrario, la fonte dell’energia risiede nel TAKER stesso, che agisce attivamente per assumere una nuova condizione. In questo caso sono particolarmente pertinenti i domini del controllo e dell’interesse personale. Il TAKER, infatti, acquisisce qui grande rilievo, caratterizzandosi per il pieno controllo e un’*affectedness* di tipo benefattivo (intesa come accrescimento di potere/funzione). In questo caso ‘prendere’ significa senz'altro ‘assumere’:

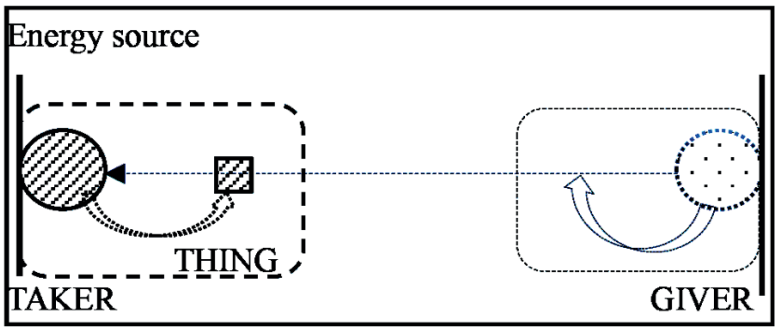


Fig. 8: matrice dei domini di 'prendere' con i nomi di funzione o di controllo.

Con *i nomi di assunzione di responsabilità* (Tabella 5), il GIVER non è più presente sulla scena (Figura 9):

italiano	**inglese**	**francese**	**spagnolo**	**portoghese**
prendere una decisione	*take a decision*	*prendre une décision*	*tomar una decisión*	*tomar uma decisão*
prendere un provvedimento	*take action/a measure*	*prendre des mesures*	*tomar una medida*	*tomar uma medida*
prendere una precauzione	*take a precaution*	*prendre une précaution*	*tomar una precaución*	*tomar uma precaução*
prendere una posizione	*take a stand*	*prendre (une) position*	*tomar una posición*	*tomar uma posição*

Tab. 5: 'prendere' e i nomi di assunzione di responsabilità.

In questo caso la traiettoria sussiste solo a partire dalla THING: *prendere* risponde appieno alla definizione di Newman (1996: 56-57) secondo cui i *taking verbs* esprimono «the movement of a thing [...], initiated by a person; the thing ends up in the sphere of control of a person». Il TAKER, solo argomento ormai esistente, esercita una forza attrattiva sull'oggetto per portarlo nella propria sfera di controllo:

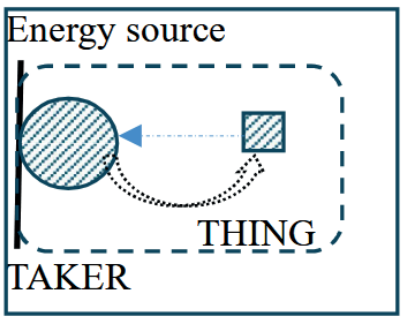


Fig. 9: matrice dei domini di 'prendere' con i nomi di assunzione di responsabilità.

Newman (1996: 59) rappresenta questa diversa semantica dei verbi di ‘prendere’ come in Figura 10:

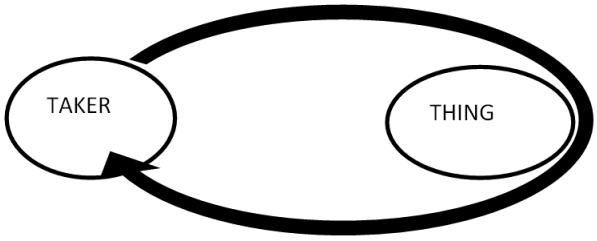


Fig. 10: rappresentazione della semantica di ‘take’ (Newman 1996: 59).

Con i nomi di attività (Tabella 6), infine, l’estensione semantica di ‘prendere’ raggiunge il suo limite estremo. Questo non accade in italiano, ma tra le lingue romanze è presente in francese (limitatamente a *prendre une douche* e *prendre un bain*), così come si trova in inglese:

italiano	**inglese**	**francese**	**spagnolo**	**portoghese**
far(si) una passeggiata	*take a walk*	*se faire une promenade*	*dar un paseo*	*dar um passeio*
far(si) una doccia	*take a shower*	*prendre une douche*	*darse una ducha / ducharse*	*tomar um duche*
far(si) un bagno	*take a bath*	*prendre un bain*	*darse un baño / bañarse*	*tomar banho*
far(si) una dormita	*take a nap*	*faire un somme*	*echarse una siesta*	*fazer uma sesta*

Tab. 6: ‘prendere’ e i nomi di attività.

Con questi nomi, per i verbi di ‘prendere’ non c’è più traccia del trasferimento di possesso, ragion per cui viene meno il dominio del controllo e scompare dallo schema il quadrato tratteggiato (Figura 11). La traiettoria spazio-temporale, limitata (*bounded*) nel caso di ‘passeggiata’, è totalmente assente nel caso di ‘doccia’, salvo per quanto concerne la durata, anch’essa limitata: anche il dominio spazio-temporale, dunque, è profondamente affievolito. Per quanto concerne il dominio delle dinamiche di forza, la ‘forza’, attrattiva, subisce una completa metaforizzazione e si riduce al *quantum* di energia astratta necessaria per entrare nell’evento. Il dominio che sussiste pienamente è, invece, quello dell’interesse personale. Questo comporta da una parte che la selezione del verbo supporto sembra ormai totalmente lessicalizzata; dall’altra che c’è una piena grammaticalizzazione del significato di ‘prendere’, in quanto codifica esclusivamente la diatesi:

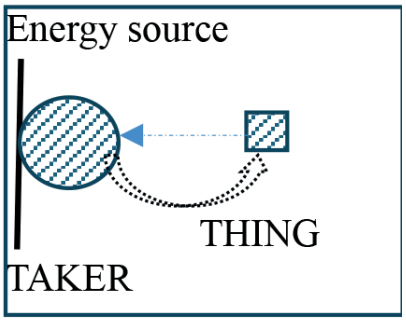


Fig. 11: matrice dei domini di 'prendere' con i nomi di attività.

È in questo stadio di totale desemantizzazione che si verifica la convergenza funzionale con l'uso dei verbi di 'dare' nelle lingue iberiche: in spagnolo (*dar un paseo*) o in portoghese (*dar um passeio*), *dar* svolge la medesima funzione dei verbi di 'prendere' in inglese e, parzialmente, in francese. Da direzioni opposte, i due tipi di verbo arrivano al medesimo esito di svuotamento semantico. Ciò che permane è, nel caso dei verbi di 'prendere', l'*affectedness* del soggetto, strettamente legata al dominio dell'interesse personale, e, in quello dei verbi di 'dare', la forza propulsiva del GIVER, strettamente legata al dominio delle dinamiche di forza (§ 3.1). Trattandosi spesso di attività fisiche, questi predicati rientrano, del resto, nella tipologia dei verbi mediali (Kemmer 1993), il cui tratto distintivo è proprio il coinvolgimento del soggetto nell'evento, che si tratti di un TAKER, con i verbi di 'prendere', o di un GIVER, con quelli di 'dare'.[5]

4. Conclusioni

L'analisi dei dati qui presentata permette di fare alcune considerazioni finali sulla natura delle CVS formate con 'prendere' e sulla relazione che queste intrattengono con le CVS con 'dare'.
In primo luogo, la polisemia evidenziata nel *dataset* trova una spiegazione coerente all'interno dello schema metaforico secondo cui gli SoA espressi dai nomi predicativi possono essere concettualizzati come oggetti concreti suscettibili di trasferimento di possesso. Ciò consente al verbo 'prendere' di estendere il proprio dominio di applicazione ben oltre il trasferimento fisico, strutturando concettualmente esperienze astratte.
In secondo luogo, i vari usi dei verbi di 'prendere' con nomi predicativi di tipo differente sono correlati a diversi gradi di svuotamento semantico. Il passaggio dal valore lessicale pieno a quello di verbo supporto può essere inteso, nella modellizzazione, come disattivazione dei domini che compongono la matrice semantica del verbo. A questo svuotamento della matrice di domini si accompagna la mancata attivazione del GIVER in alcune configurazioni, il che è strettamente legato all'affievolimento e addirittura al venir meno del dominio spazio-temporale e di quello delle dinamiche di forza. Nei casi in cui il verbo risulta meno motivato – come nella cooccorrenza con i nomi di attività – non è più presente neanche il dominio del controllo. In questo processo di erosione, tuttavia, emerge un elemento invariante fondamentale: l'unico dominio che rimane costantemente attivo lungo tutto lo spettro delle costruzioni è quello dell'interesse personale. Indipendentemente dal grado di astrazione della costruzione, il soggetto (TAKER) risulta, infatti, sempre focalizzato e, soprattutto, *affected* dall'evento. Che si tratti di ricevere un colpo, assumere un comando o effettuare una passeggiata, 'prendere' codifica invariabilmente un coinvolgimento del soggetto nella sfera dell'evento, confermando

[5] In italiano, in questo caso, la selezione di *fare* sottolinea semplicemente la processualità, ma la possibile aggiunta di *-si* è strettamente correlata alla medialità.

la sua vocazione a marcare una diatesi sostanzialmente media, in cui l’iniziatore dell’azione è anche il termine ultimo dei suoi effetti.

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Chapter 17.
Metaphors and Metonymies as 'Avatars' of Western Domination: The Case of English Loanwords from Indic Languages

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Abstract

Over the centuries, English has incorporated numerous lexical items from languages spoken in the colonies of the British Empire (Mugglestone 2006; Durkin 2014; McIntyre 2020). This paper focuses on loanwords from Indic languages — such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, and Tamil — acquired during and after the colonial era. While many of these borrowings retain meanings close to their original sense (e.g., *loot* from Hindi लूट, 'plundering'), a significant number have undergone semantic shifts, acquiring metaphorical or metonymical senses that often supplanted their literal meanings. For instance, Sanskrit अवतारः (*avatāraḥ*), originally denoting the 'descent of a deity,' evolved into *avatar* in English, now primarily referring to a digital representation of a person (OED). Such transformations illustrate a systematic process whereby culturally or religiously significant concepts from the donor language are secularized and diminished in the recipient language. Conversely, terms denoting material processes (e.g., *bandanna*, *khaki*, *shampoo*) frequently developed metonymical senses, associating raw materials or techniques with finished products. These semantic developments, far from being accidental, reflect entrenched cognitive patterns (Durkin 2009; Sweetser 1991) and perpetuate colonial hierarchies, reinforcing Western cultural dominance. The paper argues that these figurative shifts ─ both metaphorical and metonymical ─ constitute linguistic avatars of imperial ideology, persisting into contemporary English usage.

Keywords: metaphor, metonymy, loanwords, Indic languages.

1. Introduction

Throughout its extensive history, the English language has borrowed innumerable words from a wide array of other languages and varieties (Mugglestone 2006; Durkin 2014; Mcintyre 2020,

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OED).[1] Most of them have been taken from European languages: for instance, among many others, as of the time of writing, the OED registers 44,756 words borrowed from Latin, 25,014 from French, 3,874 from German, 2,313 from Italian, 1,915 from Spanish, 451 from Portuguese and 426 from Russian.[2] However, a significant number of words also come from other source languages around the world. At the time of the British Empire, many new lexical items were acquired from the substrates spoken in the colonies, so much so that this «covetous incorporation of different languages [became] a symbol for the […] Empire's reach» (Saxena 2022: 33). For instance, the OED registers 572 loanwords from African languages such as Swahili (103), Yoruba (38), Igbo (10), etc.; 900 from Austronesian languages such as Maori (336), Tagalog (75), Javanese (38), etc. The present work will focus on English loanwords borrowed from the languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent, such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, etc. Most of these terms are not high-frequency words (category 1), while some have become part of General English (category 2) and are commonly used in everyday situations. The lexical items in the first category ─ which in most cases retain meanings close to the original source-terms ─ generally denote cultural, traditional, geographical and historical referents, such as religious concepts, typical Indian dishes, clothes, flora and fauna, etc., and are mainly used when discussing these specific topics. On the other hand, while some of the higher-frequency terms in the second category retain the meanings of the source-words, many others have undergone processes of metonymization and metaphorization (Brinton & Traugott 2005), frequently acquiring figurative senses which ─ on numerous occasions ─ have completely supplanted their original meanings in everyday language. More specifically ─ as shown in chapter 2 ─ many loanwords which have a low cultural, traditional or religious relevance in the donor language often acquired a metonymical meaning (Littlemore 2015; Kövecses 2006) in English, while those which have a high cultural, traditional or religious significance in the donor language are often used metaphorically (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 2003; Punter 2007). The present work will primarily explore the higher-frequency loanwords in category 2 whose primary meanings in English are figurative. More specifically, it will be shown that the metaphorical meanings in English systematically vilify and debase the original cultural, traditional and religious referents/vehicles in the donor languages by associating them with more profane and less dignified tenors. Meanwhile, the metonymical senses contribute to reinforcing the colonial and postcolonial hierarchical structures imposed by the colonizers by associating raw materials and processes denoted by the source-terms with their corresponding finished products denoted by the English adaptations of

[1]As summarized by Durkin (2014: 3), «[i]n linguistics, the term 'borrowing' describes a process in which one language replicates a linguistic feature from another language, either wholly or partly. [...] Words have both a form and a meaning. Either component can be borrowed». The term 'loanword' is used when «both the form and (at least some aspect of) the meaning of a word from [one] language have been borrowed into [another language]».

[2]Unfortunately, for various reasons, it is very difficult to provide exact numbers. As Durkin (2014: 13) explains, «[l]ists of loanwords given in handbooks and histories of English […] are hypotheses, sometimes supported by evidence so secure that they are not in any real doubt, but very often based on much less secure foundations». One common issue, for instance, is that «[i]t is notoriously difficult to draw a distinction between two dialects of the same language and two different languages» (Durkin 2014: 20). This is the case with Hindi and Urdu, which ─ even though they are transcribed with two different scripts ─ are so similar that Shackle and Snell (1990: 1) regard them as «identical twins [who] have chosen to dress themselves as differently as possible». For more details, see Durkin (2014: 3-49). Consequently, figures may change over time as new discoveries are made and errors are corrected, and the numbers provided in the present paper may become obsolete. For example, in May 2024, the loanwords from Latin registered in the OED ─ which constantly updates its database and revises its existing entries ─ were 44,538, while at the time of writing (January 2025), they were 44,756 (+ 218). In the same period, French passed from 24,867 to 25,014 (+167), German from 3,956 to 3,874 (-82), Italian from 2,297 to 2,313 (+16), etc. (OED).

the original words, as if to suggest that while the colonized are relegated to the position of cheap man power, only the 'superior' colonizers have the right to enjoy the rewards of that labour. Based on the above, it will be argued that these figurative developments can be regarded as some of the many 'avatars' of Western domination (see Section 2.2 and conclusions).

2. English loanwords from Indic languages – General overview

As shown in Tab. 1 (OED),[3] the most important source of loanwords from the Indic languages is Hindi (571 words), followed by Sanskrit (440) and Urdu (261). However, many terms also come from other Indo Aryan languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent, such as Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, and Gujarati, as well as from Dravidian languages like Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu.[4]

INDO-ARYAN		DRAVIDIAN	
LANGUAGE	**LOANWORDS**	**LANGUAGE**	**LOANWORDS**
Hindi	571	Tamil	70
Sanskrit	440	Malayalam	25
Urdu	261	Telugu	18
Bengali	57	Kannada	8
Panjabi	49	Malto	2
Marathi	47		
Sinhala	35		
Pali	28		
Gujarati	21		
Assamese	9		
Rajasthani	6		
Kashmiri	3		

Tab.1: (OED).

[3] The figures in Tab. 1 reflect those available at the time of writing (January 2025). However, as explained in footnote 2, they may change in the future. For instance, in May 2024, the loanwords from Hindi registered in the OED were 565, while at the time of writing they were 571 (+6); Sanskrit: from 435 to 440 (+5); Urdu: from 256 to 261 (+5), Panjabi: from 49 to 44 (-5), Kannada: from 7 to 8 (+1) etc. On the other hand, the numbers for languages such as Sinhala, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, etc. remained unchanged over the same period of time.

[4] For a general introduction to Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages, see Cardona and Jain 2014, Masica 1993, Singh Narula 2009, Steever 2020. More specifically, for Hindi and Urdu see McGregor 1999, Angelillo 2020, Agnihotri 2007, Handa 1978, Shackle and Snell 1990, Bilal *et al*. 2012. For Sanskrit, Ruppel 2017.

Most of these loanwords denote cultural, traditional, geographical and historical referents and ─ as mentioned in the introduction ─ are not high-frequency terms and typically retain the meaning of the source-words in the donor languages. They are normally used only when discussing topics such as local culture, traditions, geography, history, etc. For instance, some of these loanwords are names of flora and fauna (Tab. 2), such as 'peepul', «[a] kind of fig tree, *Ficus religiosa*, […] regarded as sacred by Hindus and Buddhists» (OED), from Hindi पीपल (pīpal) (OED, OHED), 'poon', «any of several large Indo-Malayan trees of the genus *Calophyllum*, *esp*. the Alexandrian laurel» (OED), from Tamil **புன்னை** (puṉṉai), Malayalam പുന്ന (punna) and Kannada ಪೊನ್ನೆ (ponne) (OED, FabTED, GunMED, KitKED), or 'chital',«[t]he Indian spotted deer, *Axis axis*», from the Hindi चीतल (cītal) (OED).

FLORA	**FAUNA**
Chir *n*. > Hindi चीड़ (cīṛ) **Peepul** *n*. > Hindi पीपल (pīpal) **Poon** *n*. > Tamil **புன்னை** (puṉṉai), Malayalam പുന്ന (punna) and Kannada ಪೊನ್ನೆ (ponne) **Toon** *n*. > Hindi तुन (tun) Etc.	**Chital** *n*. > Hindi चीतल (cītal) **Hilsa** *n*. > Hindi हिलसा (hilsā) **Mugger** *n*. > Hindi मगर (magar) **Shikra** *n*. > Urdu شکرہ (shik'rah) Etc.

Tab. 2: OED, OHED, FabTED, GunMED, KitKED, FalHED, QurSD.

There are also numerous terms for food and drink (Tab. 3), such as 'basmati', a type of rice, from the Hindi बासमती (bāsmatī) (OED, OHED), 'ghee',«[b]utter made from buffalo's or cow's milk, clarified by boiling, so as to resemble oil in consistency», from the Hindi घी (ghī) (OED, OHED), and 'appam', «a thin pancake made with rice flour (typically fermented with toddy or yeast) and coconut or coconut milk», from the Tamil **அப்பம்** (appam) and the Malayalam അപ്പം (appam) (OED, FabTED, GunMED).

FOOD AND DRINK	
Appam *n*. > Tamil **அப்பம்** (appam) & Malayalam അപ്പം (appam) **Basmati** *n*. > Hindi बासमती (bāsmatī) **Bhaji** *n*. > Hindi भाजी (bhājī)	**Ghee** *n*. > Hindi घी (ghī) **Kedgeree** *n*. > Hindi खिचड़ी (khicṛī) **Mulligatawny** *n*. > Tamil **மிளகுத்தண்ணீர்** (miḷaku-t-taṇṇīr). **Roti** *n*. > Hindi रोटी (roṭī)

Biryani *n*. > Hindi बिरयानी (biryānī)	**Samosa** *n*. > Hindi समोसा (samosā)
Chapatti *n*. > Hindi चपाती (capātī)	**Sandesh** *n*. > Bengali সন্দেশ (sandeśa)
Chutney *n*. > Hindi चटनी (caṭnī)	Etc.
Dal *n*. > Hindi दाल (dāl)	

Tab. 3: OED, OHED, BisBED, FabTED, GunMED, MadTM.

Several lexical items are words for clothes (Tab. 4) typically used in the Indian subcontinent, such as‘sari’, from the Hindi साढ़ी (sāṛhī), साड़ी (sāṛī), «[a] traditional garment [...] [often worn by] Indian women» (SOED, OHED) and ‘mundu’, from the Malayalam മുണ്ടു (muṇṭu, muṇḍu), «[a] garment consisting of a rectangular cloth that is wrapped around the waist, worn by men chiefly in Kerala» and other parts of southern India (OED, AHDEL, GunMED).

CLOTHES	
Choli *n*. > Hindi चोली (colī)	**Pyjamas** *n*. > Urdu پاجامہ، پائےجامہ (pāë-jāmā, pai-jāmā, pā-jāmā, pā-jamah) & Persian پای جامہ (pāy-jāma)
Dhoti *n*. > Hindi धोती (dhoti)	**Sari** *n*. > Hindi साढ़ी (sāṛhī), साड़ी (sāṛī)
Mundu *n*. > Malayalam മുണ്ടു (muṇṭu, muṇḍu)	Etc.

Tab. 4: OED, OHED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED, GunMED.

Some loanwords are common only in Indian or South Asian English (Lange 2020) (Tab. 5). For instance, ‘badmash’, from Urdu بدمعاش (bad-maʹāsh) and Persian بد معاش (bad ma‘āsh), «[a] scoundrel, a rogue; [...] a hooligan» (OED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED), or ‘bustee’, «[i]n South Asia: a village or group of huts; a shanty town, a slum», from Hindi बस्ती (bastī) (OED, OHED).

INDIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN ENGLISH	
Badmash *n*. > Urdu بدمعاش (bad-maʹāsh) & Persian بد معاش (bad ma‘āsh)	**Chacha** *n*. > Hindi चाचा (cācā)
Bustee *n*. > Hindi बस्ती (bastī)	**Chatta** *n*. > Hindi छाता (chātā)
Chabutra *n*. > Hindi चबूतरा (cabūtrā)	**Gobar** *n*. > Hindi गोबर (gobar)
	Etc.

Tab. 5: OED, OHED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED.

In the categories discussed thus far, the incidence of loanwords used figuratively in English is extremely low and not comparable to those analysed in chapter 2. For instance, ‘kedgeree’ (mid-17th century), from Hindi खिचड़ी (khicṛī), «a dish of rice and pulse boiled together, with *ghī* and spices» (OED, OHED), in English also acquired the extended slightly metaphorical sense of «a

dish made of cold fish, boiled rice, eggs, and condiments» (OED): the name remains unchanged even if the ingredients are not exactly the same of the original recipe. However, in the early 20th century, the term also acquired the completely metaphorical sense of «[a]mixture, a jumble» (SOED), due to the variety of ingredients used to prepare it.
Finally, many terms denote cultural, traditional, religious or historical referents in the Indian subcontinent (Tab. 6). For instance, 'panchayat', from Hindi पंचायत (pañcāyat), «[i]n South Asia: a group of five or more people which sits as a council or a court of law to decide on matters affecting a village, community, or caste» (OED, OHED), 'gosain', from Hindi गोसाई (gosāīṁ), «[a] Hindu who professes a life of religious mendicancy» (OED, OHED) and 'Kathakali', from Malayalam കഥകളി (kathakaḷi), «[a] South Indian dance-drama based on Hindu literature» (OED, GunMED).

CULTURE, TRADITION, RELIGION, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	
Apsara *n.* > Hindi अप्सरा (apsarā) **Avatar** *n.* > Sanskrit अवतारः (avatāraḥ), now secondary literal meaning. **Babu** *n.* > Hindi बाबू (bābū) & Bengali বাবু (bābu) **Bindi** *n.* > Hindi बिंदी (bindī) **Budgerow** *n.* > Hindi बजरा (bajrā) & Bengali বজরা (bajarā) **Chacha** *n.* > Hindi चाचा (cācā) **Chillum** *n.* > Hindi चिलम (cilam) **Dam** *n.* > Hindi दाम (dām) **Diwali** *n.* > Hindi दीवाली (dīvālī) **Gosain** *n.* > Hindi गोसाई (gosāīṁ) **Guru** *n.* > Hindi गुरु (guru) & Sanskrit गुरु (guru) **Juggernaut** *n.* > Hindi जगन्नाथ (jagannāth) **Karma** *n.* > Sanskrit कर्मन् (karman)	**Kathakali** *n.* > Malayalam കഥകളി (kathakaḷi) **Mantra** *n.* > Sanskrit मन्त्रः (mantraḥ) **Nirvana** *n.* > Sanskrit निर्वाण (nirvāṇa) & निर्वाणम् (nirvāṇam) **Panchayat** *n.* > Hindi पंचायत (pañcāyat) **Pariah** *n.* > Tamil பறையன் (paṟaiyaṉ) & Malayalam പറയൻ (paṟayan) **Pundit** *n.* > Sanskrit पण्डितः (paṇḍitaḥ) *n.* & पण्डित (paṇḍita) *a.* **Purdah** *n.* > Urdu پردہ (par'dah, parda) and Persian پردہ (parda) **Swastika** *n.* > Sanskrit स्वस्तिकः (svastikaḥ) **Tantra** *n.* > Sanskrit तन्त्र (tantra) **Thug** *n.* > Hindi ठग (ṭhag) Etc.

Tab. 6: OED, OHED, ApteSED, MacSD, BisBED, MadTM, FabTED, GunMED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED.

In contrast to the low incidence of figurative senses in the previous categories, several of the terms in Tab. 6 ─ such as 'avatar', 'guru', 'karma', 'mantra', etc. ─ have also acquired metaphorical senses which have often become their primary meanings in everyday usage (Section 2), while their original literal meaning is typically reserved for discussions related to more specialized topics such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

3. High-frequency loanwords: metaphors and metonymies

Apart from the hundreds of lower-frequency loanwords discussed in the previous section, English also borrowed a significant number of lexical items from different Indic languages which have become part of General English and are commonly used in many everyday contexts and situations. For instance, 'jungle', from Hindi जंगल (jaṅgal), Marathi जंगल (jaṅgal) and Sanskrit जङ्गल (jaṅgala), 'loot', from Hindi लूट (lūṭ), 'pyjamas', from from Urdu پاجامہ، پائےجامہ (pāë-jāmā, pai-jāmā, pā-jāmā, pā-jamah) and Persian پای جامہ (pāy-jāma), 'shampoo' from Hindi चाँपो (cāṁpō), imperative of चाँपना (cāṁpnā), and 'thug', from Hindi ठग (ṭhag) (OED, OHED, MolDME, ApteSED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED).

HIGH-FREQUENCY LOANWORDS

Avatar *n.* > Sanskrit अवतारः (avatāraḥ), metaphorical sense.

Bandanna *n.* > Hindi बाँधनू (bāṁdhnū)

Bangle *n.* > Hindi बँगरी (baṁgrī)

Basmati *n.* > Hindi बासमती (bāsmatī)

Bungalow *n.* > Hindi बँगला (baṁglā)

Chillum *n.* > Hindi चिलम (cilam)

Cot *n.* > Hindi खाट (khāṭ)

Dekko *n.* & *v.* > Hindi देखो (dekhō), imperative of देखना (dekhnā)

Ganja *n.* > Hindi गाँजा (gāṁjā)

Guru *n.* > Hindi गुरु (guru) & Sanskrit गुरु (guru)

Loot *n.* & *v.* > Hindi लूट (lūṭ)

Mantra *n.* > Sanskrit मन्त्रः (mantraḥ)

Nirvana *n.* > Sanskrit निर्वाण (nirvāṇa) & निर्वाणम् (nirvāṇam)

Pariah *n.* > Tamil பறையன் (paṟaiyaṉ) & Malayalam പറയൻ (paṟayan)

Pundit *n.* > Sanskrit पण्डितः (paṇḍitaḥ) *n.* & पण्डित (paṇḍita) *a.*

Purdah *n.* > Urdu پردہ (par'dah, parda) and Persian پردہ (parda)

Pyjamas *n.* > Urdu پاجامہ، پائےجامہ (pāë-jāmā, pai-jāmā, pā-jāmā, pā-jamah) & Persian پای جامہ (pāy-jāma)

Shampoo *n.* > Hindi चाँपो (cāṁpō), imperative of चाँपना (cāṁpnā)

Swastika *n.* > Sanskrit स्वस्तिकः (svastikaḥ)

HIGH-FREQUENCY LOANWORDS	
Juggernaut *n*. > Hindi जगन्नाथ (jagannāth) **Jungle** *n*. > Hindi जंगल (jaṅgal), Marathi जंगल (jaṅgal), Sanskrit जङ्गल (jaṅgala), also metaphorical secondary meaning. **Karma** *n*. > Sanskrit कर्मन् (karman) **Khaki** *n*. > Urdu & Persian خاکی، خاکي (khākī), also almost literal as an adjective.	**Tantra** *n*. > Sanskrit तन्त्र (tantra) **Thug** *n*. > Hindi ठग (ṭhag) Etc.

Tab. 7: OED, OHED, ApteSED, MacSD, MolDME, FalHED, QurSD, StePED, MadTM, FabTED, GunMED.

In contrast to the culture specific and lower-frequency terms in Section 1, the cases of figurative meanings increase significantly among higher-frequency loanwords. More specifically, it is possible to identify two main groups:

1. Metonymy: predominant in loanwords whose source-terms have a low cultural, traditional or religious relevance in the donor languages.
2. Metaphor: predominant in loanwords whose source-terms have a high cultural, traditional or religious relevance in the donor languages.

On many occasions, these figurative meanings have become the primary senses of the words, and often have even supplanted the original meanings of the source-terms.

3.1. Group 1 – Metonymy

A significant number of high-frequency loanwords whose source-terms have a low cultural, traditional or religious relevance in the donor languages have acquired a metonymical primary sense in English, which in many cases completely supplanted the original literal meaning (Tab. 8).[5]

[5]Although some words in the first column (original meaning) may have meanings in English which do not correspond exactly to those of the source-terms in the donor languages, they are always closely related in ways that are neither metonymical nor metaphorical. For instance, the word from Urdu پاجامہ، پائےجامہ (pāë-jāmā, pai-jāmā, pā-jāmā, pā-jamah) denotes trousers that can be worn both during the day and while sleeping (FalHED, MolDME, QurSD). However, in English, the primary meaning is «nightclothes consisting of loose trousers or shorts and a jacket or other top» (OHED). Secondary figurative meanings are indicated next to the word (as in the case of 'jungle').

GROUP 1 – LOW CULTURAL, TRADITIONAL OR RELIGIOUS RELEVANCE	
ORIGINAL MEANING	**METONYMY**
Bangle *n*. > Hindi बँगरी (baṁgrī) **Cot** *n*. > Hindi खाट (khāṭ) **Jungle** *n*. > Hindi जंगल (jaṅgal), Marathi जंगल (jaṅgal), Sanskrit जङ्गल (jaṅgala), also metaphorical secondary meaning. **Loot** *n*. & *v*. > Hindi लूट (lūṭ) **Pyjamas** *n*. > Urdu پاجامہ، پائےجامہ (pāë-jāmā, pai-jāmā, pā-jāmā, pā-jamah) & Persian پای جامہ (pāy-jāma) Etc.	**Bandanna** *n*. > Hindi बाँधनू (bāṁdhnū) **Ganja** *n*. > Hindi गाँजा (gāṁjā) **Khaki** *n*. > Urdu & Persian خاکی، خاکي (khākī), also almost literal as an adjective. **Shampoo** *n*. > Hindi चाँपो (cāṁpō), imperative of चाँपना (cāṁpnā), also literal. Etc.

Tab. 8: OED, OHED, ApteSED, MacSD, FalHED, QurSD, StePED, MolDME.

For instance, the noun 'bandanna,' which first entered the English language in the mid-18th century, originates from the Hindi बाँधनू (bāṁdhnū), «a mode of dyeing [...] in which parts of the cloth are tied up so as not to receive the dye» (OED, OHED). Thus, the process through which bandannas were originally dyed became the vehicle that «provides mental access to another conceptual entity» (Kövecses 2006: 99): the item of clothing itself ─ the finished product, target of this lexicalized metonymy ─ which is the only meaning of the word in English.

BANDANNA, *n*.	
VEHICLE	**TARGET**
«[A] mode of dyeing [...] in which parts of the cloth are tied up so as not to receive the dye» (OHED).	«A square or triangle of cloth, typically having a pattern of white or pale spots or other figures on a background of a uniform colour, used as a handkerchief or (now usually) worn tied around the head, neck, or face for protective or decorative purposes» (OED).

Tab. 9: OED, OHED.

The noun 'ganja' (early 19th century) comes from the Hindi गाँजा (gāṁjā), meaning «1. hemp, *Cannabis sativa*. 2. hemp leaves, flower heads, or buds» (OED, OHED) ─ the raw material

(vehicle). In English, however, the term refers to the final product (target): «[a] preparation of Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*, variety *indica*), strongly intoxicating and narcotic» (OED).

GANJA, *n*.	
VEHICLE	**TARGET**
«1. hemp, *Cannabis sativa*. 2. hemp leaves, flower heads, or buds» (OHED).	«A preparation of Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*, variety *indica*), strongly intoxicating and narcotic» (OED).

Tab. 10: SOED, OHED.

The noun 'khaki,' which first entered the English language in the mid-19th century, comes from the Urdu خاکی، خاکي (khākī), «[d]usty; of the colour of dust or earth» (*adj*.) or «[a]n earthy brown dye» (*n*.) (OED, FalHED, QurSD). It usually denotes a «dull yellowish-brown fabric, orig. of stout twilled cotton […] used esp. for army uniforms» or a «soldier dressed in khaki» (SOED). Thus, the colour (vehicle) is used to refer to a type of cloth (target) that is often dyed in the same colour. However, the target of this first metonymy also became the vehicle of a second metonymy, as this type of cloth is often mentioned to refer to another target: a soldier wearing a uniform made of it.[6]

KHAKI, *n*.	
VEHICLE	**TARGET**
«Dusty; of the colour of dust or earth» (adj.) or «[a]n earthy brown dye» (n.) (FalHED).	«A dull yellowish-brown fabric, orig. of stout twilled cotton […] used esp. for army uniforms» (SOED). ↓ «A soldier dressed in khaki» (SOED).

Tab. 11: FalHED, SOED.

The noun 'shampoo,' which first entered the English language in the mid-18th century as a verb, comes from the Hindi चाँपो (cāṁpō), imperative of चाँपना (cāṁpnā), 'to press' or 'to put pressure (on)' (OED, OHED). Thus, the action or process of pressing became the vehicle of a metonymy whose target is «[a] cleansing preparation for the hair» (SOED) that is used while a person 'presses' on one's hair to wash it. Today, this lexicalized metonymy represents one of the primary meanings of the word when used as a noun.[7]

[6] 'Khaki' can also denote «[t]he uniform of *Panjābī* soldiers, hence Sikh infantry» (FalHED).

[7] Another common meaning of 'shampoo' is «[t]he act or operation of shampooing» (OED). As a verb, it can also mean «[t]o subject (the scalp) to washing and rubbing with some cleansing agent» (OED). In both cases, the original sense of 'to press' has been preserved, but it always involves the use of a cleansing substance.

SHAMPOO, *n*.	
VEHICLE	**TARGET**
«[T]o press, to squeeze; to put pressure (on)» (OHED).	«A cleansing preparation for the hair» (SOED).

Tab. 12: SOED, OHED.

The pattern which emerges from all these instances is clear: while the donor languages — spoken by the colonized — provide the processes or the material through or with which something is done or made, the receiving language — English, spoken by the colonizers — obtains the finished product: the oppressed provide their labour, yet it is the oppressor who harvests the rewards of this toil.

In this first group, metaphors are the exception and do not typically represent the primary sense of the word, as is the case, for instance, with the term 'jungle', from the Hindi and Marathi जंगल (jaṅgal), 'waste,' 'wild,' 'desert place', but also 'jungle,' 'forest,' 'wood,' and Sanskrit जङ्गल (jaṅgala), «[a] desert, dreary ground, waste land. [...] A thicket, forest» (OED, OHED, MolDME, ApteSED). Originally, the word denoted «[w]aste or uncultivated ground (= 'forest' in the original sense); then, such land overgrown with brushwood, long grass, etc.; hence [late 18th century], in Anglo-Indian use: [...] [l]and overgrown with underwood, long grass, or tangled vegetation» (OED). This remains the primary meaning of the word. However, in the mid-19th century, 'jungle' also acquired the secondary metaphorical sense of «a place of bewildering complexity or confusion» (OED).

3.2. Group 2 – Metaphor

On the other hand, while many high-frequency loanwords with a low cultural, traditional or religious relevance have undergone metonymization processes, a substantial number of high-frequency lexical items whose source-terms denote highly relevant religious, cultural or traditional referents in the donor languages (Tab. 13) have developed a metaphorical sense in English. Once again, these figurative meanings have almost always become the primary senses of these terms in everyday usage. As can be seen in the examples below, in most cases, the original cultural and religious vehicles of these metaphors are systematically vilified and debased by being associated with profane and less dignified tenors.

GROUP 2 – HIGH CULTURAL, TRADITIONAL OR RELIGIOUS RELEVANCE	
ORIGINAL MEANING	**METAPHOR**
Diwali *n*. > Hindi दीवाली (dīvālī)	**Avatar** *n*. > Sanskrit अवतारः (avatāraḥ)
Tantra *n*. > Sanskrit तन्त्र (tantra)	**Guru** *n*. > Hindi गुरु (guru) & Sanskrit गुरु (guru)

GROUP 2 – HIGH CULTURAL, TRADITIONAL OR RELIGIOUS RELEVANCE	
Thug *n.* > Hindi ठग (ṭhag), metaphorical sense in Hindi.[8] Etc.	**Juggernaut** *n.* > Hindi जगन्नाथ (jagannāth) **Karma** *n.* > Sanskrit कर्मन् (karman) **Mantra** *n.* > Sanskrit मन्त्रः (mantraḥ) **Nirvana** *n.* > Sanskrit निर्वाण (nirvāṇa) & निर्वाणम् (nirvāṇam) **Pundit** *n.* > Sanskrit पण्डितः (paṇḍitaḥ) *n.* & पण्डित (paṇḍita) *a.* **Pariah** *n.* > Tamil பறையன் (paṟaiyaṉ) & Malayalam പറയൻ (paṟayan) **Purdah** *n.* > Urdu پردہ (par'dah, parda) and Persian پردہ (parda), secondary metaphorical meaning. Etc.

Tab. 13: OED, OHED, ApteSED, MacSD, MadTM, FabTED, GunMED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED.

For instance, the noun ‘avatar’ originates from the Sanskrit अवतारः (avatāraḥ), which means «manifestation; [...] [d]escent of a deity upon earth, incarnation in general; [...] [a]n incarnation of Viṣṇu» (ApteSED, OED). The word first entered the English language in the late 18th century with its original meaning. However, in the late 20th century, it also acquired the metaphorical sense of «[a] graphical representation of a person or character in a computer-generated environment» (OED). Consequently, the «[d]escent of a deity upon earth» lost its literal meaning and became the vehicle in a metaphor which reduced it to a figurative incarnation of a human being in cyberspace.

[8] The Hindi term ठग (ṭhag) denotes «1. a cheat, swindler; villain. 2. a robber. 3. *hist*. a thug: member of a secret gang of robbers and murderers» (OHED). The third sense is the original meaning, while the first and second are metaphorical developments. In English, the primary meaning is «[a] violent or aggressive person, esp. a criminal; a hoodlum» (OHED), which closely relates to the two metaphorical senses in Hindi. However, English also borrowed the original concept ─ normally spelt with a capital initial (‘Thug’) ─ which carries significant historical relevance.

AVATAR, *n.*	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
«[M]anifestation; [...] [d]escent of a deity upon earth, incarnation in general; [...] [a]n incarnation of Viṣṇu» (ApteSED).	«A graphical representation of a person or character in a computer-generated environment» (OED).

Tab. 14: ApteSED, OED.

The noun ‘guru’ comes from the Hindi and Sanskrit गुरु (guru) (OED, OHED, ApteSED), «a religious teacher, spiritual preceptor. [...] one who performs the purificatory ceremonies over a boy and instructs him in the Vedas» (ApteSED). More in general, it means ‘venerable’ or ‘respectable’ as an adjective, and ‘spiritual guide’, ‘mentor’ or ‘teacher’ as a noun (OHED, ApteSED). These original and literal meanings entered the English language in the early 17th century (OED). However, since the mid-20th century the term has mainly been used to refer to «[a]nyone looked up to as a source of wisdom or knowledge» or «an influential leader or pundit» (SOED), even if they are not spiritual guides and do not instruct in the Vedas, thus assuming a metaphorical sense as in ‘fashion guru’, ‘marketing guru’ etc.

GURU, *n.*	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
«[A] religious teacher, spiritual preceptor. [...] one who performs the purificatory ceremonies over a boy and instructs him in the Vedas» (ApteSED); ‘spiritual guide’, ‘mentor’ or ‘teacher’ (OHED, ApteSED).	«Anyone looked up to as a source of wisdom or knowledge; an influential leader or pundit» (SOED).

Tab. 15: ApteSED, OHED, SOED.

The noun ‘Juggernaut’ comes from the Hindi जगन्नाथ (jagannāth), «lord of the world: a title of Viṣṇu or of Kṛṣṇa [the eighth avatar of Viṣṇu]; specif. the idol and temple of Viṣṇu at Puri» (OED, OHED), and ultimately from the Sanskrit जगत् (jagat), ‘the world’, ‘the universe’, and नाथः (nāthaḥ), ‘lord’, ‘master’ or ‘protector’ (ApteSED, MacSD). The term first appeared in English in the mid-17th century with its original meaning and the initial in uppercase (OED). Annually, the effigy of the deity was «dragged in procession on an enormous cart, under the wheels of which many devotees are said to have formerly thrown themselves to be crushed» (OED, SOED). In the mid-19th century, the term acquired the metaphorical sense of «[a] large heavy vehicle; *spec*. a heavy lorry» (OED) ─ spelled with a lowercase initial (‘juggernaut’). It is likely that the name of the idol was also used ─ by means of metonymy ─ to refer to the massive cart which transported it. Then, in turn, the target of this metonymy became the vehicle for the new metaphorical sense. As a result of this process, today, when referring to a very big lorry (tenor), one often employs the title of one of the most sacred Hindu deities (vehicle).

JUGGERNAUT, *n.*	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
The gigantic cart which transported the idol and temple of Viṣṇu at Puri (metonymy). ↓ «[L]ord of the world: a title of Viṣṇu or of Kṛṣṇa [the eighth avatar of Viṣṇu]; specif. the idol and temple of Viṣṇu at Puri» (OHED).	«A large heavy vehicle; *spec*. a heavy lorry» (OED).

Tab. 16: OED, OHED.

The noun ‘karma’ comes from the Sanskrit कर्मन् (karman), a word with multiple meanings, including ‘action’, ‘deed’ and ‘fate’ in the sense of «the certain consequence of acts done in a former life» (ApteSED, OED). In Buddhism and Hinduism, it refers to «[t]he sum of a person’s actions, esp. intentional actions, in this and previous states of existence, regarded as determining that person’s fate in future states of existence» (OED), while in Jainism, it denotes the «subtle physical matter which binds the soul as a result of bad actions» (OED). These original senses entered the English language in the late 18th to early 19th century (OED, SOED). However, nowadays the term is commonly employed metaphorically to refer ─ often informally ─ to «luck, esp. viewed as resulting from one’s actions» (OED), which has become the primary sense of the word. Thus, one of the most important and revered concepts in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism has been stripped of its sacredness.

KARMA, *n.*	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
Fate in the sense of «the certain consequence of acts done in a former life» (ApteSED); in Buddhism and Hinduism, «[t]he sum of a person’s actions, esp. intentional actions, in this and previous states of existence, regarded as determining that person’s fate in future states of existence» (OED); in Jainism, the «subtle physical matter which binds the soul as a result of bad actions» (OED).	«[L]uck, esp. viewed as resulting from one’s actions» (OED).

Tab. 17: ApteSED, OED.

The noun ‘mantra’ originates from the Sanskrit मन्त्रः (mantraḥ), «[a] Vedic hymn or sacred prayer (addressed to any deity), a sacred text; [...] [a] charm, spell, an incantation» (OED, ApteSED).

This original sense entered the English language in the late 18th century. However, by the late twentieth century, the metaphorical sense of «[a] constantly or monotonously repeated phrase or sentence; a characteristic formula or refrain; a byword, slogan, or catchphrase» (OED) became its primary meaning. Once more, one of the most sacred elements in Indian culture is diminished and vilified by the association with a profane and mundane tenor.

MANTRA, *n.*	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
«A Vedic hymn or sacred prayer (addressed to any deity), a sacred text; [...] [a] charm, spell, an incantation» (ApteSED).	«A constantly or monotonously repeated phrase or sentence; a characteristic formula or refrain; a byword, slogan, or catchphrase» (OED).

Tab. 18: ApteSED, OED.

'Nirvana' derives from the Sanskrit terms निर्वाण (nirvāṇa), «[b]lown or put out, extinguished (as a lamp or fire); [...] [l]iberated from existence», and निर्वाणम् (nirvāṇam), «[e]xtinction; [...] [f]inal liberation or emancipation from matter and reunion with the Supreme Spirit, eternal bliss; [...] ([w]ith Buddhists) [a]bsolute extinction or annihilation, complete extinction of individual or worldly existence» (OED, ApteSED). The term first entered the English language in the early 19th century with its original meaning. However, in the later part of the same century, it also acquired the metaphorical sense of «a state of oblivion or of perfect happiness; an ideal or idyllic place or condition», used even for the most trivial matters, without any religious implications, and without the «realization of the non-existence of self, leading to cessation of all entanglement and attachment in life» (OED).

NIRVANA, *n.*	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
«Extinction; [...] [f]inal liberation or emancipation from matter and reunion with the Supreme Spirit, eternal bliss; [...] ([w]ith Buddhists) [a]bsolute extinction or annihilation, complete extinction of individual or worldly existence» (ApteSED).	«[A] state of oblivion or of perfect happiness; an ideal or idyllic place or condition» (OED).

Tab. 19: ApteSED, OHED, SOED.

The noun 'pariah' originates from the Tamil பறையன் (paṟaiyaṉ), «[a] caste, one of 18 kuṭi-makkaḷ» and the Malayalam പറയൻ (paṟayan), «a caste of drum-beaters, living by making mats, baskets, besides witchcraft, etc.» According to the OED, the literal meaning for both words is «(hereditary) drummer». The two terms are derived from the Tamil பறை (paṟai) and the Malayalam പറ (paṟa) respectively, both meaning «a drum», but also «[t]he Paṟaiya caste, as drum-beaters» in Tamil and «what belongs to Paṟayars» in Malayalam (OED, MadTM,

FabTED, GunMED). ‘Pariah,’ with a capital initial, first entered the English language in the early 17th century with its original meaning of «[a] member of a group of castes concentrated in southern Kerala and Tamil Nadu, included among the Scheduled Castes or Dalits» (OED). These people lived on the margins of society because they did not belong to any of the traditional four castes in the varna system, and to have any contact with them was often regarded as defiling. Moreover, because of the rigidity of the Indian caste system, they had no chance whatsoever of improving their situation. By the early 18th century, the word acquired its first metaphorical sense of «[a] member of any low caste; a person of no caste, an outcaste» (OED). Thus, even if someone was not a பறையன் (paṟaiyaṉ) or a പറയൻ (paṟayan) but belonged to another of the Scheduled Castes, they were still called «(hereditary) drummers». After this intermediate stage, in the early 19th century, ‘pariah’ (now with a lower case initial) expanded its metaphorical sense to denote any «member of a despised class of any kind; someone or something shunned or avoided; a social outcast,» even if they do not belong to a caste-based society and their lot is not as dire and hopeless as was that of the original «(hereditary) drummers» and their descendants in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

PARIAH, *n*.	
VEHICLE	**TENOR**
«A caste, one of 18 *kuṭi-makkaḷ*» (MadTM); «a caste of drum-beaters, living by making mats, baskets, besides witchcraft, etc.» (GunMED); «(hereditary) drummer» (OED); «[a] member of a group of castes concentrated in southern Kerala and Tamil Nadu, included among the Scheduled Castes or Dalits» (OED).	«A member of any low caste; a person of no caste, an outcaste» E18 (OED). ↓ «A member of a despised class of any kind; someone or something shunned or avoided; a social outcast» E19 (OED).

Tab. 20: OED, MadTM, FabTED, GunMED.

Finally, there are also some loanwords which have acquired a secondary metaphorical meaning, while their primary meaning remains very close to the literal sense of the source-terms. However, they are very few and can be regarded as exceptions. One example is the term ‘purdah’, from the Urdu پردہ (par'dah, parda) and Persian پردہ (parda), «[a] curtain. [...][a] screen; cover; veil; [...][a] small wall which screens the entrance to a house. [...][s]ecrecy; privacy; concealment; seclusion», but also «a partition between two rooms» (OED, FalHED, QurSD, StePED). The term originally denoted «[a] curtain; *esp.* one used in some Muslim and Hindu communities to screen women from public observation and particularly from the sight of men or strangers» (OED). However, the word is now often used also in an extended metaphorical sense to denote other types of ‘seclusion,’ such medical isolation or quarantine (OED, SOED).

4. Conclusion

The Indian writer Amitav Ghosh described loanwords as *girmitiyas*, an adaptation of the Hindi गिरमिटिया (girmiṭiyā), which means ‘indentured labourer,’ derived from the Hindi गिरमिट (girmiṭ),

itself an adaptation of the English 'agreement,' in the sense of «contract by indenture (to work on cane plantations)» (OHED). *Girmitiyas* were often indentured against their will and sent to work in distant places. Similarly, «[loan]words, no less than people, are endowed with lives and destinies of their own. [...] [they are] migrants who have sailed from eastern waters towards the chilly shores of the English language [...] [as] a shipload of *girmitiyas* […]».[9] As demonstrated in the present paper, at least some of these loanwords ─ particularly those whose source-terms denote highly significant religious, cultural, or traditional referents in the donor languages ─ may have been treated as such, maybe in an unconscious effort to strengthen British domination during and after the Empire ─ up to the present day.

The loanwords in group 1 ─ whose source-terms have a lower cultural, traditional or religious relevance in the donor languages, such as 'shampoo', 'bandanna' and 'khaki' ─ exhibit a remarkably high incidence of metonymies which systematically associate the processes through which products are manufactured or the raw materials used to make them ─ denoted by the source-words in the donor languages ─ with the final products resulting from these processes and materials ─ denoted by their English figurative adaptations. In essence, while the colonized perform the labour, it is the colonizers who benefit from the final products.

The loanwords in group 2 ─ whose source-terms hold a highly cultural, traditional or religious significance in the donor languages ─ display a remarkably high incidence of hyperbolic metaphors. In these instances, the religious or cultural vehicles denoted by the source-words in the donor languages are systematically degraded and vilified by their association with comparatively less dignified and more secular tenors in English. This degradation is evident in the examples analysed in Section 2.2: the incarnation of a deity ─ such as Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu ─ being reduced to the metaphorical incarnation of an ordinary person in cyberspace; the idol of Vishnu at Puri (Juggernaut) and the massive cart that transports it being transformed into a large heavy lorry for transporting ordinary goods; or the concept of 'karma', a central tenet of Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, being informally employed to figuratively denote «luck, esp. viewed as resulting from one's actions» (OED).

The systematic degradation of the vehicles of the metaphors in group 2, along with the systematic metonymical association of processes to their products or results in group 1 may sound awful, but it is certainly not surprising, because «the metaphorical and metonymical meaning developments found in the histories of particular words are not accidental, one-off affairs, but instead reflect characteristic patterns of thought» (Durkin 2009: 240-241). Moreover, «the internal structure of word meaning is not autonomous but exists against a background of our general assumptions about the world (sociocultural beliefs included)» (Sweetser 1991: 16). In the instances analysed in the present work, the underlying assumptions and sociocultural beliefs embedded in these metonymies and metaphors reflect a deeply ingrained sense of self-perceived superiority that the British Empire held over the colonies, that survived the fall of the Empire, and that the Western world in general still holds over other cultures.

At the time of the Empire, the culture and the people associated to the donor languages were systematically regarded as inferior. It was a dynamic of colonizer versus colonized, master versus servant. So as to assert their dominance, the colonizers needed to demonstrate in every possible way who had to toil and perform the processes, and who, instead, had the right to benefit from the final products. Thus, indigenous cultures had to be vilified to reinforce the notion that they could not even be compared to the 'superior' culture of the colonizers. It was as if the Empire were telling its subjects that the only thing they were allowed to do was to work for the benefit of a foreign conquering power which, in turn, had the right to take away what

[9] See https://amitavghosh.com/other-works-contributions/chrestomathy-amitav/ (accessed 26/01/2025).

was being produced, and they had to accept the diminishment and vilification of their culture, religion and deities, which ─ ideally ─ were to be supplanted by the 'superior' foreign ones imported by the colonizers.
The systematic linguistic devaluation of the 'other' by means of metonymization and metaphorization of their words not only reflects, but also perpetuates ─ be it consciously or unconsciously ─ this supremacist stance even to this day, not only in Britain but throughout the Western world. This is why the metaphorical and metonymical meanings acquired by many loanwords borrowed from Indic languages can be regarded as 'avatars' of Western domination. The metaphors and metonymies discussed in the present work are just some of the many manifestations, or ─ more precisely ─ incarnations of the Western episteme, which still contribute to the enforcement of Western cultural dominance over the rest of the world. People in the West may believe that they have become more tolerant and respectful of other cultures. However, the reality is that not only do they still use these metonymies and metaphors, but they even create new ones which follow the same logic, as is evident in the case of 'avatar' (Section 2.2), whose metaphorical sense as «[a] graphical representation of a person or character in a computer-generated environment» (OED) only appeared in the late 20th century, long after the fall of the British Empire.

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[10] The dictionaries marked with an asterisk (*) can be accessed online at https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/.

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Chapter 18.
La metáfora en la construcción de los dominios semánticos nahuas: un estudio difrástico

Metaphor in the Construction of Nahua Semantic Domains: a Diphrastic Study

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Resumen

El presente artículo ofrece un análisis léxico-semántico de los pares difrásticos presentes en el Libro VI del *Códice Florentino*. La primera parte del estudio está dedicada a la elaboración de un corpus conformado por difrasismos vía metáfora. El objetivo principal reside en vislumbrar las ramificaciones del conocimiento nahua mediante conceptualizaciones metafóricas, analizando las estructuras duales más recurrentes dentro del corpus, y cuya construcción del significado se obtiene mediante el mapeo de un dominio conceptual a otro dominio conceptual. Finalmente, se busca representar gráficamente la construcción de sentido de los pares difrásicos a través de la metáfora, mostrando cómo los procesos lingüísticos y cognitivos se entrelazan para descifrar y conceptualizar la realidad de los habitantes del México prehispánico.

Palabras clave: proceso metafórico, gramática cognitiva, difrasismo, náhuatl, *Códice Florentino.*

Abstract

This article offers a lexical-semantic analysis of the diphrastic pairs present in Book VI of the Florentine Codex. The first part of the study is devoted to the elaboration of a corpus of diphrasisms via metaphor. The main objective is to explore the ramifications of Nahua knowledge through metaphorical conceptualizations, analyzing the most recurrent dual structures within the corpus, and whose meaning construction is obtained by mapping from one conceptual domain to another conceptual domain. Finally, the study aims to graphically represent the meaning construction of the diphrastic pairs through metaphor, demonstrating how linguistic and cognitive processes intertwine to decipher and conceptualize the reality of the inhabitants of pre-Hispanic Mexico.

Keywords: metaphorical process, cognitive grammar, diphrasism, náhuatl, Florentin Codex.

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1. Introducción

En el marco del presente estudio, nos proponemos abordar la metáfora en tanto que trayectoria privilegiada para la construcción de sentido de los difrasismos, a saber, binomios léxicos con unidad semántica (Montes de Oca Vega 2013a), sumamente productivos en lengua náhuatl, y por tratarse de estructuras que «no solo expresan un significado determinado, sino que contienen la manera de pensar y de conceptualizar de una cultura específica, en este caso, el México central en la época prehispánica» (Montes de Oca Vega 2001: 389) pues contribuyen, en un nivel pragmático, a la construcción de actos de habla rituales (Montes de Oca Vega 2013b):

> Los difrasismos se consideran como estructuras lingüísticas construidas por la yuxtaposición de dos términos que a nivel semántico se toman como una unidad. La unión de dos o más lexemas no es aleatoria, está motivada por aspectos sociales, culturales y representa las maneras de percibir y conceptualizar referentes significativos en el México prehispánico del siglo XVI (Montes de Oca 2009: 426).

Más específicamente, este estudio se centra en el análisis de los pares difrásticos contenidos en el Libro VI del *Códice Florentino*, cuyo examen requiere la combinación de dos métodos, el semasiológico y el onomasiológico. Recopilado por el fray Bernardino de Sahagún, el *Códice Florentino* alberga los llamados *huehuetlahtolli*, 'palabra o discurso de los ancianos', cuya expresión lingüística dibuja un espacio textual privilegiado dentro del cual los difrasismos se insertan como códigos especiales,[1] particularmente productivos para codificar el lenguaje ritual o ceremonial de la cultura náhuatl.

En una primera fase, y a partir de la identificación de los pares difrásticos, se elaborará un corpus conformado por difrasismos vía metáfora provenientes del Libro VI del *Códice Florentino*. Para ello, los instrumentos privilegiados son la obra de Montes de Oca, *Los difrasismos en el náhuatl de los siglos XVI y XVII*, entre cuyos méritos destaca el reconocimiento de la productividad y del dinamismo de una estructura lingüística que representa una forma típica de conceptualizar y descifrar la realidad de los habitantes del México prehispánico, el Gran Diccionario Náhuatl y el manual de gramática náhuatl de Michel Launey.

En una segunda etapa, en cambio, se asumirán como marco metodológico los presupuestos teóricos de la nueva tradición gramatical inaugurada por Ronald Langacker. La gramática cognitiva representa una revolución en los estudios de semántica tradicional en tanto que fija el estudio de la gramática de una lengua con referencia a su valor semántico y, por lo tanto, sujeta a «un sistema de organización del conocimiento lingüístico como parte integrante de la experiencia humana» (Langacker 1982: 24). Este enfoque[2] se complementará con la propuesta de categorización del conocimiento propiciada por Eleanor Rosch, denominada 'teoría de los prototipos' y con la teoría de los espacios mentales propuesta por Fauconnier y Turner en *The*

[1] Sobre la ductilidad de los difrasismos, entendida como la capacidad para adaptarse y resemantizarse en diferentes contextos culturales y semánticos, y la evolución, en el caso del náhuatl doctrinal, hacia una lengua de especialidad, véase Mollo (2022).

[2] Planteamiento tropológico, que no cognitivista, es el que Maria Lida Mollo (2024) reserva al estudio de los pares difrásticos contenidos en otro texto recopilado por Bernardino de Sahagún, *Colloquios y Doctrina Christiana* (1524), poniendo el foco en aquellos integrados por el lexema *yóllotl* ('corazón'). La aplicación de la gramática de los tropos permite a la autora ir más allá de los mapeos entre dominios conceptuales con vistas a ensayar un análisis de las diferencias entre metáfora analógica, por un lado, y metáfora convencional, sinécdoque y metonimia, por otro, en relación con el conflicto conceptual, ora valorizado, ora disuelto.

Way We Think, a la que aquí se acude con vistas a analizar la construcción del significado de los difrasismos.

El carácter novedoso del marco metodológico dentro del cual se inserta el presente estudio reside en la toma de distancia de la visión tradicional que ve la metáfora desde una óptica de trasposición de significado de un término al otro. Muy por el contrario, cuando hablamos de metáfora:

> [it] is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words. We shall argue that, on the contrary, human thought processes are largely metaphorical. This is what we mean when we say that the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined. Metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in person's conceptual system (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:6).

Pues la manera en que categorizamos la realidad constituye una vía de acceso privilegiada al mundo de la experiencia y a la construcción de significados derivados de ella, un espacio dentro del cual la ciencia cognitiva y algunos procesos creativos, como la metáfora y la metonimia,[3] juegan un papel fundamental a la hora de descifrar nuestra forma de pensar y de ahondar en la construcción de nuevos significados (Lakoff 1987). Tanto la metáfora como la metonimia representan trayectorias fundamentales para rastrear la formación de significado de los difrasismos. Sin embargo, y como el objetivo del presente estudio reside en vislumbrar las ramificaciones del conocimiento nahua mediante conceptualizaciones metafóricas, centraremos nuestra atención solamente en esas estructuras duales que más ocurrencias presentan dentro del corpus, y cuya construcción del significado se obtiene a través del mapeo de un dominio al otro o, mejor dicho, de un dominio conceptual a otro dominio conceptual, en una interacción entre dominios heterogéneos (Croft 2022).

Finalmente, el estudio buscará representar gráficamente la construcción de sentido de los pares difrásicos a través de la metáfora, mostrando cómo estos procesos lingüísticos y cognitivos se entrelazan para descifrar y conceptualizar la realidad de los habitantes del México prehispánico.

2. ¿*Methaphoras* o difrasismos?

La constitución del corpus a partir del Libro VI del *Códice Florentino* y, en concreto, de los pares detectados en el capítulo 43, titulado: «Capítulo 43. De algunas methaphoras delicadas con sus declaraciones», obedece a dos razones principales. La primera se debe a que esta sección, ya desde el título, encierra una de las principales limitaciones en el tratamiento de los difrasismos, a saber, su identificación con la figura de la metáfora. Sahagún, al presentar los difrasismos, los relega a mero recurso estilístico en tanto que 'metáforas delicadas'. Esta interpretación se inserta dentro de una tradición que inicia con fray Bernardino de Sahagún y

[3] Contrariamente a lo que acontece en la trayectoria metafórica, el mapeo metonímico no implica un cambio de dominio para las entidades involucradas. Es así como resulta posible asistir a un proceso de cambio denominativo en la medida en que los distintos objetos que intervienen en un espacio conceptual estén conectados por una relación de continuidad.

fray Andrés de Olmos,[4] y continúa con estudiosos come el padre Garibay,[5] Miguel León-Portilla[6] y Thelma Sullivan.[7]
Sin embargo, los límites conceptuales trazados por los exponentes de esta tradición, influenciada por la definición clásica de metáfora planteada por Aristóteles, han oscurecido cualquier posibilidad de una comprensión más amplia de los difrasismos al enfocarse exclusivamente en su dimensión estilística. A partir de los estudios de Mercedes Montes de Oca, una de las lingüistas más acreditadas en este campo de investigación, se introduce un enfoque innovador que trasciende la visión reduccionista tradicional y permite analizar los difrasismos desde una perspectiva cognitiva con el fin de «desarrollar el concepto de metáfora a partir de los procesos de conceptualización que implican relaciones entre dominios conceptuales y no a partir de la lengua y de los referentes en la realidad» (Montes de Oca 2013a: 27). De ahí que:

> la metáfora tiene sentido en el contexto de análisis que proponemos si se considera que es un proceso de construcción del significado, que se conforma como una trayectoria entre dominios cognoscitivos y no partiendo de la consideración de que los difrasismos se forman uniendo dos palabras para crear una similitud por contigüidad (Montes de Oca 2013a: 37).

La segunda razón a la base de la elección de este capítulo radica en la forma que adquiere dicha sección, que actúa como un apéndice del Libro VI al reunir distintas 'metáforas delicadas', lo que lo convierte en vector de riqueza temática y conceptual, además que de distintas estrategias discursivas y estilísticas nahuas. El apartado, adoptando la forma de un glosario en el que el evangelizador va proporcionando significados y contextos de uso de cada par, se hace cargo de una reflexión metalingüística enmarcada en un estudio pragmático acerca de los difrasismos (Montes de Oca 2013a). Es así como Sahagún recopila un listado de 92 *metaphoras*, cada una encuadrada en su contexto de aparición, el del lenguaje ceremonial, y acompañada por una 'declaración' que, en forma anafórica, empieza cada apartado con'esta letra quiere decir..'.
En lo que toca a la elaboración del corpus, la tabla[8] que se presenta a continuación ha sido elaborada a partir del análisis del capítulo 43 del Libro VI del *Códice Florentino* y constituye

[4] Cfr. «Las siguientes maneras de dezir son methaphóricas, porque una cosa quiere dezir la letra y otra la sentencia, aunque algunas vayan a la letra glosada y otras se puedan aplicar a otro sentido del que van» (Olmos 2002 [1547]: 177).

[5] Cfr. «Llamo así un procedimiento que consiste en expresar una misma idea por medio de dos vocablos que se completan en el sentido, ya sea por ser sinónimos, ya por ser adyacentes. Varios ejemplos del castellano explicarán mejor: "a tontas y a locas; a sangre y fuego; contra viento y marea; a pan y agua" &c. Esta modalidad de expresión es rara en nuestras lenguas, pero es normal en náhuatl… Casi todas estas frases son de sentido metafórico, por lo cual hay que entender su aplicación, ya que si tomaran a la letra torcería de sentido, o no lo tendrían adecuado al caso» (Garibay 1989: 115).

[6] Cfr. «Analizando ahora la estilística de los *huehuehtlahtolli* encontramos que en él se emplean con gran frecuencia muchos "difrasismos", nos referimos a las expresiones en las que la yuxtaposición de los vocablos de contenido metafórico lleva a evocar un pensamiento que se desea destacar. Valiéndose luego de otros difrasismos, que en forma de paralelo aduce, se torna más explícito lo que quiere decir» (León-Portilla 1992: 203-206).

[7] Cfr. «La expresión figurativa mediante metáforas y sinónimos es muy propria del náhuatl tanto en la prosa como en la poesía. Uno de los casos más frecuentes es la metáfora generalmente formada de dos palabras que, en combinación, expresan una sola idea» (Sullivan 1992: 16).

[8] Por razones de espacio, en esta ocasión se presentarán solamente dos tablas. La Tabla 1, que contiene 122 pares (entre difrasismos nominales, verbales y adverbiales) detectados en el capítulo objeto de análisis y la Tabla 2, que incluye 68 pares difrásticos con conformación nominal, no formarán parte del presente trabajo. En cambio, en este estudio se dará a conocer la Tabla 3, que reúne los difrasismos vía metafórica, a la cual se hará referencia como 'Tabla 1' y la Tabla 4, que ofrece una clasificación adicional de los mismos con base en los parámetros de 'núcleos conceptuales', a la que se hará referencia como 'Tabla 2'.

el material de referencia para el presente examen. En ella, la primera columna muestra el difrasismo base, la segunda el contexto de aparición, la tercera la página y la cuarta la traducción al español de los lexemas que componen el difrasismo. De un total inicial de 122 pares, han sido seleccionados únicamente los difrasismos nominales, excluyendo, de tal forma, los verbales y adjetivales, lo que redujo el corpus a 68 pares. Finalmente, se seleccionaron aquellas estructuras cuya construcción de sentido implicara una trayectoria metafórica:

	Difrasismo base	**Difrasismo en contexto**	**Página**	**Traducción**
1	*in chalchihuitl* *in quetzalli*	*Ticteteçoa in chalchivitl, ticoaoaçoa in quetzalli*	199v	Jade Pluma de quetzal
2	*In atl* *In tepetl*	*in altépetl* *Amo teauh, tetepeuh* *Maltepeuh* *in altepetl: qujtoznequj: in atl, in tepetl.* *in altepetl*	200r 201r 201r 202v 203r	Agua Cerro
3	*Teuhtli* *tlazolli*	*Teuhio, tlaçollo*	201v	Polvo Basura/mugre
4	*Ahuehuetl* *pochotl*	*in juhquj vey avevetl, vey pochotl* *Tavevetl, in tipochotl*	202r 208v	Ahuehuete ceiba
5	*Mixtli* *ayahuitl*	*Mixtitlan, aiauhtitlan*	202r	Nube niebla
6	*Poctli* *ayahuitl*	*Poctli, aiavitl*	202r	Humo niebla
7	*Tleyotl* *mahuizyotl*	*têiotl, maviziotl* *in jmavizio, in jtleio* *in jtleiotzin, in jmaviziotzin*	202r 205r 210r	Fama gloria
8	*Teoatl* *tlachinolli*	*Teuatl, tlachinolli*	202v	Agua divina hoguera
9	*ocelotl* *cuauhtli*	*Ocelopetlatl, quappetlatl* *Quauhiotica, oceloiotica*	202v 212r	Tigre águila
10	*Cuitlapilli* *atlapalli*	*Cujtlapilli, ynatlapalli* *in cujtlapilli, in atlapalli*	202v 213v	Ala cola
11	*Huitztli* *ahuatl*	*In avitzio, in ahavaio* *tevitzio, teaoaio*	203r 203r	Espina Espina aguda
12	*Toptli* *petlacalli*	*Toptli, petlacalli* *Cujx topio, cujx petlacallo*	204r 205r	Cofre petaca
13	*Tenyotl* *I'tauhcayotl*	*in jteio, in jtauhca* *Moteiotia, mjtauhcaiotia*	205r 205r	Fama gloria
14	*Chalchihuitl* *teoxihuitl*	*Vel chalchiuhtic, vel teuxiuhtic vel acatic, vel ololiuhquj*	205v	Jade Piedra preciosa
15	*Cozcatl* *Quetzalli* *pilli*	*tecozquj, tequetzal, tepiltzin*	206v	Collar Pluma de quetzal señor
16	*Iztlactli* *tencualactli*	*Iztlactli, tenqualactli*	207v	Saliva baba
17	*Tochtli* *mazatl*	*In otitochtiac, in otimaçatiac*	209v	Conejo venado

	Difrasismo base	Difrasismo en contexto	Página	Traducción
18	*Pollocotli Zacacualli*	*Pollocotli, çacaqualli*	212v	paja zacate
19	*Amoxtli Tla'cuilolli*	*Imamux, intlacujlol*	215r	Libro escritura

Tab.1: Difrasismos vía metafórica.

3. Núcleos conceptuales

Considerando los difrasismos como portadores de una función esencialmente denominativa, cuyos lexemas pueden aludir a distintas facetas de un mismo referente, es posible clasificar estas formas difrásticas por medio de núcleos conceptuales, es decir, un espacio temático integrado por diferentes declinaciones semánticas asociadas a cada concepto. La propuesta de subdivisión se debe a Montes de Oca, quien puso de manifiesto la necesidad de organizar el amplio repertorio de difrasismos por ella analizado, agrupándolo según campos temáticos para lograr mayor claridad semántica y una optimización analítica.
A partir del corpus de difrasismos vía metáfora presentado en la tabla anterior, este estudio intenta dar cuenta de las distintas ramificaciones léxicas y semánticas de cada par. El intento ciertamente no es presentar un sistema hermético de las estructuras lingüísticas y conceptuales de este pueblo, sino, más bien, ofrecer un inventario de categorías formadas dentro de un contexto particular, el de los *huehuehtlahtolli* de la tradición nahua, y en un marco temporal determinado, el México prehispánico del siglo XVI. Es así como se torna posible proporcionar un listado de los núcleos conceptuales compuestos por difrasismos vía metáfora, entre los cuales los campos semánticos de los objetos valiosos, la fama y la guerra destacan por su frecuencia:

Núcleo conceptual	Difrasismo base	Difrasismo en contexto	Pág.	Traducción
	in chalchihuitl in quetzalli	*Ticteteçoa in chalchivitl, ticoaoaçoa in quetzalli*	199v	Jade Pluma de quetzal
VALIOSO	*Chalchihuitl teoxihuitl*	*Vel chalchiuhtic, vel teuxiuhtic vel acatic, vel ololiuhquj*	205v	Jade Piedra preciosa
	Cozcatl Quetzalli pilli	*tecozquj, tequetzal, tepiltzin*	206v	Collar Pluma de quetzal señor
PUEBLO	*In atl In tepetl*	*in altépetl* *Amo teauh, tetepeuh* *Maltepeuh* *in altepetl: qujtoznequj: in atl, in tepetl.* *in altepetl*	200r 201r 201r 202v 203r	Agua Cerro
PECADO	*Teuhtli tlazolli*	*Teuhio, tlaçollo*	201v	Polvo Basura/ mugre

Núcleo conceptual	**Difrasismo base**	**Difrasismo en contexto**	**Pág.**	**Traducción**
PROTECCIÓN	*Ahuehuetl pochotl*	*in juhquj vey avevetl, vey pochotl Tavevetl, in tipochotl*	202r 208v	Ahuehuete ceiba
	Mixtli ayahuitl	*Mixtitlan, aiauhtitlan*	202r	Nube niebla
	Poctli ayahuitl	*Poctli, aiavitl*	202r	Humo niebla
FAMA	*Tleyotl mahuizyotl*	*têiotl, maviziotl in jmavizio, in jtleio in jtleiotzin, in jmaviziotzin*	202r 205r 210r	Fama gloria
	Tenyotl I'tauhcayotl	*in jteio, in jtauhca Moteiotia, mjtauhcaiotia*	205r 205r	Fama gloria
GUERRA	*Teoatl tlachinolli*	*Teuatl, tlachinolli*	202v	Agua divina hoguera
	ocelotl cuauhtli	*Ocelopetlatl, quappetlatl Quauhiotica, oceloiotica*	202v 212r	Tigre águila
MACEHUALES	*Cuitlapilli atlapalli*	*Cujtlapilli, yn atlapalli in cujtlapilli, in atlapalli*	202v 213v	Ala cola
DESCENDIENTE	*Huitztli ahuatl*	*In avitzio, in ahavaio tevitzio, teaoaio*	203r 203r	Espina Espina aguda
SECRETO	*Toptli petlacalli*	*Toptli, petlacalli Cujx topio, cujx petlacallo*	204r 205r	Cofre petaca
MENTIRA	*Iztlactli tencualactli*	*Iztlactli, tenqualactli*	207v	Saliva baba
	Pollocotli Zacacualli	*Pollocotli, çacaqualli*	212v	paja zacate
SALVAJE	*Tochtli mazatl*	*In otitochtiac, in otimaçatiac*	209v	Conejo venado
SABIDURÍA	*Amoxtli Tla'cuilolli*	*Imamux, intlacujlol*	215r	Libro escritura

Tab. 2: Núcleos conceptuales difrásticos.

3.1. Núcleo conceptual de los objetos valiosos

Los difrasismos que integran este núcleo conceptual están relacionados con objetos valiosos en el México prehispánico. Jade, oro, plumas de quetzal junto con la turquesa y otras joyas, desempeñaron un papel central en los aspectos económicos, rituales y sociales de las civilizaciones mesoamericanas. En el difrasismo *cozcatl quetzalli* (collar y pluma de quetzal) los dos lexemas están empleados en relación con el ser humano y, en particular, para dirigirse a algún noble o señor. Junto con otros objetos valiosos, como *chalchihuitl* (jade), *teoxihuitl* (turquesa) y *maquiztli* (pulsera), *cozcatl* y *quetzalli* se activan en tanto que elementos prototípicos del dominio y, a través de una trayectoria metafórica, crean una proyección en un nuevo dominio conceptual para designar al *pilli* (noble).

Además de pasar al dominio meta en tanto que objetos sumamente valiosos y preciados para los mexica, estos términos participan en la puesta en prominencia de un subdominio explícito en el lexema que sigue[9] a este difrasismo, *pilli* (señor o noble), confluyendo en el dominio de

[9]A este respecto, Montes de Oca (2013a: 35) rehúsa hablar de trifrasismo. Más bien, la autora enmarca la presencia de un tercer término en una función aglutinadora, cuyo intento reside precisamente en expresar el significado del par difrástico.

la nobleza. Mediante una trayectoria metafórica, los objetos preciosos del *source domain* se proyectan al *target domain*, representando valores como la nobleza y el estatus social. En este proceso, no solo se resalta la importancia económica de los objetos, sino también su eficacia simbólica para construir categorías sociales.

Núcleo conceptual	Difrasismo base	Difrasismo en contexto	Pág.	Traducción
VALIOSO	*Cozcatl* *Quetzalli*	*tecozquj, tequetzal, tepiltzin*	206v	Collar Pluma de quetzal

Tab. 3: Núcleos conceptuales: VALIOSO.

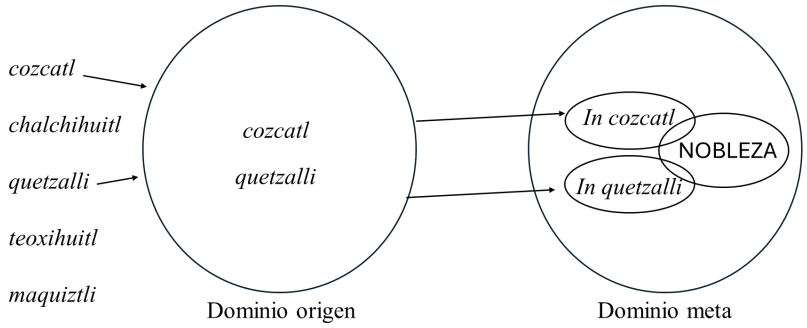


Fig.1: Trayectoria metafórica de los objectos valiosos.

3.2. Núcleo conceptual de la guerra

La guerra en la sociedad mexica siempre jugó un papel fundamental, ya que se configuraba como la principal emisora de corazones cautivos sacrificados en nombre del sol. Cada hombre estaba llamado a actuar bajo una ética moral y religiosa según la cual la condición de guerrero y la muerte en combate constituían motivos de gloria y fama eterna. Por ello, dada la trascendencia ritual de la guerra y la necesidad incesante de sangre para alimentar la luz del sol, la cultura náhuatl parece conferir a la guerra una condición poética, de manera que se le conoce como *xochi yaoyotl* (guerra florida).

A este respecto, vale la pena acudir a José Alcina Franch, quien en su artículo *Lenguaje metafórico e iconografía en el arte mexica* propone una explicación en clave metafórica de varios difrasismos, entre ellos el que aquí se analiza. Según el estudioso, la explicación de par difrástico *in teoatl in tlachinolli* (agua-fuego sagrado) se encontraría en su representación iconográfica ya que muestra la confluencia de dos ríos, uno de agua divina, es decir, de sangre, y otro de fuego; el primero desemboca en el glifo 'agua' y el segundo en el de 'fuego' (Alcina Franch 1995). Al estar situada cerca de la boca, esta representación requiere, para Alcina Franch, una interpretación metafórica capaz de crear un nuevo espacio semántico en el que las palabras 'sangre' y 'fuego' remiten al concepto de guerra y destrucción.

En el difrasismo *in teoatl in tlachinolli*, los dos lexemas se refieren al poder destructor de la guerra. Respecto a otros referentes, como la flecha (*mitl*), el escudo (*chimalli*) y los dardos (*tlacochtli*), que se ubican en el subdominio de los objetos materiales involucrados en la guerra,

el agua y el fuego sagrados representan,compatiblemente con la cosmovisión dual propria de esta cultura,[10] las fuerzas destructoras capaces de conceptualizar la acción guerrera.

Núcleo conceptual	Difrasismo base	Difrasismo en contexto	Pág.	Traducción
GUERRA	*Teoatl tlachinolli*	*Teuatl, tlachinolli*	202v	Agua divina Hoguera

Tab. 4: Núcleos conceptuales: GUERRA.

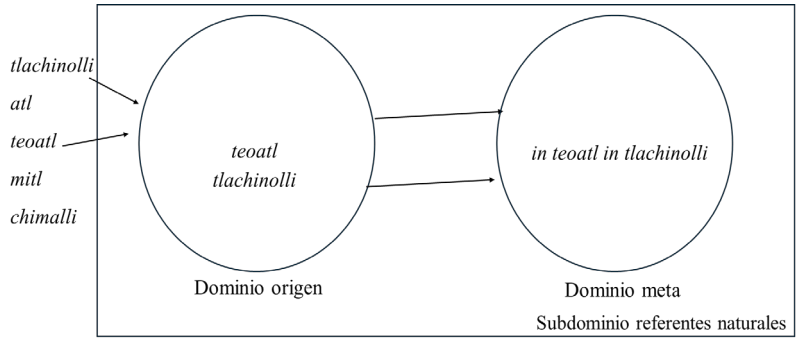


Fig. 2: Trayectoria metafórica de la guerra.

3.3. Núcleo conceptual de la fama

Vinculado al núcleo conceptual anterior, la fama resulta ser un atributo especialmente relevante para este pueblo. El honor mexica podía ser conquistado a través de dos vías, la de las palabras y la de las acciones. La primera, representada por el difrasismo *in xochitl in cuicatl* (flor-canto) alude a la poesía como un medio artístico para alcanzar felicidad y fama eterna; la segunda vía es la que se centra en las acciones bélicas.[11]

Un ejemplo representativo de este núcleo temático es el difrasismo *poctli ayahuitl* (humo-niebla). Emblema característico de la figura de Tezcatlipoca (Mollo 2013), el humo y la niebla, elementos a la vez naturales y abstractos, evocan algo que se difunde y, por lo tanto, visible pero intangible. La asociación metafórica que conecta el simbolismo del humo y la niebla permite conceptualizar a personas destacadas y dignas de renombre en la cosmovisión mesoamericana, vislumbrando un mapeo conceptual esclarecedor de cómo los mexicas recurrían a elementos del entorno natural para construir significados relacionados con la grandeza y la reputación.

Núcleo conceptual	Difrasismo base	Difrasismo en contexto	Pág.	Traducción
FAMA	*Poctli ayahuitl*	*Poctli, aiavitl*	202r	Humo niebla

Tab. 5: Núcleos conceptuales: FAMA.

[10] Sobre dualismo y dualidad en la cultura náhuatl véase Mollo (2014: 95-114).

[11] Para entender qué tan importante era adquirir fama y prestigio dentro de la comunidad mexica y cuál era el contexto más adecuado para alcanzar este valor, Marc Thouvenot y José Rubén Romero Galván (2008: 54-56) presentan en su obra una aproximación al análisis morfológico de cada uno de los términos que intervienen dentro de este núcleo conceptual.

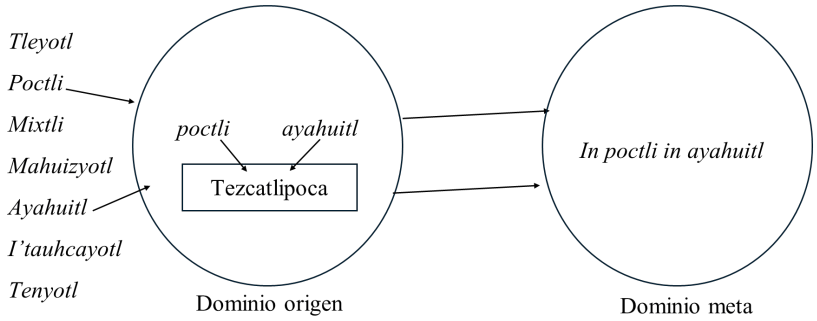


Fig. 3: Trayectoria metafórica de la fama.

4. Conclusión

La metáfora, al igual que la metonimia, representa una de las trayectorias mediante las cuales es posible trazar la formación de los significados de los difrasimos. El propósito de este análisis ha sido mostrar cómo la metáfora interviene en la construcción de los espacios semánticos nahuas, en contraste con los estudios tradicionales que buscaban establecer una falsa equivalencia entre metáfora y difrasismos, y destacando, en cambio, la interdependencia entre lengua y cultura. Por si fuera poco, en el contexto de una lengua polisintética con morfología aglutinante, cual es el náhuatl, eminentemente oral y rica en expresiones difrásticas, se torna posible mostrar la forma en que su estructura y uso no solo reflejan, sino también modelan los parámetros cognitivos de sus hablantes.

La categorización de los difrasismos en núcleos conceptuales permite explorar los dominios en virtud de los cuales los procesos metafóricos estructuran el sistema conceptual nahua. Desde la riqueza material hasta la gloria personal, la metáfora opera como un puente que conecta dominios cognitivos, transformando objetos y conceptos en vehículos de significado cultural. Este enfoque no solo amplía nuestra comprensión de los difrasismos, sino que también revela las interacciones dinámicas entre lenguaje, pensamiento y sociedad en el mundo mesoamericano.

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Chapter 19.
Philosophical Metaphors: Plato's Allegory of the Cave and its Cultural Impact

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Abstract

One of the most influential metaphors in the history of Western thought is Plato's allegory of the cave. In this allegorical tale, which is related in Book VII of *The Republic*, Plato describes humanity as a group of prisoners dwelling in a dark cave. The people have been in this cave since childhood, shackled by the legs and neck; they live in darkness, but some light is allowed them, from a fire that casts its glow behind their backs. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised walkway along which people are walking and carrying various objects that cast their shadows on the cave wall the prisoners are facing. This is all that the shackled men can see, as they cannot turn their heads around. Their only reality consists of shadows cast on a blank wall.
Plato was a philosopher, not a storyteller, so why did he choose to expound his ideas through metaphor? The answer to this may be inferred from Lakoff's and Johnson's seminal study *Philosophy in the Flesh,* in which they posit the theory of the embodied mind and postulate that even abstract concepts are largely metaphorical. This hypothesis further develops Johnson's idea in *The Body in the Mind,* in which he argues that we apprehend reality through image-schematic structures that derive from bodily experience. One such structure is the physical schema of containment. This schema is symbolically conveyed through metaphors of enclosure or boundedness, such as the room or the cave.
The claim that philosophy most effectively speaks to us in the language of metaphor may account for the cultural impact of Plato's allegory. The allegory appeals to us not only because of its argumentative logic but also because of its experiential basis – the universal sense of bodily containment. This sense is conveyed through the parable of the cave, which has pervaded philosophy, religion, and countless works of art throughout history. The present paper explores the linguistic aspects of the allegory and its cultural impact.

Keywords: allegory of the cave, embodied mind, image-schemata, containment

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1. Introduction

The language of philosophy seems to be at odds with the language of metaphor. Philosophy aims at precision, at the most accurate expression of logical thought; metaphor offers suggestiveness and ambiguity, it expresses one thing in terms of another. Philosophical discourse is analytic, metaphorical discourse – holistic. Philosophy defines, explicates and differentiates; metaphor evokes, blurs differences, and conflates two disparate realms. Yet when Plato, the father of Western thought, deployed his views on the nature of reality, human perception and knowledge, he had recourse to metaphor. He conveyed his major philosophical tenets through the allegory of the cave.

If we broadly define allegory as the narrativization of metaphor, Plato's allegory of the cave may be seen as one of the most influential metaphors in the history of Western philosophy. In this allegorical tale, Plato describes humanity as a group of prisoners dwelling in a dark cave. The people have been in this cave since childhood, shackled by the legs and neck; they live in darkness, but some light is allowed them, from a fire that casts its glow behind their backs. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised walkway, along which people are walking and carrying various objects, such as puppets and images, that cast their shadows on the cavewall the prisoners are facing. This is all that the shackled men can see, as they cannot turn their heads around; their only reality consists of shadows cast on a blank wall.

One day, a prisoner is released from his chains. For the first time he is able to see the objects and not just their shadows – he can see the puppets and the fire inside the cave, which constitute the entire world he has inhabited since birth. Then he is led out into the real world. Blinded by the light of the sun, he cannot look directly at the trees, rocks and animals around him. All he can look at are the shadows and water reflections cast by those objects. Then his eyes become acclimatized to the glare of the sun, and he turns his gaze to the actual objects surrounding him. At the end, fully acclimatized, he looks to the source of illumination, the sun. But when he decides to return to the cave and tell his fellow prisoners about the outside world, they don't believe him and think he must have been blinded by the sun.

Plato was a philosopher, not a storyteller, so why did he choose to expound his ideas through metaphor? The answer to this may be inferred from Lakoff's and Johnson's seminal study *Philosophy in the Flesh*. The two authors propose that the mind is inherently embodied, a hypothesis which obliterates the traditional distinction between the body and the mind. They hypothesize that the neural mechanisms responsible for perception are also responsible for conceptualization. Consequently, there is no pure reasoning - abstract concepts are largely metaphorical (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 14-15).

Plato's allegory, deployed in the seventh book of *The Republic*, casts in figurative language his philosophical world view. Plato made a distinction between the sensible world and the supersensible world, calling the former the "visible" and the latter the "intelligible." The visible is further divided into shadows or images and their corresponding objects; the intelligible into mathematical objects and the Forms. Forms are immaterial, non-spatial and a-temporal: they are the origin of all the elements of the physical world. The physical, sensible world and all of its constituents are a copy or image of the Forms. A woman's beauty is a partial representation of the eternal form of Beauty; a child's goodness is a particular representation of the eternal form of Good. Since all copies and particular cases are dependent on the original, the physical world is dependent on Forms. Forms are the objects of knowledge, grasped by the intellect through definitions, dialectic, or otherwise, whereas particulars are the objects of the senses and belief.

The cave allegory memorably conveys Plato's ontological and epistemological framework. The captives doomed to look at mere shadows represent the vast majority of humanity, whose

limited perception misleads them into interpreting partial representations of reality as reality, the ephemeral particulars of the visible world as the timeless, absolute forms. The individual who climbs out of the cave into the light is the philosopher, who can see all the elements of reality as well as their origin – the sun, which is both the source of all things and the force that enables us to directly perceive all things. But when the philosopher returns to his fellow-prisoners, to instruct them about his knowledge and insight, they refuse to listen to him. They would rather kill him, as did the Athenians who killed Socrates.

Plato's conceptualization of his metaphysics is grounded in a cluster of metaphors: ESSENCES ARE IDEAS, IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, KNOWING IS SEEING and THE GOOD IS THE SUN (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 333-334). As discussed in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, the philosophical argument is deployed through metaphorical entailments. If essences are ideas, they are not material but abstract; the essence of a physical object is the ideal version of that object. But being ideal is not contrasted with being real. Essences are both ideal and real and can become the objects of knowledge through the physical faculty of sight. Lakoff and Johnson elaborate:

> These same metaphors provide the logical coherence to Plato's Allegory of the Cave. In that allegory, the Good is conceptualized metaphorically as the sun, the causal source of light, which is metaphorically the causal source of knowledge. The movement from ignorance to knowledge is depicted metaphorically as an ascent from darkness to light. At the beginning, in the stage of ignorance and opinion, the dwellers in the cave know (i.e., see) only faint shadows on the cave wall. Their ascent to knowledge moves in stages from seeing shadows, to seeing firelight, to seeing objects by sunlight, and finally to gazing on the blinding light of the Sun itself (*Ibid*.: 334).

2. The Cognitive Function of Metaphor and the Schema of Containment

The cognitive function of metaphors was also formulated by Aristotle, Plato's most influential student. In *The Poetics*, Aristotle famously defines metaphor as «the attribution of a name belonging to something else: either from the genus to the species, or from the species to the genus, or from species to species or by analogy» (1968 [350 BCE]: Chapter 21). While in the later tradition metaphor has been regarded as an ornamental stylistic device that should be used to delight the hearer, Aristotle stresses its value as a learning tool. In order to understand metaphor, the hearer must find something common between the metaphor and the thing it refers to. Thus, when we read about "the noisy sea-shore" we learn nothing about the sea except that it produces a certain kind of noise. But when we read a line such as "the roaring sea-shore" we draw a mental comparison between the sound of waves and the growls of a lion and become aware of the sea as a dangerous force of nature.

Furthermore, as persuasively argued by Wood in his study on *Aristotle and the Question of Metaphor*, if the making and understanding of metaphors requires the ability to perceive similarities between disparate things, the knowledge of similarities between things demands the knowledge of what they are in themselves. And the knowledge of what things are requires a cognitive understanding of their essence, or Form. It would thus follow that Plato's cave metaphor is not just a rhetorical strategy aimed at pleasing and persuading the audience, but another form of philosophical discourse aimed at making the audience intellectually grasp the essential nature of reality. Aristotle's view of metaphor foreshadowed contemporary cognitive linguistics and was also shared by philosophers. Thus Nietzsche declared that «Knowing is nothing but working with the favorite metaphors... The drive toward the formation of metaphor is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instance dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself» (cited in Schrift 127).

Metaphors are both cognitive and affective in their meaning. As argued by Sopory in *Metaphor and Affect*, during the metaphor comprehension process affect interacts with cognition to provide the full import of metaphorical meaning (Sopory 2005: 433). The cave allegory may illustrate his claim. In Plato's symbolic tale, the prisoners live in darkness, an image encoded in language as a metaphor for ignorance: "to be in the dark," "dark ages" or conversely, "the age of enlightenment" are three cases in point. But whereas ignorance is an abstract concept to which we cognitively respond by negative judgment, its metaphorical expression as darkness affects us emotionally as well. Darkness makes us feel disoriented and frightened. And our emotional response of insecurity, disorientation and confusion has a physical origin – we conduct ourselves in the world through the sense of sight. Without sight and the light that enables it, we are lost.

The last example illustrates the bodily basis of metaphors, which is persuasively argued in Mark Johnson's *The Body in the Mind*. Johnson argues that our perception and interaction with the world are grounded in embodied schemata. Schemata are traditionally defined as clusters of knowledge representing a particular generic procedure, object, sequence of events or social situation (Johnson 1987: 19). This knowledge, insists, Johnson, is not propositional. We do not apprehend reality through abstract conceptual paradigms but through image-schematic structures which derive from bodily experience. One such structure is the physical schema of containment. Johnson explains:

> Our encounter with containment and boundedness is one of the most pervasive features of our bodily experience. We are intimately aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers into which we put certain things (food, water, air) and out of which other things emerge (food and water, wastes, blood etc.). From the beginning, we experience constant physical containment in our surroundings (those things that envelop us). We move in an out of rooms, clothes, vehicles and numerous kinds of bounded spaces.[…] The most experientially salient sense of boundedness seems to be that of three-dimensional containment (i.e. being limited or held within some three-dimensional enclosure, such as a womb, a crib or a room) (*Ibid*.: 21-22).

In Plato's philosophical argument the cave is the site of humanity's entrapment in false beliefs; in psychology, folklore or myth the cave generally stands for secrecy and containment.[1] The schema of containment entails a wealth of logical and psychological implications, some of which can be diametrically opposed. For one, containment and boundedness are the source of our in/out orientation, and as such can signify inclusion or exclusion. Containment may feel protective or suffocating, liberating (from the threat of external forces) or confining. It may evoke shelter or imprisonment, the beginning of life or its end. Our first physical container is the womb; our last physical container is the tomb. The body, the physical container of the self, is the prototype of our containment experience in the world and of its metaphorical rendition in art.

3. The Cultural Impact: From Cave to Room in Literary Works

The claim that philosophy most effectively speaks to us in the language of metaphor may account for the cultural impact of Plato's allegory. The allegory appeals to us not only because of its argumentative logic but also because of its experiential basis – the universal sense of bodily containment. This sense is conveyed through the parable of the cave, which has pervaded

[1] The cave is a general symbol of enclosure, secrecy and containment. Caves are associated with the underworld and with archetypes of maternity and the unconscious. In myth and folklore, caves usually house gnomes and spirits; they are often the site for secret initiation ceremonies (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982: 180).

philosophy, religion, and countless works of art throughout history. Literary works in particular abound with metaphors of enclosure, which sometimes function as generic signposts.

The literary theorist Bakhtin, who formulated the concept of the *chronotope* – a conflation of the Greek terms for time and space – argued that the room, or more precisely the parlor, is the chronotope of the realistic novel, the traditional setting of the bourgeoisie depicted by writers such as Stendhal or Balzac. The room is a construct of containment and its physical properties – enclosure, confinement, circuitousness – lend themselves to a rich and often conflicting array of metaphorical interpretations.

In feminist narratives, the room, the woman's traditional abode, can alternately signify enslavement or freedom, imprisonment or autonomy. The room is the setting and focal metaphor of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 19th century classic *The Yellow Wallpaper*, a story in which a young and creative woman, suffering from post-partum depression, is virtually imprisoned in a summer resort by her loving husband, a physician who knows best what is good for her, and in the name of that knowledge deprives her of all human contact and creative resources, until she loses the last shreds of her sanity. Gilman's end-of-century story, published in 1892, ironically refers to a Victorian literary tradition which associated female creativity with insanity that could best be cured by solitary confinement. This attitude is perhaps most aptly conveyed in the title of Sandra Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's landmark work of feminist literary criticism – *The Madwoman in the Attic.* But another landmark work of feminist criticism, Virginia Woolf's short essay *A Room of One's Own* celebrates the room as the site of the female writer's empowerment and autonomy.

If the room, as setting and metaphor, is associated with 19th century realism and with 19th and 20th century feminist writing, it is equally associated with another generic tradition, that of detective fiction. First introduced in Edgar Allan Poe's 1841 story *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, the conundrum of the locked room alludes to a logic-defying situation. In his foundational narrative Poe introduces an amateur detective, Chevalier Auguste Dupin, summoned to investigate the murder of a mother and a daughter whose mutilated bodies were found in a hermetically sealed room. Since Dupin's problem-solving strategy is logical deduction, which does not allow for the co-existence of two conflicting facts (nobody can enter or exit a room locked from inside; a murder has been committed in such a room), the first fictional sleuth concludes that one of the elements of the puzzle must be misleading. And so it is. Dupin discovers a broken nail in one of the window sashes, which not only explains the perpetrator's way of entry and escape, but also suggests his very nature – an orangutan. His discovery marks the victory of logic: «if the deductions are the sole proper ones», to quote Poe through the mouthpiece of Dupin, then «the suspicion arises inevitably from them as the single result» (Poe 1994: 89). «[Poe]», argues the literary critic Michael Holquist, «is the Columbus who lays open the world of radical rationality which is where detectives have lived ever since» (Holquist 1983: 157).

In classic detective fiction the locked room convention evokes the supremacy of logical deduction and signals the detective genre's twin ontological and epistemological assumptions – the world can be understood by reason because it is based on reason. The genre celebrates the belief elegantly summarized by Holquist: «there are no mysteries – there is only incorrect reasoning» (Holquist 1983: 157).

In time the image of the locked room has become a set repertoire of crime fiction, but its purport has been gradually transformed. In the postmodern, "metaphysical" detective story the locked room image has come to signify the inverse of its original implication, the ultimate impossibility of knowledge and the defeat of the mind in face of incomprehensible reality.

4. A Postmodern Revision: Emma Donoghue's *Room*

Emma Donoghue's 2010 novel, *Room,* which was also adapted to film, conflates the metaphor of the room with Plato's metaphor of the cave. In both the book and the film Room is at once the title, the main narrative's principal setting and the novel's focal metaphor. Inspired by real life events, such as Josef Fritzl case, the story is related from the perspective of Jack, a five-year-old narrator/protagonist, who is being held captive in a small room along with his mother. The mother was kidnapped and imprisoned by her captor in a secluded, single-room outbuilding; this is where Jack was born and this has been his entire world for the five years of his young life. His life is divided between Ma, Room and Television. As it is all he has ever known, Jack believes that only the room and the things it contains (including himself and Ma) are "real". The rest of the world exists only on television, as pictures projected from an electrical appliance in the wall.

Although Donoghue's novel intertextually corresponds with the metaphorical representation of the room as a trope of female servitude or autonomy, the narrative's principal intertextual reference is Plato's cave allegory. The novel is ironically self-reflexive in this respect: in one of the TV interviews aired after Jack and his Ma have been released, the panelists self-importantly analyse Jack's young life in terms of Plato's cave. And indeed such a reading is inescapable. The images flickering on the TV screen in the room evoke the shadows cast on the walls of Plato's cave. With one crucial difference: whereas Plato's prisoners mistake fiction for reality, Jack mistakes reality for fiction. To phrase it more accurately, the shadows in the Platonic allegory are fiction in the sense of being distanced from reality at two removes: they are only reflections cast by physical objects, which are themselves partial reflections, or images, of real essences, the Forms. The interplay of fiction and reality is no less subtle in *Room*. In order to save the child from a terrible sense of deprivation, his mother deceives him into believing that only the room exists. The rest of the world, what he sees on TV, is fiction and art, just as the pictures in his beloved picture books.

Jack's mother eventually "unlies" to him and tells him that what they see on TV are pictures of real things. Jack is unable to grasp the news. «Room is real for real», he thinks, «but maybe Outside is too, only it's got a cloak of invisibility on like Prince Jack in the story?» (Donoghue 2010: 63). The two are finally rescued and Jack is initially blinded by the sun: like Plato's prisoner ascending from the cave, Jack must become acclimatized. But unlike Plato's prisoner, for whom the world outside the cave provides a closer access to the essential reality of forms, the young prisoner who has managed to escape from the room discovers a reality that is not always real. His grandmother remarried so the man whom he meets and who takes care of him is not his real grandfather; lollipops won't make him lose his teeth because, as his mother explains "they make them with a kind of not-real sugar that's not bad for your teeth."

As correctly noted by Dinter, Donoghue is revising here Plato's ontological and epistemological model by referring to Baudrillard's notion of simulacra. In 2006 Baudrillard famously declared that postmodern reality relies on «models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal…It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, not even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real» (Baudrillard 2006: 1-2). This is the young protagonist's philosophical insight as he reflects:

> When I was four I thought everything in TV was just TV, then I was five and Ma unlied about lots of it being pictures of real and Outside being totally real. Now I'm Outside but it turns out lots of it isn't real at all (Donoghue 2010: 345).

Like the allegory of the cave, *Room* addresses questions of perception, ontology and epistemology. We can only experience the world through our perceptual tools, but what is the validity of our perception? To what extent is what we see true or "real?" And if perception is fallible, what other means do we have to gain access to knowledge? Is knowledge possible at all, and if so, what does knowing something amount to? These are the central questions of our lived experience and the principal concerns of philosophy. Philosophical discourse attempts to provide answers, which are addressed at our cognitive faculty. Narrative asks and answers through metaphors, which address our full being – our mind, our feelings and our body.

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III.
Metaphors, Concepts & Cognition

Chapter 20.
Gestes métaphoriques en classe de français langue étrangère

Metaphorical Gestures in the French as a Foreign Language Classroom

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Résumé

Au sein de cet article, nous nous proposons d'analyser qualitativement la diversité d'usage à laquelle se prêtent les gestes métaphoriques à visées pédagogiques. Pour ce faire, les données ont été collectées à travers un corpus filmique issu des classes naturelles de français langue étrangère de trois enseignantes traitant le même contenu didactique dans un collège francophone en Turquie. Nos analyses font ressortir les résultats suivants : premièrement, les gestes métaphoriques de morphologies diverses servent d'appui à la transmission d'information en conceptualisant et en visualisant le référent verbal le plus souvent abstrait. Deuxièmement, une autre catégorie de gestes métaphoriques met en évidence surtout certains gestes emblématisés dans le contexte pédagogique et aide à la gestion des interactions pédagogiques sur un point linguistique ou à l'évaluation.

Mots-clés : geste métaphorique, geste pédagogique, geste emblématique, didactique du français langue étrangère.

Abstract

Within this article, we aim to qualitatively analyse the diverse uses of metaphorical gestures for pedagogical purposes. To do so, data were collected from a video corpus drawn from the natural settings of teaching French as a foreign language, involving three teachers covering the same didactic content in a French-speaking middle school in Turkey. Our analyses bring out the following findings: firstly, metaphorical gestures of various forms support the conveying of information by conceptualizing and visualizing the verbal referent, which is most often abstract.

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Secondly, another category of metaphorical gestures highlights especially some emblematic gestures within the instructional context and assists in managing pedagogical interactions related to linguistic points or in assessment.

Keywords: metaphoric gesture, teaching gesture, emblematic gesture, teaching of French as a foreign language.

1. Introduction

Cette recherche vise à exploiter l'usage que les enseignantes tirent des gestes métaphoriques (Kendon 2004 ; McNeill 1992, 2005) dans le cadre de la communication didactique en classe de français langue étrangère (dorénavant FLE) (Cicurel 1985, 2011), où les éléments de nature à la fois verbale et kinésique entrent en jeu d'une manière tantôt concomitante tantôt complémentaire. Autrement dit, l'objectif principal consiste, en l'occurrence, à éclaircir les diverses modalités à travers lesquelles les *gestes métaphoriques* (désormais, GM) véhiculent l'information linguistique, concourent à la gestion des activités/interactions et opèrent en vue d'évaluer la prestation des élèves (Tellier 2006, 2008). En bref, ce présent travail cherche à soulever la question de recherche suivante en tant que problématique : comment les gestes métaphoriques assurent-ils la communication didactique en classe de FLE en supplément à la parole enseignante ?

Ceci dit, même si on retrouve, lors d'une revue de littérature en la matière, plusieurs recherches réservées à la morphologie, aux caractéristiques cognitives et au fonctionnement des GM dans le cadre de la communication multimodale (voir entre autres Cienki & Müller 2008 ; Müller *et al*. 2013, 2014 ; Streeck 2009), peu de recherches ont été consacrées à leur fonctionnement au niveau didactique/pédagogique en classe de FLE (voir Denizci 2015, 2020, 2022 ; Denizci & Azaoui 2020). De même, d'autres recherches qui creusent la question de gestes utilisés à des fins pédagogiques s'intéressent davantage aux gestes iconiques et déictiques (voir entre autres Azaoui 2017a, 2017b, 2023 ; Tellier 2006, 2008, 2016 ; Tellier & Stam 2012 ; Tellier & Yerian 2023), qu'il s'agisse du contexte expérimental ou du milieu naturel d'enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères. En somme, il s'avère que les recherches mentionnées ci-dessus accordent peu de place aux GM en fonction de la communication didactique en classe de FLE.

Toujours dans l'optique soulignée ci-dessus, il n'en reste pas moins que des recherches devraient s'effectuer, surtout dans le cadre qui nous préoccupe, à propos de l'emploi des GM en classe de FLE, si bien que cet article porte exclusivement sur la morphologie ainsi que sur les différentes fonctions pédagogiques des GM faisant partie intégrante du discours enseignant. En vue de nous pencher sur cette problématique, nous avons collecté les données à travers un corpus vidéo basé sur les classes de trois enseignantes de FLE qui dispensaient des cours à un public adolescent de niveau langagier A1 (Conseil de l'Europe 2005) en milieu naturel d'enseignement-apprentissage dans un collège francophone en Turquie. Ainsi avons-nous tenté de mettre au point les diverses modalités dont les GM véhiculent l'information pour instruire, interagir et évaluer au sein de la communication didactique en classe de FLE.

2. Cadre Théorique

La théorie qui gravite autour de la gestuelle remonte essentiellement aux travaux de David Efron pendant les années 1940 en fonction du caractère culturel des gestes faisant partie essentielle de la communication sociale (voir Kendon 2004) de nature multimodale (Goffman 1956). Mais c'est surtout grâce aux recherches d'Adam Kendon et de David McNeill depuis les

années 1980 qu'on a commencé à s'investir en toute rigueur dans les études de la *gestuelle* (*gesture studies*) qui puisent leur réflexion surtout dans les gestes manuels *coverbaux* (*co-speech gestures*) liés au discours verbal (ou à la parole) qu'ils accompagnent (Cosnier 1982 ; Kendon 2004 ; McNeill 1992). En tant qu'éléments constitutifs d'un même système cognitif (McNeill 1992, 2005), le geste (qui relève de l'imagerie mentale trouvant son expression sous forme de mouvements des mains et des bras) et la parole (mots en tant qu'unités analytiques qui s'enchaînent) cohabitent dans la communication et y assument des fonctions tantôt redondantes tantôt complémentaires. Ceci revient à dire que les gestes sont immanents à toute interaction sociale, quel que soit le contexte en question.

Dans le cas qui nous préoccupe, nous tenons à nous pencher sur une catégorie gestuelle coverbale dite GM employé à des fins pédagogiques ; c'est-à-dire, en tant que geste pédagogique (Tellier 2006, 2008), le GM sera traité en l'occurrence du point de vue morphologique et fonctionnel. Bien entendu, il s'avère que les interactions de classe font preuve de multimodalité due au recours chez l'enseignant à toutes sortes de ressources pédagogiques fournies par le discours verbal, le corps et le support matériel/technologique (Azaoui 2014; Cadet & Tellier 2007; Colletta 2005). En somme, nous soutenons qu'il faut porter une attention particulière au GM qui est susceptible de véhiculer l'information langagière (aux niveaux morphosyntaxique, lexicale ou phonologique), de gérer la classe et d'évaluer par diverses modalités au sein de l'activité enseignante (Cicurel 1985, 2011 ; Tellier 2006, 2008).

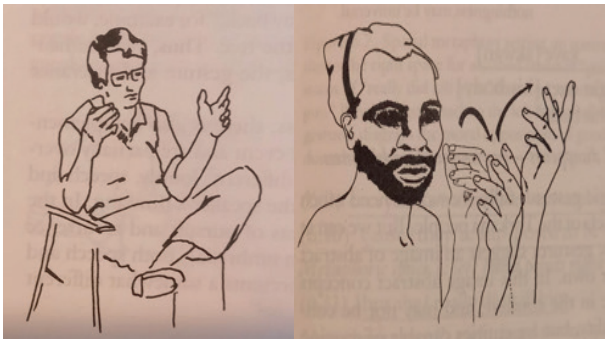
En ce qui concerne la classification morphologique (ou la forme) gestuelle la plus répandue (et généralement admise), McNeill (1992) regroupe sous les gestes coverbaux quatre types/dimensions : *déictique* (geste de pointage vers un objet concret mais parfois aussi vers un référent que l'on atteste dans la parole, en dépit de son absence dans l'environnement spatial, voir à ce propos, Denizci 2020; Denizci & Azaoui 2020), *iconique* (geste visualisant/illustrant un objet de l'environnement immédiat ou un référent/concept concret de la parole), *métaphorique* (geste représentant un concept abstrait qui ne figure effectivement que dans la parole) et *battement* (geste plus ou moins répétitif et inconscient, qui rythme surtout le discours au niveau syntaxique ou qui accentue un mot au niveau prosodique). Ici, nous n'en retiendrons que les GM pour les soumettre à un examen plus détaillé.

Au même titre que d'autres usages langagiers, le recours à des métaphores permet essentiellement l'accomplissement des actes de parole liés surtout à la description ou à l'information dans le cadre verbal et pragmatique (Machamer 2000). Pourtant, la métaphore verbale véhicule l'information suivant ses propres modalités. Dans cette optique, la théorie de *métaphore conceptuelle* suggère déjà que le champ concret de l'expérience humaine sert d'appui pour la conception ou l'imagination mentale des référents abstraits, comme dans l'exemple de la collocation « donner une idée », où l'on conçoit une idée comme un objet à transmettre ou à délivrer à l'allocutaire (Lakoff & Johnson 2003 [1980] ; Parrill 2008).

Bien entendu, il en va de même pour la métaphore au niveau des gestes manuels. En fait, lorsque McNeill (1992) étiquette et met en évidence les GM (en s'inspirant de la métaphore conceptuelle), il les considère essentiellement comme des gestes qui présentent une *idée abstraite* ou une *image de l'invisible/de l'abstraction* ; il s'agit notamment des *GM de conduit* (*conduit metaphoric gestures*), où la morphologie gestuelle met en place deux mains qui se regardent comme contenant et qui semblent tenir un paquet imaginaire entre elles, représentant ainsi le concept abstrait (ou parfois même concret) comme contenu (voir Figure 1a ci-dessous). Dans la Figure 1a, le GM renvoie au référent verbal « dessin animé » et présente/visualise/concrétise l'idée de dessin animé en le conceptualisant, ce que Calbris et Porcher (1989) désignent comme la *concrétisation de l'abstrait*. De notre part, nous appelons cette catégorie essentielle *geste métaphorique conteneur* (désormais, GMC).

Un GMC présente donc le référent du discours verbal en *empaquetant* d'une manière ou d'une autre l'information, comme s'il s'agissait d'une réalité physique. En bref, le GMC représente les concepts (référents du discours verbal) abstraits dépourvus de forme physique en les visualisant/matérialisant, mais parfois aussi même des concepts concrets en leur associant une forme globale, c'est-à-dire en les concrétisant (Denizci 2015). Par conséquent, le GMC établit une analogie entre la forme gestuelle et le contenu sémantique du discours verbal (référent) par divers traits de sens.

Disposant d'un haut degré d'iconicité (et donc quasi-iconique), un autre type de GM appelé par McNeill (1992) *geste métaphorique non-conduit* (*non-conduit metaphoric gesture*) repose sur les gestes qui expriment des concepts abstraits mais de manière plus imagée par rapport aux GMC; ce type de GM se distingue du geste iconique par le fait qu'il représente des idées abstraites. Le geste de la Figure 1b (voir ci-dessous) en constitue un exemple par excellence, où le référent verbal abstrait « connaissance » est représenté par un mouvement latéral, semi-circulaire, rapide et subtil de la main gauche (avec des doigts progressivement dressés) vers l'extérieur. Ici, le contenu sémantique abstrait « connaissance » est assimilé par le locuteur à quelque chose de volatile qui bouge en l'air, si bien qu'une analogie est établie entre le concept abstrait et le geste par l'intermédiaire du trait sémantique « déplacement » (la traduction verbale du geste serait comme suit : la connaissance bouge et change de mains entre les gens, ou bien elle circule d'une personne à l'autre). Nous appelons ce type de GM *geste métaphorique non-conteneur* (désormais, GMNC).



1a 1b

Fig. 1 : Exemples de GM par McNeill (1992).

Dernièrement, il convient d'inclure aux GM (qu'il s'agisse de GMC ou de GMNC) les gestes appelés *emblème* (ou geste emblématique) : ce sont des gestes spécifiques à une ou plusieurs cultures (voir Calbris & Montredon 1986 ; Johnson *et al*. 1975 ; Morris 1997), ou bien codifiés/conventionnalisés dans le contexte pédagogique (Hauge 1999 ; Azaoui 2013). En tant que gestes quasi-linguistiques (Cosnier 1982) et traduisibles (Kendon 2004), les emblèmes correspondent à un équivalent verbal plus ou moins figé comme les collocations ou les expressions d'une culture-langue donnée. Contrairement aux gestes coverbaux, les emblèmes sont plus ou moins conventionnels dans un contexte particulier ; autrement dit, leur sens est fixé auparavant en quelque sorte et connu de la part des locuteurs. Mais, de même que les gestes coverbaux, ils peuvent coïncider avec la parole à laquelle ils réfèrent en sorte qu'ils en intensifient la valeur illocutoire, même s'ils surgissent en redondance, ce qui est constaté le plus souvent dans nos analyses. Qu'ils surviennent en l'absence ou en présence de la parole, les emblèmes ayant un haut degré d'iconicité servent des fois à représenter des concepts abstraits (collocations ou expressions idiomatiques) en les visualisant par abstraction, ce qui les rapproche davantage des GM selon nous. Par conséquent, nous avons lieu de supposer que

certains gestes emblématiques sont en effet aussi des GM. Nous reviendrons sur la pertinence des gestes emblématiques au sein de cette recherche dans la partie consacrée aux résultats.

3. Méthodologie

En vue de décrire les diverses modalités dont les GM assurent la communication didactique en classe de FLE, nous avons collecté les données à travers les enregistrements vidéo des cours de FLE dispensés en contexte naturel d'enseignement-apprentissage par trois enseignantes dans un collège francophone en Turquie, si bien que nous avons constitué un corpus de type écologique (dont nous n'analyserons ici qu'une partie en lien avec les GM) et nous avons déployé une stratégie de recherche dite empirique (voir Tellier 2012, 2013). Les participantes de la recherche ont traité une même unité comme contenu didactique (à savoir l'unité intitulée *Belle vue sur la mer !* dans le manuel *Latitudes 1 : Méthode de français*, *A1/A2*, Mérieux & Loiseau 2008) auprès des élèves adolescents de niveau A1.
Pour ce qui est de l'analyse des données, cet article souscrit à la fois à l'analyse de contenu ethnographique et à l'analyse du discours, où les GM sont examinés en rapport avec la parole (Babbie 2010 ; Bryman 2012; Paillé & Mucchielli 2013). Concernant la transcription de la parole et l'annotation des gestes, nous avons amalgamé les conventions de Bertrand *et al*. (2008) et de McNeill (1992, 2005) :

/ / = segment de discours borné par des pauses silencieuses
: = allongement de mot/syllabe
MAJUSCULE = mot accentué
[**mot(s) en caractère gras entre les crochets**] = partie du discours verbal affilié au geste.

4. Résultats

Nos analyses du corpus font ressortir les résultats présentés dans les lignes qui suivent.

4.1. Morphologie des GMC basée sur l'empaquetage et la catégorisation de l'information lexicale

Comme nous l'avons déjà précisé, suivant la typologie gestuelle largement admise (McNeill 1992, 2005), les GM se déclinent en deux morphologies essentielles : de prime abord, se trouvent les GMC, où le locuteur fait comme s'il tenait un objet avec une seule main (les doigts légèrement repliés et la paume regardant vers le ciel) ou avec les deux mains (les deux paumes se regardant). De toute façon, la morphologie gestuelle en question peut être assimilée à des objets imaginaires tenus comme une tasse (voir Figure 2c, 2d) ou un paquet (voir Figure 2a, 2b, 2e), les deux fonctionnant en tant que conteneur/contenant d'une information.
L'attribution d'une forme visuelle sert d'étayage pour l'empaquetage de l'information qui s'accomplit donc de deux façons : en premier lieu, le GMC représente un concept/référent abstrait dépourvu d'une forme/propriété physique par l'association d'une forme visuelle à celui-ci, d'où la *concrétisation de l'abstrait* à laquelle souscrivent donc les concepts abstraits « caractère des gens » et « journée » dans les Figures 2a et 2b. En second lieu, le GMC est susceptible de représenter un concept/référent concret en assignant à celui-ci une forme différente que sa forme d'origine, d'où l'*abstraction du concret* exemplifiée dans les Figures 2c, 2d et 2d (comme une variante à l'envers) respectivement par les concepts concrets « guide de voyage », « parties […] habitées » et « couloir ». En somme, ce qui caractérise les GMC, c'est leur forme grosse, globale et rudimentaire par rapport à celle plus affinée et détaillée des

gestes iconiques. Dans cette optique, même si le GMC est mis en place pour l'*explication lexicale*, sa valeur informative s'avère douteuse de notre point de vue étant donné son faible degré d'iconicité.



/oui ben parce que c' est le **[caractère hein des:]** des: ça reflète le caractère des gens/

2a



/vous mélangez toujours **[journée]**/

2b



/pour acheter un **[GUIDE de voyage]**/

2c



/dans le monde entier **[il y a des parties qui sont/habitées]**/

2d



/comme tu veux dans la classe ou dans le **[couloir]**/

2e

Fig. 2 : Empaquetage de l'information par les GMC.

Parfois, le GMC sert non seulement de représentation, mais aussi de *catégorisation lexicale*, lorsqu'il se sert de l'espace métaphoriquement (voir McNeill 2005) sur axe horizontal

imaginaire. Comme le montre ci-dessous la Figure 3, l'enseignante oppose deux adjectifs « (plages) payantes » et « (plages) privées » par deux GMC consécutifs en déplaçant légèrement le premier GMC à sa droite et en localisant donc les deux sur l'axe horizontal. De surcroît, vu que les deux GMC évoquent successivement deux catégories à travers un axe, il s'agit pour cet exemple aussi d'une dimension déictique qui se greffe à la configuration métaphorique.



Fig. 3 : Catégorisation lexicale par le GMC.

4.2. Geste présentatif et paume(s) latérale(s) ouverte(s) comme variantes des GMC

Nous postulons que des gestes comme le *geste présentatif* (dont nous avons déjà vu un exemple dans la Figure 2c ci-dessus) et les *paumes latérales ouvertes* pourraient être inclus également dans la catégorie des GMC.

De prime abord, le *geste présentatif* (*presenting gesture*, voir Parrill 2008), autrement appelé *geste de livraison* (*delivery gesture*, voir Bavelas *et al*. 1992, 1995), est censé délivrer l'information métaphoriquement sous forme de paquet que le locuteur semble tenir à la main imaginairement. Par exemple, lors de l'évaluation de la réponse d'une apprenante qui fait une faute, l'enseignante met en œuvre ce type de geste dans sa version avec les deux mains et énonce « je ne sais pas » (voir Figure 4a ci-dessous). Le geste en question opère à plusieurs niveaux : premièrement, l'enseignante détient l'information (c'est-à-dire la bonne réponse) dans ses mains et elle est prête à la délivrer à l'apprenante. Pourtant, puisque l'enseignante veut inciter l'apprenante à l'autocorrection, elle oriente le geste présentatif vers l'apprenante avec les deux mains qui entrent en jeu et énonce les propos « je ne sais pas ». Ainsi se complètent-ils le geste et la parole au niveau communicatif ; d'une part, le geste présentatif dirigé vers l'apprenante contient au niveau métaphorique l'information (que l'enseignante refuse de donner d'emblée pour des raisons pédagogiques) ; d'autre part, il fait référence aussi, au niveau déictique, à la réponse fautive antérieurement formulée par l'apprenante (voir à ce propos Denizci & Azaoui 2020). La communication reste en suspens pour un certain moment jusqu'à ce que l'apprenante reformule sa réponse. Cette fois-ci, l'enseignante effectue un autre geste présentatif (avec la seule main gauche) accompagné de « d'accord » (voir Figure 4b ci-dessous) ; pourtant, la parole, le ton de la voix ainsi que le geste expriment l'éventualité de la correction de la réponse, comme d'autres réponses sont aussi possibles. En fin de compte, cet exemple met en évidence la complémentarité du geste et de la parole, qui vont de pair pour mener à bien/assurer la communication didactique en assumant à la fois des fonctions informatives, pragmatiques et interactives dans une même circonstance.



/[je ne sais pas]/

4a



/[d'accord]/

4b

Fig. 4 : Gestes présentatifs.

Le geste présentatif de la Figure 4b s'intègre en effet dans une famille de gestes plus large, désignée par Kendon (2004) comme *paume(s) latérale(s) ouverte(s)* (*open hand supine hand gestures*) dont la configuration la plus typique consiste en deux bras écartés et tendus latéralement (vers les deux côtés du locuteur) avec les paumes ouvertes (regardant vers le haut) et les doigts plus ou moins dressés. Appelé aussi *geste du bowling* par Morris (1997) en raison de sa morphologie, ce geste est accompagné le plus souvent de haussement d'épaules. En l'occurrence, le paquet imaginaire des GMC n'est plus tenu à la main ; au contraire, le locuteur fait comme s'il cherchait à montrer à son allocutaire que ses mains sont vides (voir Figure 5 ci-dessous). Nous considérons ce geste aussi comme une variante des GMC. Selon McNeill (1992), le geste concerné crée une *sensation de vide* et il semble que le locuteur ne détienne plus l'information dans un paquet imaginaire. La pertinence de ce geste est plutôt liée à sa fonction pragmatique, puisqu'il marque en sous-entendue des *phatèmes* ou des *marqueurs de structuration de conversation* non prononcés comme « hein », « n'est-ce pas », « tu sais », « tu vois », etc. (voir Riegel *et al*. 2009). Suivant le contexte communicatif et l'intonation du discours verbal, le geste en question se prête à deux interprétations possibles : soit il exprime la certitude/l'évidence ou l'éventualité d'une chose (où le locuteur recherche chez l'allocutaire l'adhésion à son idée), soit il marque contrairement le sentiment d'incertitude surgissant chez le locuteur, voire son manquement d'information à propos de ce dont il parle (Calbris & Montredon 1986). Dans l'exemple de la Figure 5, lors d'une discussion sur la « mobilité réduite », l'enseignante échange les mots « oui, ça (la perte de mobilité) arrive (dans la vie) » et son geste remplit une fonction plutôt pragmatique, étant donné qu'il sous-entend les phatèmes «

hein » ou « n'est-ce pas », qui indiquent la probabilité et recherchent implicitement l'accord de l'allocutaire en la matière.



/[oui ça arrive]/

Fig. 5 : Paumes latérales ouvertes.

Par conséquent, le geste présentatif et les paumes latérales ouvertes font partie des *gestes récurrents* (*recurrent gestures*) (Müller 2017, cité dans McNeill 2018), comme ils se manifestent régulièrement dans la communication. Le geste présentatif de nature métaphorique est un type de signe non conventionnel, vu qu'il ne renvoie pas à un contenu sémantique fixé au préalable. En revanche, les paumes latérales ouvertes correspondent implicitement à des équivalents verbaux surtout phatiques et plus ou moins fixes (prononcés ou non), ce qui montre de notre point de vue leur caractère partiellement conventionnel à l'instar des gestes emblématiques. En effet, comme l'affirme McNeill (2012, 2018), ce sont des emblèmes qui comportent une métaphoricité et donc encodent des métaphores.

4.3. Emblèmes pédagogiques sous forme de GMNC

Le cas de certains gestes admis généralement comme gestes emblématiques pose problème du point de vue de la classification gestuelle, car morphologiquement parlant, ils possèdent les propriétés des iconiques, alors qu'ils réfèrent le plus souvent à un contenu sémantique abstrait. Ceci contrevient d'emblée à la définition des iconiques qui sont censés illustrer un concept concret. Alors, pour résoudre ce problème d'ordre taxinomique, nous suggérons que les gestes emblématiques constituent une catégorie gestuelle hyperonymique et qu'ils se rattachent principalement aux *gestes métaphoriques quasi-iconiques* ; autrement dit, aux gestes de *haut degré d'iconicité* (voir aussi Denizci 2022). Cette considération des emblèmes s'accorde avec la définition que McNeill (1992) tire des GMNC, comme c'est le cas du geste de la Figure 1b (voir ci-dessus) par exemple.

Ceci dit, nous postulons que certains emblèmes culturellement et/ou pédagogiquement spécifiques peuvent être acceptés comme des GMNC ; c'est-à-dire, la deuxième catégorie des GM à aborder dans la partie suivante. Les GMNC présentent morphologiquement plus de finesses, de détails visuels et de variétés par rapport aux GMC, ce qui les rapproche davantage des gestes iconiques. Néanmoins, ils diffèrent des iconiques par leur signifié abstrait plus ou moins conventionnel (fixe) et leur éventuelle émergence dans la communication même en l'absence de la parole.

Au niveau culturel, nous pouvons citer par exemple l'emblème français à équivalent verbal « en avoir ras-le-bol » (Calbris & Montredon 1986, voir Figure 6a ci-dessous) : la main y coupe à plat la partie supérieure du front et évoque dans l'esprit un vase à ras bord, ce qui laisse

entendre l'épuisement de la tolérance vis-à-vis d'une situation. L'analogie s'effectue ici au niveau opérationnel par un ou plusieurs traits sémantiques. C'est ainsi qu'un élément A (concept abstrait comme comparé/signifié/référent verbal) est assimilé à un élément B (geste en tant que comparant/signifiant) ; dans le cas du geste de la Figure 6a, le mécanisme analogique qui engendre la métaphoricité fonctionne comme suit :

- *geste comme comparant/signifiant* = tranchant de la main qui bouge à plat au niveau du front supérieur = vase à ras bord ;
- *concept sémantique abstrait comme comparé/signifié/référent verbal* = en avoir assez = ne plus pouvoir tolérer quelque chose/quelqu'un ;
- *analogie* établie sur les traits sémantiques « quantité » et « niveau limite ».

Il en va de même pour le geste dit *doigts en forme d'anneau* ou le geste *ok* (Morris 1997) produit par la jonction de l'index et du pouce dans la main, et utilisé pour l'approbation ou la confirmation (voir Figure 6b ci-dessous) ; l'analogie y est construite sur les traits sémantiques « articulation », « circularité » et « complétude » qui donnent à entendre la précision ou la perfection.



6a 6b

Fig. 6 : Emblèmes culturels (Calbris & Montredon 1986 ; Morris 1997).

Au sein de notre corpus, nous avons repéré certains GMNC souscrivant à ce que Azaoui (2013, 2014) appelle *emblème pédagogique* ; en d'autres termes, des gestes qui surviennent régulièrement à visée pédagogique en classe de FLE. Ce sont en effet des GMNC qui sont conventionnalisés ou *emblématisés* en contexte pédagogique, dans la mesure où ils s'attachent à un *code commun gestuel* (Tellier 2006) qui s'implique entre les enseignants et les élèves, et à condition que le geste soit performé à plusieurs reprises et que son sens soit reconnu par les élèves.

L'emploi des emblèmes pédagogiques sous forme de GMNC de notre corpus est réservé à deux fonctions pédagogiques essentielles : attirer l'attention des élèves au sein des interactions pédagogiques et évaluer (voir Figure 7 ci-dessous). Dans la Figure 7a, l'enseignante attire l'attention des élèves à un point langagier en mettant en place le geste dit *main en forme de bourse* (Kendon 2004 ; Morris 1997). Effectué par le rassemblement des doigts en pointe, le geste dont il est question ici fait preuve de précision et donne à entendre « tirer l'essentiel du point langagier ». Similairement, l'*index dressé* (parfois secoué de part et d'autre ou vers l'avant) de la Figure 7c attire l'attention des élèves lors de la gestion de l'interaction pédagogique à propos d'un point langagier. Le geste de bourse et l'index dressé sont susceptibles de se chevaucher parfois avec des battements, ce qui leur confère davantage une allure d'insistance. Dernièrement, analogue au signe *ok*, le *pouce dressé* dans la Figure 7b sert à évaluer directement la performance des élèves.



/[les éléments importants]/

7a



/[ah bon c' est super] $volkan$/

7b



/[attention]/ [on peut te dire]/

7c

Fig. 7 : Emblèmes pédagogiques sous forme de GMNC.

5. Conclusion

Dans cet article, nous avons cherché à comprendre le fonctionnement des GM au sein de la communication didactique en classe de FLE. Pour ce faire, nous nous sommes aidé des données d'un corpus filmique recueilli dans le milieu naturel d'enseignement-apprentissage.

Les GM que nous avons analysés en partant des données du corpus s'appuient sur deux morphologies essentielles : de prime abord, se trouvent les GMC servant d'étayage pour la transmission de l'information langagière, bien que leur valeur informative soit incertaine. Il nous semble qu'ils opèrent plutôt au niveau de la cognition en facilitant l'encodage ou l'empaquetage de l'information.

Deuxièmement, nous avons constaté des GMNC qui relèvent morphologiquement des emblèmes pédagogiques dont la spécificité consiste en un haut degré d'iconicité. Fonctionnellement parlant, les GMNC concourent à la gestion des interactions pédagogiques concernant un point langagier ou à l'évaluation.
Au total, les GM méritent un intérêt particulier du point de vue à la fois morphologique et fonctionnel. Ceci est lié, selon nous, à la complexité des processus mentaux chez l'individu qui s'efforce par divers moyens de concrétiser ses pensées grâce au langage.

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Chapter 21.
Sfide creative nei processi di comprensione del linguaggio metaforico

Creative Challenges in the Processes of Understanding Metaphorical Language

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Abstract

Il contributo analizza le potenzialità cognitive e visive del linguaggio figurato, con particolare attenzione alla metafora, a partire dalle intuizioni di Aristotele (IV sec. a.C.). Il filosofo è il primo a definire la metafora come trasposizione di un nome improprio, individuando in essa un dispositivo linguistico e concettuale capace di rivelare somiglianze ontologiche e di trasgredire l'uso proprio del linguaggio in modo pertinente. La metafora, secondo Aristotele, non è solo ornamento retorico, ma strumento cognitivo che amplia la conoscenza, creando relazioni semantiche e formulando concetti attraverso processi come il trasferimento da genere a specie e l'analogia. Centrale è la proprietà imagistica della metafora, che consente di "porre davanti agli occhi" concetti astratti, generando immagini mentali e favorendo la comprensione. Tale carattere visivo, che anticipa teorie moderne sul *visual imagery* e sulla simulazione motoria, conferisce alla metafora una forza espressiva sorprendente, capace di evocare azioni e movimento anche in entità inanimate. Le metafore più efficaci, infatti, attivano conoscenze corporee e pre-riflessive, trasformando l'esperienza linguistica in un processo polisensoriale.
L'uso del linguaggio figurato diventa così un'avventura interpretativa che stimola l'ingegno, produce piacere estetico e lascia tracce durature nella mente dell'interprete. Tuttavia, la fruizione delle metafore richiede competenza e allenamento: coglierne il senso implica affinare lo sguardo e l'udito, credendo nel loro potere trasformativo. In conclusione, la metafora si configura come un fenomeno proteiforme, capace di coniugare dimensione verbale e visiva, generando esperienze cognitive e immaginative memorabili.

Parole chiave: metafora, cognizione, linguaggio figurato, immagine, simulazione.

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Abstract

The present paper explores the cognitive and visual potential of figurative language, focusing on metaphor, starting from Aristotle's insights (4th century BCE). The philosopher was the first to define metaphor as the transposition of an improper name, identifying it as a linguistic and conceptual device capable of revealing ontological similarities and appropriately transgressing the literal use of language. According to Aristotle, metaphor is not merely a rhetorical ornament but a cognitive tool that expands knowledge by creating semantic relationships and formulating concepts through processes such as the transfer from genus to species and analogy. This study focuses on the imagistic property of metaphor, which allows abstract concepts to be "placed before the eyes," generating mental images and facilitating understanding. This visual dimension, anticipating modern theories on visual imagery and motor simulation, gives metaphor a surprising expressive power, capable of evoking action and movement even in inanimate entities. The most effective metaphors activate bodily and pre-reflective knowledge, transforming linguistic experience into a multisensory process. Figurative language thus becomes an interpretative adventure that stimulates ingenuity, produces aesthetic pleasure, and leaves lasting traces in the mind of the interpreter. However, understanding metaphors requires skill and practice: grasping their meaning involves refining perception and believing in their transformative power. In conclusion, metaphor emerges as a protean phenomenon, combining verbal and visual dimensions to generate memorable cognitive and imaginative experiences.

Keywords: metaphor, cognition, figurative language, image, simulation.

1. Il "porre davanti agli occhi" e altre scoperte aristoteliche

Le potenzialità cognitive del linguaggio figurato sono state rilevate, per la prima volta nella storia, da Aristotele (IV secolo a.C.): la metafora è valorizzata come una figura del pensiero che ha il merito di proiettarsi in una dimensione visuale e di esercitare un'autorevolezza espressiva la cui portata è giunta fino ai giorni nostri. E la prima definizione aristotelica della metafora, «Metafora è una trasposizione di un nome improprio (*onómatos allotríou epiphorá*) o da genere a specie, o da specie a genere, o da specie a specie o per analogia» (Aristotele 2010 [IV sec.]: 57b, 6-9), diventa così un manifesto teorico sugli utilizzi non letterali del linguaggio. Trasposizione che potrebbe essere intesa come una trasgressione dell'uso proprio[1] e, in tal senso, la metafora «È un dispositivo linguistico e concettuale essenziale per scoprire un rapporto ontologico, una somiglianza che c'è effettivamente tra gli enti e che consente di trasgredire in modo *pertinente* l'uso proprio del linguaggio» (*Ibid*.: 320).
Inoltre, la metafora è in grado di spostare e creare relazioni semantiche tra le parole e i sintagmi allo scopo di ampliare la conoscenza (Aristotele 1996 [IV sec.]: III, 10, 1410b) e per questo si configura come uno strumento cognitivo in grado di formulare concetti. Pensiamo, ad esempio, al concetto di "stare fermo" che, tra i vari modi dello stare fermi - "stare all'ancora", come in «La mia nave sta ferma laggiù» (Aristotele 2010 [IV sec.]: 21, 57b, 6) - si attiva quando si utilizza un concetto generale per intenderne uno più specifico (il trasferimento da genere a specie).
In tale figura è ulteriormente connaturata una proprietà imagistica che permette di visualizzare quei concetti troppo astratti per essere compresi. Nella *Retorica* il filosofo discute la metafora per analogia (*kat'analoghian*) che, tra i processi di formazione del linguaggio figurato, è quello che rende maggiormente visibile il formarsi di una metafora (Ervas & Gola 2016: 12); e descrive il meccanismo espressivo definito come «porre davanti agli occhi» (*poiein pro ommaton*) (Aristotele 1996 [IV sec.]: III, 10, 1411a2) che mette in luce la capacità di sintesi, di "abbreviazione" conoscitiva della metafora determinandone il carattere di sorpresa, di originalità e di scarto rispetto alla norma,secondo il commento di Daniele Guastini (Aristotele

[1] Regolata, tuttavia, dalla distinzione aristotelica in generi e specie secondo Guastini (Aristotele, 2010 [IV sec.]: 314).

2010 [IV sec.]: 330). Vi sono anche le "metafore-immagine" (caratterizzate da una relazione logica di sostituzione da specie a specie) la cui struttura non è sintattica ma puramente lessicale e il loro profilo è quello di essere massimamente icastiche, di creare un effetto visivo e di produrre una presenza immediata (Aristotele 2010 [IV sec.]: III 11, 1411b20–1412a17). È il caso dell'espressione figurata che mette a confronto un giudice con un altare[2] che ci pone "davanti agli occhi" quegli aspetti più significativi che distinguono un "vero" giudice, come la sacralità della sua missione, l'onestà che deve caratterizzarlo e il coraggio che lo deve sostenere.
Inoltre, tale proprietà imagistica può riferirsi alle parole che rappresentano un oggetto in azione. Sono le metafore assai "luminose" quelle che ci mettono di fronte alle cose perché capaci di rievocare nella mente dell'interprete un'azione, e abili nel descrivere, anche qualcosa di inanimato, nella dimensione dell'agire, del movimento. Aristotele, pur non conoscendo le teorie sulla dimensione corporea del linguaggio e nello specifico l'ipotesi della simulazione motoria sviluppate nell'ambito delle neuroscienze (Gallese 2005, Gallese & Sinigaglia 2010) con le riflessioni sopra esposte pare quasi esserne stato un antesignano. L'esperienza del "porre davanti agli occhi", infatti, si avvicina alla descrizione del fenomeno del *visual imagery* (Carston 2010, 2018), ovvero la capacità che il linguaggio possiede di attivare un'immagine mentale, riproducendo l'esperienza del vedere una scena sia a livello fenomenologico sia in termini di simulazione. Anche l'altro aspetto, relativo al ruolo dell'azione, sembra creare una connessione con il paradigma della simulazione. Difatti, secondo il filosofo, le metafore particolarmente efficaci sono proprio quelle che descrivono qualcosa, anche e soprattutto qualcosa di inanimato, nella dimensione dell'azione - frutto dell'insieme di conoscenze motorie immediate e pre-riflessive che ci accomunano come organismi della medesima specie (Cuccio *et al.* 2013: 78).
Le intuizioni di Aristotele rimasero un unicum tra le riflessioni filosofiche dedicate alla componente visuale del linguaggio, bisognerà attendere qualche secolo prima che il discorso riprenda a pieno ritmo riqualificando la stessa attività del vedere immagini come processo metaforico del pensiero.

2. Le attivazioni imagistiche del pensiero: il caso delle immagini mentali

Gli effetti immaginativi generati dal linguaggio emergono, dunque, nelle sequenze di comprensione degli enunciati metaforici e nei modi figurati del pensare. La possibilità che un'interprete voglia vedere e interpretare un'immagine ora come una cosa, ora come un'altra (*sehen als*) è stata discussa anche da Wittgenstein (1958 [1953]: 193-194): pensiamo alla figura di Jastrow che si presta al gioco immaginativo del vedere, ora una testa di coniglio, ora di anatra mettendo in luce la capacità di ragionamento in senso metaforico.
Il potenziale imagistico evidenzia la natura visiva della metafora e pone in secondo ordine la sua componente concettuale. Secondo Donald Davidson la metafora non permetterebbe di evocare dei contenuti cognitivi, bensì delle immagini mentali che dispongono di un aspetto differente rispetto ai concetti. I concetti possono essere codificati dal punto di vista linguistico, mentre le immagini faticosamente si inquadrano nel linguaggio codificato: «A picture is not worth a thousand words, or any other number. Words are the wrong currency to exchange for a picture» (Davidson 1978: 46). Tali formulazioni visive che nascono nella mente non si delineano come "ritratti" in senso stretto di ciò che vediamo, né sono il risultato dell'attività percettiva del vedere. Si tratta di rappresentazioni mentali accompagnate da

[2] Aristotele ha tratto l'immagine metaforica dal filosofo matematico Archita (Aristotele 2010 [IV sec.]: 1412a12-4).

informazione sensoria priva di un diretto stimolo esterno, che sono rievocate e indotte a vivere una qualche nuova situazione dello stimolo originale (Pearson *et al.* 2015). Esse, dunque, sono il risultato degli effetti non proposizionali del linguaggio, cioè di quella tipologia di enunciati figurativi o letterari che si distinguono per la varietà delle sfumature espressive e la capacità di attivare meccanismi percettivi, emozionali e sensorimotori (Wilson & Carston 2019). Nella metafora morta *He was burned up* 'Era furibondo/uscì dai gangheri' sono evidenti le potenzialità visive del linguaggio: «When the metaphor was active, we would have pictured fire in the eyes or smoke coming out of the ears» (Davidson 1978: 38). Come un effetto secondario della loro elaborazione linguistica e pragmatica, dunque, l'interprete può immaginare un contenuto visivo nella mente che si attiva in modo automatico; e alla pari degli effetti cognitivi proposizionali (*Ibid*.: 46), anche gli effetti imagistici che ne derivano acquisiscono una notevole rilevanza. Inoltre, come non pensare alle sollecitazioni imagistiche che alcune metafore nuove possono creare nella mente di chi le percepisce: nell'enunciato riportato da Robyn Carston, citando Lynne Tirrell, *If you find a student with a spark of imagination, water it,* 'Se trovi uno studente con una scintilla di immaginazione, incoraggialo', l'interpretazione dell'espressione metaforica evidenziata "visivamente" dai concetti *spark*'scintilla' e *water* 'acqua' mantiene attivo il suo significato letterale (Carston 2010: 307).

La capacità di formulare o meno un immaginario visivo determina la distinzione tra due ampie categorie di metafore: le *image-permitting metaphors* la cui comprensione avviene senza un'ulteriore costruzione immaginativa da parte di chi le fruisce, e quelle che, invece, richiedono la realizzazione di un'immagine, che sia visuale, tattile, uditiva, denominate *image-demanding metaphors*. Tra queste ultime si analizzi l'enunciato *He wiped the floor with me*: il verbo *to wipe* in senso letterale significa pulire, traducibile in senso figurato con 'Egli mi ha sconfitto', pronunciato da Wittgenstein al fine di descrivere il suo primo incontro con Frege, che fornisce con chiara evidenza una brillante immagine della superiorità intellettuale del maestro e dell'autorità che esercita sull'allievo (Green 2017).

L'attivazione immagistica può essere innescata anche durante il processo di comprensione di una metafora visiva, quando il *visual mental imagery* (Nanay 2016) agisce alla stessa stregua dell'inferenza nell'ambito verbale: il "vedere" manca di un immediato *input* sensoriale e si distingue dalla percezione che invece è la registrazione di uno stimolo fisicamente presente (Kosslyn *et al.* 1995). Tutto ciò che si può immaginare riguarda l'abilità delle interpreti a riattivare e manipolare le rappresentazioni visive in assenza di un corrispondente stimolo visivo (Ganis & Shendan 2011). La produzione di immagini mentali proviene dalla memoria, dall'abilità di rievocare per immagini, e agisce sotto il controllo della volontà (può essere attivata o meno), a differenza del processare percettivo obbligatorio e involontario.

La messa in funzione di immagini mentali è necessaria per comprendere quelle metafore visive in cui uno dei due domini non si vede: infatti, per capire la *image-demanding metaphor* che promuove l'evento World Environment Day (2013)[3] l'osservatrice può visualizzare nella sua mente gli aspetti visuali e tattili dell'immagine che osserva, quindi, una pancia in gravidanza che corrisponde al dominio sorgente non visibile, ma anche l'azione metaforica di accarezzare una pancia in gravidanza, al posto dell'abbracciare un albero (Ervas 2019).

L'esperienza di visione che si viene a creare grazie alle proprietà espressive del linguaggio metaforico non è l'unico modo che abbiamo per saggiare la conoscenza del mondo che abitiamo. Altri elementi in gioco arricchiscono lo sguardo e sfidano le nostre abilità cognitive.

[3]L'immagine è consultabile al link: https://adsspot.me/media/prints/world-environment-day-mother-nature-4e4771ec0a0b (10/12/2024)

3. L'esperienza corporea durante i processi di comprensione del linguaggio metaforico

Come dimostra l'ipotesi della cognizione incarnata (Varela *et al.* 1992), gli individui sperimentano il significato delle esperienze attraverso i loro corpi: infatti, i nostri corpi e il loro utilizzo al fine di interagire con il mondo e con le persone intorno a noi serve come base per il modo in cui formiamo le idee e le comunichiamo agli altri. Le nostre esperienze percettive, motorie ed emotive giocano un importante ruolo nel modellare come parliamo, pensiamo e interagiamo con le persone, gli oggetti e la realtà che ci circonda. Quando percepiamo un'azione che ha un suo svolgimento, non ci limitiamo a vedere o sentire quell'azione, bensì la "sperimentiamo" e la comprendiamo anche attraverso la nostra corporeità. Come hanno mostrato gli studi sui neuroni specchio, vedere un'azione determina un'attivazione delle parti del cervello che sono coinvolte nel movimento, nell'elaborazione degli stimoli sensoriali e nelle emozioni (Fadiga *et al.* 1995; Gallese *et al.* 1996). A tal riguardo, è stato dimostrato che osservare un soggetto che svolge un'azione, come quella di colpire una palla, attiva la corteccia motoria correlata a quel movimento (l'area della corteccia cerebrale pre-motoria che controlla anche il movimento della gamba e del piede); e per giunta questa attivazione si verifica anche durante l'ascolto di una narrazione che comprende quella determinata azione, quando ad esempio un soggetto racconta di quando ha colpito un pallone durante una partita (Tettamanti *et al.* 2005). Anche i concetti astratti sono per lo più incarnati, spesso attraverso il linguaggio metaforico, e le nostre interazioni corporee con il mondo intorno a noi forniscono le motivazioni per i modi metaforici in cui parliamo di concetti astratti e di emozioni. Impariamo ad associare certe esperienze corporee con particolari concetti astratti ed emozioni, e questo ci permette di usare l'uno per rappresentare in termini metaforici l'altro. Questi utilizzi del linguaggio spiegano il perché parliamo di "sentirci giù" quando siamo depressi, e perché parliamo di vicinanza emotiva come se fosse una vicinanza in senso fisico. Tali espressioni hanno l'abilità di provocare delle risposte sensomotorie che corrispondono all'azione fisica di "guardare indietro" e all'esperienza fisica di "vicinanza" (Littlemore 2019: xiii-xiv).

Secondo Gallese e Lakoff (2005) la conoscenza concettuale è incarnata, ovvero è mappata all'interno del nostro sistema sensomotorio: esso fornisce una struttura al contenuto concettuale e caratterizza anche il contenuto semantico dei concetti nei termini di come funzioniamo con i nostri corpi nel mondo. Nella loro ricerca gli studiosi mostrano che "immaginare" e "fare" usano un substrato neurale condiviso, e lo stesso substrato neurale utilizzato nell'immaginare è impiegato nel comprendere. L'immaginazione, come il percepire e il fare, è incarnata, cioè strutturata dalla interazione con il mondo che avviene attraverso il nostro corpo e il nostro cervello. La capacità che possediamo di immaginare di afferrare si avvale dello stesso substrato neurale dell'azione e della percezione dell'afferrare. L'immaginare è, dunque, una forma di simulazione - una simulazione mentale di un'azione o di una percezione dal momento in cui utilizza molti degli stessi neuroni impiegati per agire o percepire realmente (Gallese 2003).

L'espressione metaforica *He grasped the idea,* 'Egli afferrò l'idea' determinerebbe, in chi l'ascolta, l'attivazione di quelle aree cerebrali correlate alla presa motoria. Dalle evidenze scientifiche emerge quanto la capacità di immaginare in senso visivo e motorio abbia una natura incarnata; è stato dimostrato, infatti, che l'allenamento mentale di un esercizio fisico induce un aumento della forza muscolare tale da essere comparato a quello ottenuto da un esercizio compiuto realmente (Yue & Cole 1992). Quando ci impegniamo nell'immaginare

l'esecuzione di una determinata azione, diversi parametri corporei si comportano in modo simile a quando effettivamente svolgiamo le stesse azioni.[4]
Alcune metafore comportano una simulazione di tipo sensoriale (Lacey *et al.* 2012), oltre che motoria, che può determinare un'esperienza di piacere, o di dolore in chi le fruisce. Ciò vuol dire che nella fase di intendimento linguistico, oltre ai fenomeni della simulazione motoria e della immaginazione visiva, alcune espressioni metaforiche possono attivare per via diretta anche le nostre aree sensoriali attraverso un processo di simulazione. Chi fruisce della metafora, quindi, può provare immediatamente e direttamente delle sensazioni, che inevitabilmente susciteranno anche un'impressione di piacere o di dolore. La metafora ben congegnata è quella che sollecita in maniera immediata e veloce le nostre comuni esperienze motorie e sensoriali e, sulla base di queste, riesce a produrre una nuova conoscenza in chi la legge. Tanto più efficace sarà una metafora quanto più essa sarà in grado di attivare la simulazione di un'esperienza sensoriale e quanto maggiore sarà il grado di piacere o di dolore che è in grado di suscitare in chi se ne avvale. Un esempio in tal senso è costituito dalla celebre metafora shakespeariana *Juliet is the sun*, che evidenzia una sua rappresentazione sensoriale in quanto richiama e attiva in noi la simulazione dell'esperienza, per la gran parte dei casi piacevole, del calore del sole sulla pelle. La simulazione sensoriale e l'esperienza di piacere o di dolore potrebbero sottostare all'esperienza di "risonanza" che spesso caratterizza alcune forme d'arte, come la poesia o la letteratura, e che potrebbe spiegare la loro efficacia e immediatezza comunicativa; difatti la sollecitazione di un'esperienza di piacere o dolore può portare la lettrice ad empatizzare con le narrazioni testuali e con le vite dei suoi personaggi (Cuccio *et al*. 2013: 79).
È dunque la vividezza del linguaggio figurato a sollecitare i meccanismi di comprensione e a comporre, come discuteremo nel prossimo paragrafo, inedite esperienze di visione che rivitalizzano la mente.

4. Vedere è agire

Gli individui abitano un mondo spaziale tridimensionale, interagiscono con gli oggetti che li circondano in una realtà immersiva. L'agire e il percepire la realtà circostante sono regolati dai rapporti che si instaurano nello spazio vissuto. Le relazioni che ognuno di noi può instaurare con l'ambiente sono orientate dal modo in cui vediamo e da come agiamo: «We right to think that perceptual experience informs us about the world we act in and that we act in the very world we perceive» (Clark 2007: 590). Quello che vediamo ogni giorno, le nostre esperienze che ci coinvolgono dal punto di vista visivo richiedono un impegno percettivo strettamente legato all'elaborazione dell'azione (Clark 2007, Nanay 2013). Come suggeriscono diversi studiosi (Wollheim 1998, Nanay 2018, Ferretti & Marchi 2021) le rappresentazioni impiegate nella percezione delle immagini sono rappresentazioni percettive e non si configurano come atteggiamenti proposizionali (come credenze o stati metacognitivi). Si tratta, pertanto, di rappresentazioni generate dai nostri flussi visivi coinvolti nel riconoscimento visivo (Nanay 2015, Ferretti 2018). Se riteniamo che la percezione visiva sia intimamente intrecciata all'azione e le rappresentazioni coinvolte nella percezione delle immagini siano percettive, e quindi visive, allora la percezione delle immagini, come percezione visiva, dovrebbe essere correlata all'azione. La visione, dunque, svolge un ruolo

[4]Ad esempio, la frequenza cardiaca e la frequenza respiratoria aumentano durante l'immaginazione motoria dell'esercizio fisico; come nell'esercizio fisico reale, aumentano linearmente con l'aumento dello sforzo immaginato (cf. Decety *et al.* 1991).

determinante in quanto facilita l'azione attraverso la percezione delle possibilità di interazione con gli oggetti reali nell'ambiente. Grazie alla visione possiamo percepire gli oggetti come potenziali obiettivi per l'interazione motoria, rappresentati nei termini delle loro proprietà manipolabili e delle azioni specifiche che essi consentono. Anche se non interagiamo immediatamente con questi oggetti, il nostro sistema visivo riesce a rappresentarli in modo da agevolare possibili azioni motorie. Un input visivo è quindi tradotto in output motorio andando a strutturare le nostre rappresentazioni motorie (Nanay 2013, Ferretti 2023).
Da quanto discusso emerge come le nostre azioni plasmino la nostra percezione visiva modificando in modo dinamico l'elaborazione delle informazioni visive. Attraverso il movimento comprendiamo meglio il mondo che ci è vicino, apprezzandone i cambiamenti di prospettiva nella stimolazione sensoriale a seconda del modo in cui articoliamo i nostri movimenti e di come strutturiamo le nostre interazioni con l'ambiente. Come alcune teorie sulla percezione basata sull'azione suggeriscono (Briscoe & Grush 2015), la nostra percezione è legata profondamente alle nostre azioni e la comprensione che abbiamo del mondo è plasmata da interazioni sensorimotorie.
Vi sono esperienze di visione in cui chi osserva può mettere in gioco il suo comprendere percettivo e il suo muoversi nello spazio al fine di capire il reale significato degli oggetti rappresentati. Come durante l'approccio all'opera d'arte *The Ambassadors*[5] realizzata da Hans Holbein il Giovane. Qui il pittore ha fatto ricorso all'effetto ottico dell'anamorfismo, tipologia di rappresentazione pittorica diffusa nel Cinquecento e nel Seicento, che crea un inganno visivo, in quanto la proiezione sul piano dell'immagine si presenta in modo distorto a tal punto che il soggetto originale si può riconoscere soltanto se la figura è osservata secondo certe condizioni. Quando la spettatrice si trova difronte alla scena rappresentata nella tavola, percepisce una specie di sbavatura grigia nella parte centrale inferiore dello spazio pittorico che può 'trasformarsi' in altro soltanto se, osservandola, cambia la sua prospettiva di osservazione attraverso il movimento corporeo. L'esperienza di comprensione sensorimotoria, quindi, permette a chi osserva di percepire realmente l'oggetto raffigurato per quello che è, ovvero un teschio che ha assunto una forma nello spazio pittorico e risulta visibile a patto che chi lo fruisca sposti la sua traiettoria di visione: difatti «The skull is not perceived as such until the painting is viewed obliquely» (Vishwanath *et al*. 2005: 1408).
La rilevanza che può assumere la componente motoria nella costruzione del significato delle rappresentazioni visive può essere testata anche nella tassonomia delle metafore visive:[6]

1. Nella metafora visiva "di moto" (*motion visual metaphor*), nella sua componente ibrida,[7] si illustra un moto fisico (un evento che non è azione orientata ad uno scopo), ad esempio lo scioglimento del pianeta terra come un cono gelato (Figura 1a).
2. Nella metafora visiva "di movimento" (*movement visual metaphor*) si raffigura un organismo che si muove (compie un'azione che non è orientata ad uno scopo), ad esempio il camminare in equilibrio su un filo (Figura 1b).
3. Nella metafora visiva "motoria" (*motor visual metaphor*) – nella sua componente contestuale[8] - l'azione raffigurata è guidata da un movimento orientato ad uno scopo, ad esempio il

[5] Immagine consultabile al link <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambasciatori_(Holbein_il_Giovane)#/media/File:Hans_Holbein_the_Younger_-_The_Ambassadors_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg>, Internet (10/12/2024).

[6] Ne hanno discusso Francesca Ervas, Gabriele Ferretti, *A New Motor-based Classification of Visual Metaphors*, (conference presentation Sifa, *Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy*, Alessandria, 08/09/23).

[7] Ci riferiamo alla *Hybrid visual metaphor* in cui i domini sorgente e target della metafora sono fusi in un'unica componente (Forceville 1996, 2008).

[8] Ci riferiamo alla *Contextual visual metaphor* in cui l'oggetto che rappresenta la sorgente sostituisce l'oggetto che rappresenta il target, o viceversa (*Ibid.*).

movimento delle mani che abbracciano la corteccia dell'albero nell'immagine che promuove un comportamento sostenibile nei confronti di madre natura (Figura 1c).

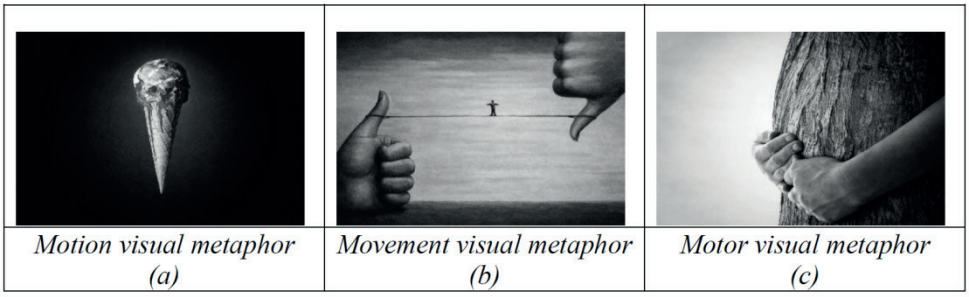


Fig. 1: Classificazione delle metafore visive motorie.[9]

Da questa proposta di classificazione si evince ulteriormente la vividezza del linguaggio metaforico che rafforza l'immaginare percettivo e può stimolare la visione a tal punto da proporre all'interprete un cambio di prospettiva nell'agire. Nella terza tipologia di metafore visive, infatti, l'azione rappresentata ha un impatto così sorprendente agli occhi di chi l'ammira tale da favorire un comportamento costruttivo per la collettività.

5. Multimodalità del linguaggio metaforico di ambito artistico

Sfide ancora più intriganti allo sguardo si manifestano anche nelle fasi di elaborazione e comprensione del linguaggio figurato d'impronta artistica.
Una metafora artistica possiede alcune caratteristiche che la accomunano ad una metafora visiva: può esprimersi in termini monomodali quando i domini target e source sono rappresentati nella medesima modalità, come spesso accade nelle opere d'arte prive di titolazione in cui la componente visiva è dominante. Oppure essa si può distinguere per la sua componente multimodale, quando target e source sono raffigurati esclusivamente o prevalentemente in differenti modalità, che possono includere non solo le modalità visive e verbali – il titolo dell'opera o la presenza di enunciati verbali inseriti nella cornice visiva - ma anche le modalità acustiche, tattili e olfattive (Forceville *et al.* 2009).
Essa ha una finalità estetica, riesce a veicolare la bellezza e se ben progettata sollecita le comuni esperienze motorie e sensoriali di chi la apprezza creando un effetto di risonanza. È necessario dedicare del tempo alla sua contemplazione al fine di indagarne il senso, solo in tal modo l'esperienza si può arricchire nella sua componente di polisensorialità. E le sollecitazioni visive e motorie che un'immagine artistica è in grado di attivare nella mente dell'interprete si trasformano in arricchimento conoscitivo. Nel processo di ricerca volto alla risoluzione dell'enigma visuale è implicato uno sforzo cognitivo che viene ricompensato dal piacere provato dall'osservatrice. Quello che viene percepito non è neutro, lascia un profondo segno nell'immaginazione e nella memoria: un'immagine artistica è così vitale che può contribuire a rafforzare l'immaginario sociale e culturale di una comunità (Guerrieri *et al.* 2023, Guerrieri 2022). Come esempio, osserviamo l'opera in figura 2 dal titolo *Verso il traguardo*, realizzata dall'artista Gianfranco Malchiodi nel 2013, che ad un primo sguardo raffigura dei fantini in corsa sui loro cavalli. In realtà l'immagine non veicola soltanto una

[9] Immagini realizzate con supporto di software di intelligenza artificiale.

passione sportiva in atto in quanto, come si precisa in una targhetta esplicativa, "…gli Operatori corrono verso la cura e i Malati verso la guarigione…". Pertanto, parlando in termini metaforici potremmo individuare la seguente metafora LA GUARIGIONE/LA CURA È (COME) UNA CORSA DI CAVALLI, in cui il dominio target corrisponde alla guarigione/cura e l'ambito sportivo corrisponde al dominio sorgente. Di conseguenza, coloro che lavorano e si adoperano per la cura (dottori, operatori sanitari) sono intesi come dei fantini che gareggiano verso il traguardo; anche la resa cromatica suggerisce la metafora dal momento in cui alcuni di loro indossano abiti bianchi mescolati all'azzurro delle divise da competizione. Così anche i pazienti dell'ospedale sono interpretati come sportivi orientati all'obiettivo della guarigione. L'immagine risulta nel complesso edificante non solo per i soggetti che intende raffigurare e per quali è destinata, ma anche per altri destinatari che l'osservano sotto molteplici punti di vista. L'opera può essere stimolante in senso acustico: la mente, infatti, potrebbe immaginare lo scalpitìo degli zoccoli dei cavalli incorporato alle incitazioni dei partecipanti alla gara. E di conseguenza il rumore diventa entusiasmo che stimola in senso motorio l'interprete che, alla pari dei medici e dei pazienti, si sente partecipe della medesima situazione "pronta" a fare la sua parte quando si presenterà l'occasione.



Fig. 2: *Verso il traguardo* (di Gianfranco Malchiodi),
Ospedale Civile di Legnano – donazione 2013.[10]

6. Una riflessione, in conclusione

Il presente contributo ha riflettuto sulla natura proteiforme del linguaggio metaforico che esercita un potenziale espressivo nelle sue componenti verbali e visive. Se una metafora brilla di luce propria può mettere in funzione in chi beneficia del suo potere la capacità di creare nella mente esperienze immaginifiche e di simulare esperienze motorie in modo repentino e imprevisto.
La fruizione delle metafore sfida l'interprete, raffina l'ingegno esponendo la mente ad un gioco interpretativo che può cambiare per sempre il suo approccio alla vita. L'esperienza di ascolto di un enunciato metaforico, oppure l'osservazione di un'immagine che contiene elementi metaforici nel suo costrutto visivo diventa così stimolante da rendere la fruizione un'avventura generatrice di piacere capace di lasciare un segno indelebile durante e dopo

[10] Immagine fotografica realizzata da chi scrive.

l'approccio. La comprensione del linguaggio figurato è dunque un'attività polisensoriale che può diventare memorabile.
Quanto di magico viene sprigionato da una metafora, però, può non costituire un patrimonio capace di essere accolto da tutte le destinatarie, infatti l'esercizio cognitivo di fruizione e interpretazione va saputo praticare. Spesso bisogna imparare a cogliere ciò che le metafore hanno da dire e da mostrare, a volte è necessario compiere uno sforzo per affinare l'udito e lo sguardo e impegnarsi a credere all'impatto sorprendente che esse possono determinare.

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Chapter 22.
A Visual Pathway towards Metaphorical Approaches to Sustainability Advocacy

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Abstract

This chapter examines how metaphors can support sustainability advocacy by helping to move audiences from passive awareness to meaningful action. While facts and data remain essential, they rarely generate the emotional resonance required to sustain engagement. Metaphors, by contrast, function as cognitive and communicative tools that shape how the public understands environmental challenges, often with greater impact than statistics alone. The chapter explores how widely used conceptual frames, such as "THE EARTH IS A PATIENT" or "CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BATTLE", influence public perception, attention and motivation, and considers the ethical implications of relying on such imagery. Particular attention is given to the dichotomy between creating urgency and avoiding compassion fatigue. The chapter concludes by arguing that positively framed visual metaphors may offer a more effective and sustainable path for long-term engagement with environmental issues.

Keywords: Sustainability advocacy; Visual metaphors; Public engagement; Environmental communication; Positive framing.

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1. Introduction

How can advocacy lead from awareness to action in the quest for sustainability? The answer may lie not in the data the campaigns present or the scientific facts they illustrate, but rather in the metaphors they use. Metaphors are both cognitive and communicative tools that can shape the public's understanding of questions of environmental protection and policy in ways that dry facts or statistics may not. Indeed, through the use of compelling metaphors, sustainability campaigns can create a certain emotional resonance and a sense of urgency, potentially transforming passive awareness into proactive and sustained engagement with initiatives aimed at raising awareness on environmental issues and promoting sustainability.
This chapter is aimed at investigating the role of metaphors in sustainability advocacy, addressing the ways in which visual metaphors, especially when framed positively, can engage public sentiment while also dealing with the risks of compassion fatigue (Sontag 2003). The chapter first examines how common metaphors such as "THE EARTH IS A PATIENT" or "CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BATTLE" contribute to shaping public perception, to then move to consider the ethical implications of their use. The discussion will explore how metaphors can either clarify or oversimplify the complexities of environmental issues. Finally, I will address the need for a balance in the use of metaphors between evoking urgency and offering hope, finally arguing that positive framing may be key to developing a long-term engagement towards sustainability within the general public.

2. Visual metaphors, advocacy and compassion fatigue

The use of visual metaphors in communication is an essential strategy to facilitate the comprehension and assimilation of complex messages by diverse audiences, often unfamiliar with technical jargon and field-specific expressions. The association of abstract concepts with familiar visual elements allows communicators to make otherwise difficult-to-understand information more accessible and relatable. In fields such as environmental protection and policy, the capacity to convey difficult ideas in a manner that resonates with a lay audience is particularly vital due to two main reasons: one is the controversial nature of the topic, which has led to polarized positions and often aggressive responses, such as climate change denial on one hand and ecoterrorism on the other (Falkenberg *et al.* 2022); the other is that, like similar objectives, raising awareness about sustainability does not merely require conveying complex ideas, but also convincing of the correctness of such ideas.
Metaphors have long been recognized as powerful cognitive tools that allow individuals to understand unfamiliar, unknown or complex domains through the lens of more familiar concepts. As it is well-known, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are not merely linguistic devices, but rather a fundamental mechanism of thought that shapes how people perceive and interact with the world. As extensions of this concept, visual metaphors leverage a particular imagery to establish connections between abstract ideas and tangible, recognizable elements. As stated beforehand, this approach can significantly enhance communication, especially towards audiences that lack prior expertise in the subject matter.
Examples may vary depending on the field. In public health communication, for instance, a campaign addressing the dangers of smoking might use a visual metaphor of a burning cigarette turning into a time bomb: this imagery draws on the familiar association between a time bomb and imminent danger, thereby framing the health risks in a way that is immediate and

understandable.[2] Visual metaphors allow the audience to quickly grasp the urgency of the message and potential consequences of the action object of the said message, without needing a detailed explanation of medical terminology or statistics. On the other hand, it is fundamental to underscore that, even though the use of visual metaphors can be highly effective, the impact of such communication depends significantly on how the initial message is framed and delivered. A key element of metaphoric communication is ensuring that the metaphor does not render the message overly intense or fear-inducing, which can lead to the disengagement of the audience and to the so-called "compassion fatigue" (Figley 1995). Sontag (2003) in particular argued that a certain weariness arises when individuals are repeatedly confronted with images and stories of pain, leading to a numbing effect. Sontag also suggests that the constant consumption of suffering, particularly through images, can dull the initial shock and emotional response, creating a sense of detachment. Compassion fatigue, therefore, could be defined as a defence mechanism, allowing individuals to distance themselves from the overwhelming reality of suffering when it becomes too much to bear. Research in health communication has shown that messages perceived as too frightening or insurmountable often result in defensive reactions, where the audience may dismiss the information as irrelevant or exaggerated (Witte 1992, Moussaoui *et al*. 2021, Hoor *et al.* 2025). Therefore, the modulation of communication is crucial to ensure that the message is received in a balanced manner, promoting reflection rather than avoidance.

In the specific context of sustainability advocacy, an effective example of the risks carried by overly intense messages is offered by environmental campaigns aimed at raising awareness about climate change. A visual metaphor that depicts Earth as an overheating kettle, for instance, may evoke a sense of urgency, but it remains within the realm of comprehensible action and does not convey a sense of danger together with the aforementioned urgency. Conversely, if one imagines images that depict the Earth as irreparably burning or drowning, such a message – rather than inducing urging and a call to action to the audience – might create an undesirable sense of hopelessness, leading the public to simply feel powerless. In such cases, the extreme nature of the metaphor, rather than raising awareness, can make the problem appear unsolvable and prompt a mental shutdown instead of motivating action. It is therefore crucial for communicators to strike a balance, using visual metaphors that emphasize the severity of an issue while also presenting the possibility of positive change.

It is in light of these considerations that the role of propositional messaging - where the information is presented in a manner that encourages positive, actionable responses - appears fundamental (Yus 2016). Propositional messaging emphasizes solutions or steps that can be taken to address the issue at hand, thereby making the audience feel empowered rather than overwhelmed. In the context of public health, for example, a campaign addressing the importance of vaccination could use a visual metaphor of a shield to represent the protective effects of vaccines: this metaphor not only conveys the concept of safety and prevention but also invites individuals to see vaccination as an empowering action they can take to protect themselves and their communities.[3] Framing the message in a positive and proactive manner, therefore, allows the campaign to counteract the fear and uncertainty that often surrounds discussions of infectious diseases and to make the audience more likely to engage with and act on the information.

The idea that that visual metaphors used in combination with positive framing can enhance audience engagement and prompt concrete actions has been explored in the scholarship.

[2] See https://signandpop.com/case/the-cigarette-time-bomb/

[3] See for instance the NHS "Protecting your Children through Vaccination" campaign at https://crewkernehc.co.uk/practice-news/protecting-your-children-through-vaccination/ (2023) (1.12.2025).

Forceville (2008) argues that visual metaphors are particularly effective because they can bypass linguistic barriers, making them a universal tool for communication; and Ottatti *et al*. (2014) found that participants exposed to metaphorical framing were more likely to report a clear understanding of the health risks and were more inclined to adopt recommended behaviours. In light of these considerations, it is arguable that visual metaphors, particularly when combined with positive framing, can serve as a potent antidote to compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue, often characterised by emotional burnout and desensitisation towards suffering or crises due to prolonged exposure to distressing imagery or narratives, indeed poses a significant challenge to campaigns aimed at engaging the public in global issues such as climate change or environmental degradation. However, by reframing these issues through the use of visual metaphors that emphasise positive, hopeful, or constructive solutions, campaigns may mitigate the negative psychological impacts associated with compassion fatigue. The theoretical foundation for this argument lies in the aforementioned cognitive linguistic frameworks of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) as further elaborated by Forceville (2009). Campaigns that present sustainability challenges through metaphors that symbolise renewal, resilience, or collective action can encourage a reframing of the audience's perception of the problem: rather than overwhelming the public with images of destruction or irreversible harm, positive visual metaphors can reorient their attention towards achievable goals, shared responsibility, and long-term benefits. In this regard, such metaphors function as cognitive tools that reshape the narrative around sustainability in ways that invite active participation rather than passive despair. Moreover, as suggested by Black (1962), the power of metaphor lies not only in its illustrative capacity but also in its potential to create new perspectives and promote novel interpretations. Positive framing, when it is employed alongside visual metaphors in sustainability campaigns, opens up conceptual spaces where environmental issues are not only presented as problems to be lamented, but also as opportunities for innovation and cooperation. Therefore, in theoretical terms, the use of visual metaphors combined with positive framing presents a promising strategy to sustain public engagement, potentially inoculating audiences against the detrimental effects of compassion fatigue while promoting a more inclusive, hopeful vision of collective action for sustainability. This approach aligns with Vidali's (2010) insights into the ethical implications of metaphors in public discourse, particularly in relation to inclusivity and emotional engagement. Sustainability campaigns, should they steer away from metaphors that evoke fear or guilt, can construct more accessible and empowering narratives, ensuring that the audience feels as part of the solution rather than paralysed by the scale of the problem. Consequently, the deliberate combination of visual metaphors with positive framing not only increases the persuasive power of sustainability advocacy but also addresses the ethical need to protect audiences from emotional exhaustion and disengagement.

3. A metaphoric approach to sustainability advocacy?

In communication strategies that aim to promote specific values, such as sustainability campaigns, metaphors can – and, in the intentions of campaigners, should – influence how the public perceives, interprets, and reacts to information. The use of metaphors in these contexts is, naturally, far from impartial: indeed, metaphors in such campaigns function as a deliberate framing device, aimed at highlighting certain aspects of reality while obscuring others. According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), metaphors shape thought by mapping the structure of one conceptual domain onto another: so when one uses a metaphor, such as "THE EARTH IS A PATIENT", the metaphor draws on the domain of healthcare (with its associations of illness, treatment, and recovery) to understand environ-

mental issues (amongst many, Herring 1996); similarly, when climate change is framed as a "battle," it suggests a conflict between opposing forces, encouraging people to think in terms of winners and losers, victories and defeats.[4] This metaphor might emphasize the need for decisive, forceful action against "enemies" of the environment, such as polluting industries. In contrast, when climate change is framed as a "journey," it implies a gradual process, highlighting the importance of long-term strategies and incremental progress.[5] The cognitive impact of these metaphorical frames is further reinforced by their emotional resonance. Metaphors indeed can evoke specific emotional responses that align with their framing (Gibbs 2006). A metaphor that portrays pollution as a "toxin" might evoke feelings of disgust and urgency, motivating individuals to support stricter regulations. On the other hand, a metaphor that frames environmental degradation as "NATURE'S SUFFERING" might evoke empathy and a sense of responsibility.

The choice of metaphor is thus a strategic decision, and the concept of framing is central to understanding how metaphors function in this context. According to Entman (1993: 52), framing involves selecting «some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described». In other words, framing is about emphasizing certain perspectives while downplaying others, effectively guiding the audience's attention and interpretation. Metaphors, both as linguistic as well as cognitive tools, serve as potent framing devices because they construct one thing in terms of another, thereby shaping how the audience perceives the subject at hand. In the context of sustainability campaigns, metaphors often portray the Earth as a "vulnerable patient" or a "wounded animal" in need of protection. These metaphors function to evoke empathy, responsibility, and urgency among the audience. When the Earth is framed as a "vulnerable patient", the metaphor encourages a sense of duty and intervention, suggesting that immediate action is necessary to "heal" the planet. Similarly, the "mother" metaphor implies a nurturing relationship, where caring for the Earth is akin to fulfilling familial duties. These metaphors, as stated beforehand, are not intended to be impartial descriptions of reality: they are in fact strategic choices aimed at shaping the emotional and moral response of the audience. Within this setting, campaigns often embrace metaphors that aim to raise awareness and aim at leading to changes in behaviour by the audience. They are inherently non-neutral in nature: the metaphors used in these campaigns reflect the underlying goals of the communicators, such as encouraging people to adopt more environmentally friendly practices or to support policy measures that address climate change.

Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011, 2013) effectively illustrate how certain metaphors can significantly influence the audience's reasoning and decision-making processes. If crime is described as a "beast", people would be more likely to support aggressive, punitive measures, whereas framing crime as a "virus" would lead to a preference for preventive measures. Similarly, in the context of sustainability, metaphors like "CARBON FOOTPRINT" or "GREEN REVOLUTION" shape the way people conceptualize environmental issues: a "footprint" metaphor suggests a tangible, measurable impact that can be reduced through individual actions, while a "revolution" metaphor evokes a sense of collective, transformative change. Metaphors like "SAVING THE PLANET" imply that the Earth is in imminent danger, neces-

[4] As in the 2025 EcoMENA campaign at https://www.ecomena.org/battling-climate-change/.

[5] For instance, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development "Entreprises pour l'Environnement" campaign, at https://www.wbcsd.org/resources/entreprises-pour-lenvironnement-how-to-embark-your-company-upon-its-climate-change-adaptation-journey/.

sitating urgent and heroic actions. This framing can inspire people to adopt more sustainable behaviours, such as reducing plastic use or supporting renewable energy.
However, as stated beforehand, this sort of metaphors can also create a sense of anxiety or fatalism if the audience perceives the threat as overwhelming. For instance, metaphors that frame climate action as a "RACE AGAINST TIME" might create a sense of urgency, but they can also lead to panic and fatalism if the audience perceives the challenge as insurmountable. Alternatively, metaphors that emphasize cooperation and collective effort, such as "JOINING HANDS TO HEAL THE EARTH", might provide a more constructive and inclusive approach to addressing environmental issues. As it has been argued in the previous section of this article, compassion fatigue is a concrete risk in campaigns of this sort. Activists and campaigners who are continually exposed to distressing information about environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, climate change, or social injustice may experience emotional exhaustion, leading to reduced motivation, cynicism, and a diminished ability to continue advocating for sustainability causes. Moreover, repeated exposure to distressing or urgent messages about environmental crises can obviously cause the public to become desensitized, driving to apathy or disengagement (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole 2009, Moser 2010). When people feel emotionally overwhelmed by the magnitude of environmental problems, they may disengage from actions that could contribute to sustainability, such as reducing consumption or supporting policy changes. This can hinder grassroots movements and efforts to mobilize communities (Reser & Swim 2011). Compassion fatigue may even lead to individuals withdrawing from the conversation altogether or becoming polarized, adopting more extreme views (either denial or radicalism) (Hoffman 2011), and reduce empathy toward those who are most affected by environmental issues, such as indigenous communities, small-scale farmers, or low-income groups disproportionately affected by climate change. Finally, a shift in messaging due to compassion fatigue may result in 'doomism' – that is, the belief that environmental damage is inevitable and irreversible (McGuire 2022).
It is also important to underscore that metaphors in sustainability discourses often carry implicit moral evaluations. When pollution is described as a "cancer" that "eats away" at the planet, the metaphor evokes a sense of moral corruption, suggesting that pollution is an inherently negative and harmful process, and this metaphorical framing aligns with a moral stance that prioritizes the health of the environment and positions human activity as a potentially destructive force. As pointed out beforehand, metaphors are hardly neutral in themselves, and are certainly not used in an unbiased manner in sustainability advocacy. In fact, metaphors as instruments of communication hold the capacity not only to illuminate the abstract but also to shape moral consciousness. This dual role of clarification and influence introduces an ethical dimension to the deployment of metaphors, especially in discourses of significant societal weight, such as sustainability. The core question is whether it is justifiable to use metaphors in ways that not only clarify complexity, but also steer the audience toward a predetermined moral stance. If one considers the metaphor of pollution as a "cancer" that "eats away" at the planet, this metaphor does more than capture the destructive nature of environmental degradation: as a matter of fact, it implicitly casts human activity as pathological, imbuing the conversation with a sense of moral transgression. The likening of pollution to illness frames the issue within a moral dichotomy: the "healthy" versus the "sick," the "natural" versus the "corrupted," the "moral" versus the "immoral." In this framing, metaphors become instruments of moral persuasion, directing audiences not only to grasp the gravity of the situation, but also to adopt an ethical stance. Here, what emerges is a problem of moral nature: on the one hand, metaphors such as these are indispensable for conveying urgency and creating a collective sense of responsibility; on the other hand, such metaphors risk distorting the complexity of the issues they seek to clarify: pollution is not a malignancy with a singular cause or a clear

ethical antagonist, but rather the result of a diverse range of human activities, policy decisions, and socio-economic factors. Simplifying this complexity into a moralised metaphor entails actively driving the audience toward a specific ethical conclusion – a conclusion that may foreclose critical engagement with the different sides of the debate on sustainability.
The ethical concern I raise, then, hinges on the potential for metaphors to manipulate the audience, rather than to merely clarify concepts. When metaphors are used to influence rather than illuminate, they engage in a form of moral coercion, not only aiding the audience's understanding of the issue but also directing their emotional and ethical responses towards a predetermined objective: the public is therefore not invited to deliberate or critically assess, but rather to simply assent to a set moral framework, thereby limiting the scope for dissent or alternative interpretations. From a theoretical standpoint, one must ask whether the moral weight of the issue at hand justifies the potential manipulation inherent in metaphorical framing. In contexts such as sustainability, where the stakes are undeniably high, the urgency of action might seem to warrant such persuasive strategies. However, to endorse the use of metaphors solely for their capacity to influence undermines the very ethos of ethical deliberation, which depends on the preservation of open and critical discourse.
The function of metaphor in ethical communication should be to enhance understanding, not to curtail the possibilities for reflective thought. Therefore, it is arguable that a moral use of metaphor would lie in its balance between clarity and openness: metaphors should enable the audience to comprehend the complexity of an issue while still preserving the space for independent ethical reasoning. When metaphors achieve this balance, they serve as facilitators of moral engagement (and one may argue) rather than tools of communication. It is therefore fundamental to constantly monitor and assess how metaphors are used in sustainability campaigns and to be aware of their potential to distort or oversimplify reality, even as they serve to mobilize public support for environmental causes.

4. Concluding remarks

In considering the role of metaphors in sustainability advocacy, it appears evident that they are not used merely as rhetorical embellishments or communicative tools, but serve in fact as cognitive and emotional framing devices aimed at shaping the public's perception and engagement. Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to explore how visual metaphors, especially when coupled with positive framing, can both convey complex ideas and combat compassion fatigue. These strategies are critical to maintaining public interest and emotional investment in long-term sustainability efforts.
As stated beforehand, in sustainability communication, metaphors such as "THE EARTH IS A PATIENT" or "CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BATTLE" are hardly impartial expressions: they are deliberate choices selected in order to shape the narrative around environmental issues. Indeed, these metaphors evoke emotional responses that influence the degree to which the audience feels compelled to act. For example, framing pollution as a "cancer" that "eats away" at the planet can evoke disgust and urgency, while also establishing a moral dichotomy between human activity as inherently harmful and nature as inherently pure. However, such metaphors also run the risk of oversimplifying complex realities and reducing very complex debates to rigid moral positions. The dual nature of metaphors requires ethical considerations for their use. On the one hand, visual metaphors can clarify abstract or technical issues, making them accessible to a broader audience; on the other hand, as discussed in Section 3 above, metaphors can also act as instruments of moral persuasion, steering audiences toward specific ethical positions. In the context of sustainability advocacy, this can be particularly effective in

mobilizing action, but may also foreclose critical engagement with the diverse aspects of the issue.

Furthermore, the danger of compassion fatigue may lead sustainability campaigns to an outcome diametrically opposite to their purported objectives. Repeated exposure to distressing images or urgent messages about environmental crises can desensitize audiences, leading to emotional exhaustion and disengagement which would be particularly problematic in the context of sustainability, where long-term public engagement is essential. However, as argued above, I believe that the solution does not lie in abandoning metaphors altogether but in carefully considering how they are framed. Positive framing, when combined with visual metaphors, can help mitigate the effects of compassion fatigue by emphasizing solutions and actionable steps, rather than focusing solely on the severity of the problem. As argued by Forceville (2008) and Vidali (2010), positive metaphors can create conceptual spaces where environmental challenges are not only problems to be feared but also opportunities for innovation, cooperation, and collective progress.

Ultimately, the goal of sustainability advocacy should be to stimulate and facilitate an informed and critical public engagement, not to limit discourse to a single moral framework. Metaphors can play a crucial role in this process, but they must be employed with care, balancing clarity with openness, and helping audiences understand the complexity of environmental issues while still preserving space for independent ethical reasoning.

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Chapter 23.
Le funzioni della metafora nell'ingiustizia epistemica nel disturbonarcisistico di personalità

Metaphor's Functions in Epistemic Injustice in Narcissistic Personality Disorder

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Abstract

L'uso della metafora è stato spesso criticato nell'ambito della comunicazione della salute poiché reifica e definisce la malattia con possibili conseguenze negative per il paziente. Le persone con disordine mentale sperimentano frequentemente la difficoltà a distinguere ciò che va attribuito al loro Sé e ciò che va attribuito alla malattia e, spesso, nel tentativo di comunicare tale esperienza, ricorrono al linguaggio metaforico. Alcuni studiosi suggeriscono l'uso del solo linguaggio letterale per parlare dell'esperienza della malattia, ma altri mettono in evidenza l'impossibilità di sbarazzarsi delle metafore nel pensiero umano stesso, oltre che nel linguaggio. Tuttavia, il tentativo di esprimere, a sé stessi e agli altri, la propria esperienza della malattia attraverso il linguaggio letterale, potrebbe causare il fenomeno dell'*ingiustizia epistemica* che indica un fallimento nell'attribuire intenzionalità al parlante, a causa della difficoltà a interpretare la propria esperienza, soprattutto nel caso della malattia mentale.
Dopo una prima ricostruzione dello stato dell'arte, si cercherà di capire se e come le varie funzioni della metafora (*naming*, *framing*, e *perspective changing*) nella narrazione delle persone con Disturbo Narcisistico di Personalità (DNP) possano modulare l'*ingiustizia epistemica* nell'attribuzione del significato del parlante con tale disturbo. Verrà presentato uno studio pilota sperimentale sulla percezione del parlante con DNP nell'utilizzo della metafora concettuale VANITÀ COME PERSONA. Si indagherà in particolare quanto i partecipanti allo studio pilota siano disposti a dare fiducia al parlante con DNP, quanto considerino appropriato il linguaggio metaforico per esprimere

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la propria condizione con DNP e quanto considerino il parlante con DNP che usa un linguaggio metaforico in grado di controllare le proprie azioni.

Parole chiave: ingiustizia epistemica, metafora, malattia mentale, disturbo narcisistico di personalità, narrazioni della malattia.

Abstract
The use of metaphor has often been criticized in Health Communication because it reifies and defines the disease with possible negative consequences for the patient. People with mental disorders frequently have trouble in distinguishing what it should be attributed to their Self and what it should be attributed to the disease and, often, to communicate this experience, they resort to metaphorical language.Some scholars suggest using only literal language to talk about the experience of illness, but others highlight the impossibility of eliminating metaphors in human thought itself, as well as in language. However, the attempt to express, to oneself and others, one's experience of illness through literal language could cause the phenomenon of epistemic injustice that shows a failure to attribute intentionality to the speaker, due to the difficulty in interpreting one's experience, especially in the case of mental illness. After a starting reconstruction of the state of the art, we will try to understand if and how the different functions of metaphor (naming, framing, and perspective changing) in the narration of people with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) can modulate the epistemic injustice in the attribution of meaning to the speaker with this Disorder. It will be presented an experimental pilot study on the perception of the speaker with NPD in the use of the conceptual metaphor VANITY AS A PERSON. We will investigate how much the participants in the pilot study are willing to trust the speaker with NPD, how much they consider metaphorical language appropriate to express their condition with NPD and how much they consider the speaker with NPD who uses metaphorical language ableto control his own actions.

Keywords: epistemic injustice, metaphor, mental illness, narcissistic personality disorder, illness narratives.

1. Introduzione[1]

Le persone con malattia mentale affrontano l'esperienza della malattia mentale anche con la difficoltà di comunicare ciò che accade loro e, talvolta, per parlare della malattia e del rapporto che hanno con essa, utilizzano metafore. Nell'ambito della comunicazione della salute, gli studiosi considerano l'utilizzo della metafora per parlare della malattia mentale da diverse prospettive teoriche. Alcune di queste, fortemente critiche, suggeriscono l'utilizzo del solo linguaggio letterale (Sontag 1978). Tuttavia, il tentativo di esprimere, a sé stessi e agli altri, l'esperienza della malattia attraverso il linguaggio letterale potrebbe causare il fenomeno dell'*ingiustizia epistemica* (Fricker 2007), ovvero un fallimento nell'attribuire al parlante la capacità di conoscere e rappresentare in modo adeguato sé stessi e la propria esperienza di vita. Presenteremo dapprima le diverse prospettive in merito all'uso della metafora per parlare della malattia mentale e illustreremo il fenomeno dell'*ingiustizia epistemica* nelle due accezioni di *ingiustizia della testimonianza* e *ingiustizia ermeneutica*. Illustreremo lo stato dell'arte degli studi sull'*ingiustizia epistemica* correlata alla malattia mentale (Crichton *et al.* 2017). In particolare, ci concentreremo sul fenomeno dell'*ingiustizia epistemica* nel disturbo narcisistico di personalità (DNP), ovvero il fallimento nell'attribuzione della capacità di interpretare il proprio vissuto a causa di una marginalizzazione delle risorse epistemiche.

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Dopo aver definito il DNP, proporremo uno studio pilota sulle funzioni che la metafora può svolgere nell'*ingiustizia ermeneutica* nel DNP, esaminando 1) l'ipotesi che l'utilizzo delle espressioni metaforiche possa ricoprire un ruolo importante nella narrazione dei parlanti con disturbo narcisistico di personalità, e 2) l'ipotesi che i proferimenti attribuiti a un parlante con disturbo narcisistico di personalità possano essere una cartina al tornasole del fenomeno dell'*ingiustizia epistemica.* Presenteremo infine le nostre conclusioni.

2. Metafora e malattia mentale

Le persone con malattia mentale sperimentano frequentemente l'*ambiguità tra il Sé e la malattia* (Dings 2019), cioè la difficoltà di esprimere l'esperienza della malattia per distinguere ciò che appartiene al loro sé e ciò che appartiene alla malattia e spesso, nel tentativo di comunicare tale esperienza, ricorrono al linguaggio immaginativo, specialmente metaforico (Ervas 2024). Il ruolo che la metafora può svolgere rappresenta un punto di partenza per le narrazioni di sé (Clark 2008), per il superamento dell'*inarticolabilità* e dell'*ineffabilità* (Kidd *et al.* 2017) dell'esperienza della malattia mentale. Inoltre, la metafora può costituire una nuova chiave di accesso in termini di pensabilità e di articolazione verbale di stati mentali ed emotivi che non trovano un corrispettivo nel linguaggio letterale (Ervas 2024) e che, talvolta, per loro natura, non sono intelligibili.
Già in passato alcuni studiosi hanno sostenuto che le metafore dovrebbero essere evitate poiché concretizzano entità metafisiche sconosciute, caratterizzandole in modi che non rispecchiano la verità (Dumarsais1988 [1730]). La personificazione della metafora, ad esempio, potrebbe incorrere nel rischio di reificazione della malattia e di possibili conseguenze negative per la percezione che il parlante ha della malattia (Ervas 2024). Per questo, Susan Sontag, nella sua opera *Illness as Metaphor*, del 1978, critica duramente l'uso della metafora. La malattia non è una metafora e propone l'eliminazione del linguaggio metaforico suggerendo l'uso del linguaggio letterale per parlarne in modo più veritiero.
L'eventualità di evitare l'utilizzo della metafora è stata messa in discussione dalla *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*, nel quadro della *cognizione incarnata* (*embodied cognition*, Lakoff e Johnson 1980). Da questo punto di vista, gli esseri umani non possono scegliere se pensare metaforicamente o meno poiché le metafore rappresentano un meccanismo cognitivo che funge da strumento di categorizzazione e costruzione di significati che riflette lo stretto legame che intercorre tra percezione corporea e cognizione. Tuttavia, questa teoria considera le *espressioni metaforiche* come strutture linguistiche superficiali riducendole a strutture concettuali sottostanti, con la perdita di alcuni aspetti linguistici che potrebbero essere rilevanti per comunicare l'esperienza della malattia mentale (Ervas 2021). Le strutture linguistiche delle metafore, infatti, non possono essere ridotte a un solo esempio di *espressione metaforica* poiché vengono estese nella narrazione del Sé per esprimere come la malattia agisce sul Sé.
Altri studiosi hanno criticato ancora l'utilizzo della metafora perché definisce la malattia e offre una finestra interpretativa (*framing*) con possibili ripercussioni per il parlante (Semino *et al*. 2018). Tuttavia, sostengono che la metafora può offrire *framing* alternativi rispetto all'esperienza della malattia (Semino *et al.* 2018). I diversi *framing* metaforici, importanti sia per la comunicazione, sia per il pensiero, esprimono e rinforzano i diversi modi di dare senso a particolari aspetti della vita e della malattia.

3. Ingiustizia epistemica e malattia mentale

Miranda Fricker, nella sua monografia *Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics of Knowing* (2007), sviluppa la nozione di *ingiustizia epistemica*, indicando il mancato riconoscimento di una persona nella sua capacità di soggetto epistemico. Distingue due accezioni di *ingiustizia epistemica*: l'*ingiustizia della testimonianza*, che consiste nel fallimento nell'attribuzione di credibilità a una persona in quanto appartenente a una classe sociale e l'*ingiustizia ermeneutica* che consiste nel fallimento nell'attribuzione di capacità interpretative al parlante, generando marginalizzazione nel tentativo di rendere intelligibile, a sé stessi e/o agli altri, la propria esperienza del mondo e degli altri.
Nell'ambito della malattia mentale (Crichton *et al.* 2017), l'*ingiustizia epistemica* si configura come la mancata attribuzione di credibilità a causa dell'identità sociale (*ingiustizia della testimonianza*), e/o dell'abilità di interpretare che cosa accade alle persone con malattia mentale che hanno risorse epistemiche diverse e marginalizzate (*ingiustizia ermeneutica*).
Esistono *condizioni globali* che contribuiscono a questo fenomeno, che possono interessare le persone a rischio o con diagnosi di qualsiasi malattia mentale (Crichton *et al.* 2017): 1) i problemi associati alla o causati dalla malattia mentale; 2) il maggior valore attribuito dagli operatori sanitari all'evidenza considerata oggettiva rispetto alle narrazioni delle persone con malattia mentale; 3) gli stereotipi negativi associati alla malattia mentale. Le *condizioni specifiche* risultano, invece, essere le conseguenze dovute alla particolare natura della malattia mentale.
Nel caso dell'*ingiustizia ermeneutica* la persona appartenente a un gruppo sociale *ermeneuticamente emarginato* si ritiene non possedere le risorse interpretative per comprendere o esprimere adeguatamente aspetti importanti della sua esperienza. La persona è lesa da questa mancanza di attribuzione di significato perché le viene negato il riconoscimento della capacità di comprendere tasselli importanti e distintivi della propria esperienza (Ritunnano 2022). Tale ingiustizia epistemica può comportare danni a livello psicologico ed esistenziale, causando un fallimento nella *creazione di significato* (comprendere e dare un senso alla propria esperienza); nella *comunicazione dell'esperienza* (trasmettere adeguatamente tale esperienza) e nell'*auto-interpretazione* (costruire la propria identità) (Ritunnano 2022; Romdenh-Romluc 2017).

4. Ingiustizia epistemica e metafora nel disturbo narcisistico di personalità

La letteratura sul tema dell'*ingiustizia epistemica* nell'ambito della malattia mentale spazia dalla *depressione* (Jackson 2017), alla *demenza* (Jongsma *et al.* 2017, Young *et al.* 2019), all'*autismo* (Jongsma *et al.* 2017), alla *psicosi* (Sanati *et al.*2015), ai *disturbi alimentari* (Voswinkell *et al.* 2021), al *disturbo disforico premestruale* (Gagné-Julien 2021) e al *Disturbo ossessivo compulsivo* (Spencer *et al.* 2021), mentre gli studi relativi ai *disturbi di personalità* sono circoscritti al solo *Disturbo borderline di personalità* (Kyratsous *et al*. 2016).
A oggi non sembra esserci letteratura specifica sull'*ingiustizia epistemica* nel caso del *Disturbo narcisistico di personalità*. Questo disturbo viene descritto dal DSM-V (2013) come caratterizzato da un pattern pervasivo di grandiosità nella fantasia o nel comportamento, dalla necessità di ammirazione, dall'assenza di empatia, come una condizione che inizia entro la prima età adulta ed è presente in svariati contesti, con la presenza di cinque o più dei nove criteri diagnostici:

1. un'esagerata, infondata sensazione della propria importanza e dei propri talenti (la grandiosità);
2. preoccupazione con fantasie di successi senza limiti, influenza, potere, intelligenza, bellezza, o amore perfetto;
3. convinzione di essere speciali e unici e di doversi associare solo a persone di altissimo livello;
4. un bisogno di essere incondizionatamente ammirati;
5. una sensazione di privilegio;
6. sfruttamento degli altri per raggiungere i propri obiettivi;
7. mancanza di empatia;
8. invidia degli altri e convinzione che gli altri li invidino;
9. arroganza e superbia.

Essendo un *disturbo egosintonico,* le persone percepiscono i loro comportamenti, pensieri ed emozioni, in sintonia con l'immagine che hanno di sé, disconoscendone la disfunzionalità a causa del divario tra un Sé fragile e irrealistico e la realtà oggettiva.

5. Le metafore del narcisismo

La concettualizzazione metaforica che, dal punto di vista cognitivo, riveste una grande importanza per la condotta e lo stato del Sé narcisistico, è la metafora concettuale dell'ORGOGLIO (Casonato 2003). L'orgoglio narcisistico, a livello cognitivo, viene co-definito dalle alterazioni nella percezione degli eventi e dalle interferenze con un funzionamento mentale normale, varia negli individui col variare delle modalità con le quali si esprime e si basa su gratificazioni ottenute dalle conquiste, dallo status symbol, dall'apparenza, dall'estetica, dall'appartenenza a un gruppo o dalla consapevolezza di avere qualità fisiche, mentali o morali. La categoria superordinata di orgoglio narcisistico definisce un dominio concettuale primario con diverse strutture cognitive subordinate.
La *vanità* è uno dei sottotipi di orgoglio narcisistico, essa caratterizza le personalità narcisistiche. Si fonda, per definizione, sulle apparenze e si organizza su base intenzionale (Casonato 2003). La persona narcisista struttura la sua attività cognitiva e la sua condotta attorno alla metafora concettuale subordinata VANITÀ COME PERSONA che, a livello espressivo, può manifestarsi con più *espressioni metaforiche* quali, ad esempio, *gratificare/ingrandire/alimentare/offendere la vanità*. Ciò che interessa da un punto di vista psicopatologico è la *natura insaziabile*, caratteristica umana traslata alla vanità che esprime il profondo, inesauribile e vano bisogno di ammirazione, fine ultimo della vanità, personificando il bisogno umano di cibarsi, per soddisfare una fame insaziabile, in questo caso di gratificazione, in vista della sopravvivenza psichica (Casonato 2003).
L'*espressione metaforica* "la vanità è insaziabile" può svolgere la *funzione linguistica di naming* nell'attribuire un *nome* per esprimere alcuni aspetti legati al DNP che non hanno un corrispettivo letterale (Ortony 1975); la *funzione concettuale di framing* nel concettualizzare il bisogno insaziabile di ammirazione offrendo un'interpretazione specifica dell'esperienza della vanità come persona (una personificazione della malattia) (Ervas 2024); la *funzione comunicativa di perspective changing* nel comunicare in modo diverso il Sé (*perspective changing*) (Steen 2008, 2010).

6. Studio pilota sulla concettualizzazione del DNP e l'ingiustizia ermeneutica

Lo studio pilota condotto presso l'Università di Cagliari (Commissione etica di Ateneo, prot. N. 0205156 del 29/09/2022), ha indagato l'utilizzo della metafora concettuale della VANITÀ COME PERSONA nella sua *espressione linguistica metaforica* "la vanità è insaziabile" nell'ambito del DNP. Abbiamo cercato di comprendere se è possibile parlare del DNP e del rapporto che le persone hanno con questa malattia senza ricorrere all'utilizzo della metafora e se, qualora fosse utilizzato il linguaggio metaforico per parlarne, si dia un caso di *ingiustizia epistemica* nei loro confronti. A tal proposito abbiamo formulato le seguenti ipotesi:

> H1: Al parlante con DNP è attribuita minore fiducia (*ingiustizia della testimonianza*) e minore capacità di controllo sulle proprie azioni (*ingiustizia ermeneutica*) rispetto a un parlante con sviluppo tipico, soprattutto nell'uso dell'*espressione metaforica* "la vanità è insaziabile" rispetto alla controparte letterale "la vanità è infinita".
>
> H2: I proferimenti attribuiti a un parlante con DNP sono ritenuti meno comprensibili e appropriati (*ingiustizia ermeneutica*) rispetto a quelli attribuiti a un parlante con sviluppo tipico, soprattutto nel caso dell'*espressione metaforica* "la vanità è insaziabile" rispetto alla controparte letterale.

6.1. Metodologia

Lo studio sperimentale è stato condotto in tre fasi:
1) la *fase pre-sperimentale* in cui sono stati elaborati quattro questionari contenenti l'*espressione metaforica* pronunciata per descrivere un parlante in condizione clinica vs. in assenza di condizione clinica, oppure la *controparte letterale* pronunciata per descrivere un parlante in condizione clinica vs. in assenza di condizione clinica. Ciascuna coppia di questionari, una in cui i partecipanti dovevano valutare l'*espressione metaforica* (CM) e l'altra *l'espressione letterale* (CL), conteneva un testo in cui ci si riferiva a una persona con la condizione clinica di DNP (CC) e un testo senza tale condizione (CNC). Tutti i testi sono riportati in Tabella 1:

	Condizione clinica (CC)	Condizione non clinica (CNC)
CM	Fabio è una persona con disturbo narcisistico di personalità. La mattina, si ammira allo specchio, orgoglioso del suo fisico possente, bel sorriso e occhi verdi. Si compiace di come appare agli altri e dei suoi beni di lusso. A lavoro ama ricevere pubblicamente attenzione e costante ammirazione. Il collega dice di lui: "la sua vanità è insaziabile".	Fabio è una persona con un'autostima molto alta. La mattina, si ammira allo specchio, orgoglioso del suo fisico possente, bel sorriso e occhi verdi. Si compiace di come appare agli altri e dei suoi beni di lusso. A lavoro ama ricevere pubblicamente attenzione e costante ammirazione. Il collega dice di lui: "la sua vanità è insaziabile".

	Condizione clinica (CC)	Condizione non clinica (CNC)
CL	Fabio è una persona con disturbo narcisistico di personalità. La mattina, si ammira allo specchio, orgoglioso del suo fisico possente, bel sorriso e occhi verdi. Si compiace di come appare agli altri e dei suoi beni di lusso. A lavoro ama ricevere pubblicamente attenzione e costante ammirazione. Il collega dice di lui: "la sua vanità è infinita".	Fabio è una persona con un'autostima molto alta. La mattina, si ammira allo specchio, orgoglioso del suo fisico possente, bel sorriso e occhi verdi. Si compiace di come appare agli altri e dei suoi beni di lusso. A lavoro ama ricevere pubblicamente attenzione e costante ammirazione. Il collega dice di lui: "la sua vanità è infinita".

Tab. 1: Testi presentati ai partecipanti per ciascuna combinazione di condizioni.

La scelta e la descrizione del protagonista dei testi, Fabio, sono state elaborate seguendo le sezioni del DSM dedicate ai *criteri diagnostici* e agli *aspetti diagnostici correlati al genere.* Il 50-75% delle persone con disturbo narcisistico di personalità è infatti di genere maschile (DSM-IV 1994; DSM-V 2013). Entrambe le condizioni espressive sono state fatte proferire da un collega poiché dalla ricerca è emerso che una persona con DNP inverosimilmente ammetterebbe l'*insaziabilità della sua vanità* a causa del divario tra un sé irrealistico e fragile e la realtà oggettiva.
2) La *fase del Pre-test* era finalizzata a valutare la *comprensibilità* del testo contenente l'*espressione metaforica*, richiedendo ai partecipanti di leggere il testo e classificare l'*espressione metaforica* su una scala Likert da 1 a 5 secondo i criteri *comprensibilità* (per niente comprensibile (1), molto comprensibile (5)), *interpretabilità* (molto ambigua (1), per niente ambigua (5)), s*ignificato emotivo* (molto negativo (1), molto positivo (5)), f*amiliarità* (per niente familiare (1), molto familiare (5)), v*erità* (molto probabilmente falsa (1), molto probabilmente vera (5)) e, infine, di generare tre proprietà per descrivere l'*espressione metaforica*.
3) Nel *Test* si chiedeva ai quattro gruppi diversi di partecipanti di leggere il testo e valutare su una scala Likert da 1 a 5 le condizioni espressive, metaforica vs. letterale, con o senza la condizione clinica, in base ai criteri di *comprensibilità*, *appropriatezza del significato*, *fiducia* e *controllo delle azioni*. Subito dopo il test venivano presentate le seguenti domande:
Comprensibilità: Il collega intende dire che la vanità di Fabio è senza limiti?
Appropriatezza del significato: Quanto ti sembra appropriata l'espressione pronunciata dal collega?
Fiducia: Ti fideresti di Fabio?
Controllo delle azioni: Pensi che Fabio possa controllare le sue azioni?

6.2. Partecipanti

La ricerca è stata condotta attraverso la somministrazione di questionari online in forma anonima, i cui dati sono stati trattati a livello di gruppo. Al pre-test hanno partecipato 18 persone (10 F/8 M) mentre al Test hanno partecipato 179 persone (125 F/54 M). I gruppi sono stati distinti a seconda del tipo di test somministrato:
Test A: Condizione metaforica, riferimento a persona con condizione clinica

Test B: Condizione metaforica, riferimento a persona senza condizione clinica
Test C: Condizione letterale, riferimento a persona con condizione clinica
Test D: Condizione letterale, riferimento a persona senza condizione clinica

	Test A	Test B	Test C	Test D	Tot.
NumeroPartecipanti	**41**	**51**	**43**	**44**	**179**
Maschi Femmine	12 29	14 37	12 31	16 28	54 125
Range di età	**15 – 58**	**25 – 70**	**19 – 67**	**17 – 70**	
Maschi Femmine	33 – 55 15 – 58	25 – 50 25 – 70	21 – 67 19 – 57	17 – 57 25 – 70	-

Tab. 2: Caratteristiche dei gruppi di partecipanti per età e genere.

6.3. Risultati

Le risposte date dai partecipanti di ciascun gruppo sono state analizzate attraverso un t-test a due code in modo da comparare ciascuna coppia di condizione (letterale vs. metaforico; condizione clinica vs. non clinica). Dunque, sono state fatte due comparazioni tra le risposte di ogni categoria di domanda finalizzate a valutare l'*espressione metaforica* in riferimento alla persona con vs. in assenza di condizione clinica, l'espressione letterale in riferimento alla persona con vs. in assenza di condizione clinica. Media (M) e Standard deviation (SD) delle risposte alle misure prese (*Comprensibilità*, *Appropriatezza*, *Fiducia*, *Controllo delle azioni*) per ciascun test sono riportate in Tabella 3:

Misure	Test A		Test B		Test C		Test D	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Comprensibilità	4,61	0,85	4,43	0,88	4,49	0,91	4,34	0,90
Appropriatezza del significato	3,68	1,07	3,25	1,12	3,79	1,15	3,32	1,27
Fiducia	2,17	1,27	2,73	0,96	2,63	1,10	3,05	1,09
Controllo delle azioni	2,95	0,99	3,08	1,02	3,05	1,14	3,68	1,01

Tab. 3: Medie (M) e standard deviation (SD) per le risposte relative a ciascun test/gruppo di partecipanti.

Comprensibilità.
I risultati sulla *comprensibilità* dell'espressione pronunciata hanno mostrato che non c'è una differenza statisticamente significativa tra espressioni metaforiche e letterali, sia nella condizione clinica sia senza condizione clinica. Comparando le risposte dei test che hanno in comune 1) la condizione metaforica (Test A e Test B), 2) la condizione letterale (Test C e Test D), 3) la condizione non clinica (Test B e Test D) e 4) la condizione clinica (Test A e C), per quanto riguarda la *comprensibilità* dell'espressione pronunciata: i risultati dimostrano che non c'è una differenza statisticamente significativa tra la condizione in cui l'*espressione metaforica* si riferisce a una persona in condizione clinica e senza tale condizione (p = 0,33); tra la condizione in cui l'*espressione letterale* si riferisce a una persona in condizione clinica e senza la condizione clinica (p = 0,45); tra l'*espressione metaforica* e *l'espressione letterale* (p = 0,62)

si riferisce a una persona che non ha condizione clinica; tra l'*espressione metaforica* e *l'espressione letterale* (p = 0,53) si riferisce a una persona in condizione clinica.

Significato appropriato.
Per quanto riguarda l'*appropriatezza di significato* i risultati indicano una tendenza alla significatività statistica per la differenza tra la condizione in cui l'*espressione metaforica* si riferisce a un parlante in situazione clinica e a un parlante in assenza di condizione clinica (p = 0,06): ciò è dovuto al fatto che la metafora è ritenuta leggermente più appropriata quando si riferisce a parlante con DNP rispetto a quando si riferisce a un parlante con sviluppo tipico. Tuttavia, per la stessa ragione, una tendenza alla significatività statistica emerge anche per la differenza tra la condizione in cui l'*espressione letterale* si riferisce a un parlante in situazione clinica e a un parlante in assenza di condizione clinica (p = 0,07). Non emerge invece alcuna differenza statisticamente significativa quando si comparano le condizioni di espressione letterale e metaforica, siano esse riferite a situazione clinica (p = 0,66) o ad assenza di situazione clinica (p = 0,80).

Fiducia.
Per quanto riguarda la *fiducia*, una differenza statisticamente significativa emerge comparando la condizione in cui l'*espressione metaforica* si riferisce a una persona in condizione clinica vs. non clinica (p = 0,03). Ciò è dovuto al fatto che i partecipanti hanno dato meno fiducia alla persona cui ci si riferisce in modo metaforico quando è persona con DNP rispetto a quando non presenta alcuna condizione clinica. Una tendenza alla significatività si evidenzia invece per l'*espressione letterale* riferita a persona in condizione clinica vs. non clinica (p = 0,08), per lo stesso motivo. Una tendenza alla significatività (p = 0,08) si nota anche comparando le condizioni in cui le espressioni *metaforiche* vs. *letterali* si riferiscono a persona con DNP, perché i partecipanti sono disposti a dare meno fiducia a persona con DNP quando ci si riferisce in modo metaforico rispetto al modo letterale. Non c'è, invece, differenza statisticamente significativa (p = 0,15) comparando le condizioni in cui le espressioni *metaforiche* vs. *letterali* si riferiscono a persona con sviluppo tipico.

Controllo delle azioni.
Per questa misura, la comparazione tra la condizione clinica e non clinica quando ci si riferisce in termini metaforici non indica alcuna differenza significativa (p = 0,55), né la comparazione tra condizione metaforica e letterale quando ci si riferisce a persona con DNP (p = 0,69). Viceversa, una differenza statisticamente significativa si riscontra comparando condizione metaforica e letterale quando ci si riferisce a persona con sviluppo tipico (p = 0,006), perché i partecipanti hanno ritenuto che fosse maggiormente in controllo delle proprie azioni la persona cui ci riferisce in modo letterale anziché metaforico. Una differenza statisticamente significativa emerge anche comparando condizione clinica e non clinica quando ci si riferisce in termini letterali (p = 0,01), perché i partecipanti hanno ritenuto che fosse maggiormente in controllo delle proprie azioni la persona con sviluppo tipico rispetto a quella con DNP.

6.4. Discussione

Il risultato della ricerca sembra confermare che, per questo studio pilota, l'*espressione metaforica* "la vanità è insaziabile" offre la possibilità di riferirsi in modo tendenzialmente più appropriato all'esperienza di una persona con questo disturbo. Seppure anche l'espressione letterale associata alla condizione clinica mostri una tendenza alla significatività, si può verosimilmente ipotizzare che sia l'*espressione metaforica* a incidere a livello espressivo e

interpretativo, attribuendo un nome (*naming*) a un'esperienza di qualcosa che si sente come non appartenente a sé, in questo caso l'insaziabilità della vanità (*framing*).
Tuttavia, quando si usa tale metafora per riferirsi a persona con DNP, si è meno inclini a dare *fiducia* a quella persona, rispetto a quando la si usa per riferirsi a persona con sviluppo tipico. Ciò accade maggiormente quando ci si riferisce a tale persona in modo metaforico anziché letterale. Inoltre, si è più inclini a ritenere una persona con sviluppo tipico con più controllo delle proprie azioni quando ci si riferisce in modo letterale anziché metaforico. A parità di espressione letterale, tuttavia, si è più inclini a ritenere una persona con sviluppo tipico con più controllo delle proprie azioni rispetto alla persona con DNP, rinforzando la condizione di ingiustizia epistemica nel caso della malattia mentale.
Risulta altresì evidente che l'attribuzione di capacità di *controllo* sulle *proprie azioni* risulta maggiore quando non viene indicata la condizione clinica: i partecipanti hanno attribuito a Fabio una maggiore capacità di *controllare* le *proprie azioni* quando non viene indicato il DNP, ma risulta che i partecipanti hanno attribuito minore capacità quando viene utilizzata l'*espressione metaforica*. Un risultato interessante indica che è la presenza della condizione clinica a essere tendenzialmente significativa nel percepire come *appropriata* un'*espressione metaforica* o letterale.

7. Conclusione

In conclusione, i risultati dello studio confermano la prima ipotesi ovvero viene attribuita al parlante con DNP meno fiducia (*ingiustizia della testimonianza*) e viene ritenuto meno capace di controllare le proprie azioni (*ingiustizia ermeneutica*) rispetto a un parlante con sviluppo tipico, soprattutto nel caso delle espressioni metaforiche. I risultati dello studio *non* confermano invece la seconda ipotesi cioè l'*ingiustizia ermeneutica* non viene associata all'espressione metaforica nella condizione clinica, che anzi risulta più appropriata del letterale. Questo, tuttavia, dà sostegno all'idea che la metafora sia un modo migliore per esprimere la condizione di malattia mentale. Nonostante la mancata attribuzione di *fiducia* e di *capacità di controllo nell'azione*, la metafora non è meno comprensibile e appropriata rispetto al letterale, ma rappresenta ancora uno strumento per comunicare il vissuto di malattia mentale agli altri (*perspective changing*). L'espressione metaforica sembra rendere comprensibile alcuni lati ineffabili legati al DNP che non trovano giustizia nel linguaggio letterale.

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Chapter 24.
Implicazioni dei deficit di memoria sulla comprensione delle metafore nella schizofrenia

Implications of Memory Deficits on Metaphor Comprehension in Schizophrenia

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Abstract

La metafora è una figura del discorso utilizzata quotidianamente per esprimere pensieri ed emozioni. La sua comprensione, tuttavia, richiede l'abilità di cogliere significati impliciti, una competenza spesso compromessa nella schizofrenia, dove prevale un'interpretazione letterale e dunque un'interpretazione errata della metafora (i.e., il fenomeno del "concretismo"). Questo articolo analizza gli studi sulla comprensione metaforica nelle persone con schizofrenia, con particolare attenzione ai deficit di memoria che compromettono l'elaborazione del linguaggio figurato. Inoltre, l'articolo esamina il potenziale contributo di un recente modello computazionale di memoria (modello BRDL, *Behavior Reasoning Description Language*) per comprendere i meccanismi mnemonici all'opera nella comprensione metaforica in tali individui.

Keywords: memoria; linguaggio; schizofrenia; metafora; modello computazionale.

Abstract

Metaphor is a figure of speech used daily to express thoughts and emotions. Its comprehension, however, requires the ability to grasp implicit meanings, a skill often impaired in schizophrenia, where literal interpretation predominates, leading to a misinterpretation of metaphors (i.e., the phenomenon of "concretism"). This article examines studies on metaphor comprehension in individuals with schizophrenia, with a particular focus on memory deficits that affect the processing of figurative language. Furthermore, it explores the potential contribution of a recent computational memory model (the BRDL model, *Behavior Reasoning Description Language*) to understanding the mnemonic mechanisms involved in metaphor comprehension in these individuals.

Keywords: memory; language; schizophrenia; metaphor; computational model.

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1. Introduzione: Cos'è la schizofrenia?[1]

La schizofrenia è un disturbo mentale complesso ed eterogeneo che colpisce circa l'1% della popolazione mondiale ed insorge tipicamente tra i 18 e i 25 anni. La quinta edizione del *Manuale Diagnostico e Statistico dei Disturbi Mentali* (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association 2014), descrive la schizofrenia come un disturbo caratterizzato da psicosi (perdita di contatto con la realtà), allucinazioni (false percezioni), deliri (credenze infondate), linguaggio e comportamento disorganizzati, appiattimento dell'affettività (riduzione delle espressioni emotive), deficit cognitivi (alterazioni nel ragionamento e nella risoluzione dei problemi) e difficoltà nell'ambito occupazionale e sociale. Questi sintomi vengono generalmente suddivisi in due categorie: 'sintomi positivi', come ad esempio allucinazioni e deliri, considerati come un'eccessiva o anomala attivazione di funzioni cognitive, e 'sintomi negativi', come afasia e apatia, che al contrario riflettono una perdita o una riduzione di funzioni cognitive normalmente presenti negli individui con sviluppo tipico (Kuperberg 2010).
È importante sottolineare che, per formulare una diagnosi di schizofrenia, non è necessario riscontrare tutti questi sintomi: è necessario, al fine della diagnosi, la presenza di almeno due dei sintomi descritti. Di conseguenza, due persone con la stessa diagnosi possono presentare sintomi diversi. La sua natura complessa rende la definizione ancora dibattuta, e il punto di vista eziologico resta incerto, con la letteratura che suggerisce una combinazione di fattori genetici ed ambientali (Caviglia & Perrella 2009). Un elemento che, tuttavia, risulta essere centrale nella schizofrenia è la presenza di deficit nella sfera comunicativa-pragmatica, che si manifesta attraverso alterazioni significative nel linguaggio.

2. Deficit di linguaggio e schizofrenia

Il disturbo formale del pensiero, o *Formal Thought Disorde*r (FTD), è uno dei sintomi legati al linguaggio associati alla schizofrenia (American Psychiatric Association 2014). Questo disturbo viene dedotto dall'eloquio dell'individuo che risulta disorganizzato, espressione della presenza di un'alterazione nella struttura del pensiero sottostante. Il DSM-5 descrive diverse forme in cui il disturbo formale di pensiero può manifestarsi:

> L'individuo può passare da un argomento all'altro (*deragliamento* o *allentamento dei nessi associativi*). Le risposte alle domande possono essere correlate in modo marginale o completamente non correlate (*tangenzialità*). Raramente, l'eloquio può essere così gravemente disorganizzato da essere quasi incomprensibile e assomigliare all'afasia ricettiva nella sua disorganizzazione linguistica (*incoerenza* o "*insalata di parole*") (American Psychiatric Association 2014: 102).

Questi sintomi non sono semplicemente il risultato di un deficit linguistico, ma riflettono una compromissione più profonda della capacità di organizzare il pensiero. Ciò non solo danneggia la comunicazione, ma rende anche più difficoltosa la comprensione e l'interazione con gli altri (Chen *et al.* 1996, Cutting 1985, Spitzer 1997).

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Un altro disturbo linguistico importante associato alla schizofrenia è il 'concretismo', ovvero la difficoltà nell'interpretazione del linguaggio figurato, come ironia, proverbi e, caso più frequente, la metafora. In particolare, il concretismo consiste nella tendenza ad interpretare in modo letterale espressioni che, invece, richiederebbero - al fine di una corretta comprensione – un'interpretazione figurata. Ad esempio, davanti ad un'espressione come 'avere un buco allo stomaco', la persona con schizofrenia potrebbe erroneamente pensare ad una patologia che colpisce lo stomaco provocando una lacerazione o un 'buco', oppure considerare l'espressione come priva di senso invece di ricollegare tale espressione alla sensazione di sentire fame. Tale deficit nell'elaborazione del linguaggio astratto nella schizofrenia compromette la comprensione del linguaggio figurato, limitando sia l'uso quotidiano del linguaggio sia la partecipazione alle interazioni sociali (Rossetti *et al.* 2018, Bambini *et al.* 2020).
La letteratura scientifica ha individuato diverse possibili cause alla base di questi deficit (Adamczyk *et al*. 2024; Bambini *et. al.* 2020; Chakrabarty *et al.* 2014; Despot *et al.* 2021; Iakimova *et al.* 2005; Kircher *et al.* 2007; Rossetti *et al.* 2018.). Numerose ricerche hanno indicato una compromissione di alcune abilità cognitive fondamentali, tra cui le competenze pragmatiche, la teoria della mente, il quoziente intellettivo (QI) e la memoria. Questi aspetti hanno un ruolo fondamentale nella produzione e nella comprensione del linguaggio, poiché influiscono sulla capacità di una persona di comprendere il significato contestuale, di cogliere l'intento comunicativo dell'interlocutore e costruire discorsi coerenti ed efficaci. Più specificamente, la memoria occupa una posizione centrale in questo quadro perché non solo svolge la funzione di immagazzinamento e richiamo delle informazioni, bensì permette la manipolazione, la creazione di nessi associativi, combinando conoscenze pregresse con nuovi stimoli ed informazioni, e la funzione d'inferire tali informazioni permettendo un'elaborazione efficace del linguaggio. Di conseguenza, la presenza di uno o più deficit a livello di memoria può compromettere in modo significativo la capacità dell'individuo di comprendere concetti complessi, così come il linguaggio figurato, e di mantenere una coerenza narrativa, influendo negativamente sulla comunicazione quotidiana.

3. Memoria e organizzazione delle informazioni

La memoria è una funzione cognitiva fondamentale, essenziale per acquisire, manipolare, conservare e recuperare informazioni. In psicologia e neurologia non esiste una definizione univoca di memoria, ma essa può essere intesa in tre modi principali, come descritto da Gabriel Radvansky:

> First, memory is the location where information is kept, as in a storehouse, or memory store. Second, memory can refer to the thing that holds the contents of experience, as in a memory trace or engram. Finally, memory is a mental process used to acquire, store, or retrieve information of all sorts (Radvansky 2017: 1).

Nel 1968, Richard C. Atkinson e Richard Shiffrin proposero il 'modello modale' della memoria, che distingue tre tipi di memoria: sensoriale, a breve termine e a lungo termine. La memoria sensoriale trattiene le informazioni per frazioni di secondo, trasferendo selettivamente alcune alla memoria a breve termine, dove restano per 15-25 secondi e vengono elaborate dalla memoria di lavoro. Quest'ultima gestisce l'attenzione e l'integrazione di informazioni linguistiche (loop fonologico), visuo-spaziali (taccuino visuo-spaziale) e multimodali (buffer episodico). Le informazioni elaborate vengono poi conservate, più o meno permanentemente, nella memoria a lungo termine. Quest'ultima nel modello viene divisa in due grandi categorie:

1) Memoria procedurale, che conserva abilità e abitudini, come andare in bicicletta o eseguire calcoli semplici; 2) Memoria dichiarativa, che riguarda informazioni fattuali e personali. Quest'ultima è stata ulteriormente suddivisa, secondo Endel Tulving (1972), in:

- Memoria episodica, responsabile della conservazione di ricordi autobiografici legati a contesti specifici e personali;
- Memoria semantica, che immagazzina conoscenze generali sul mondo, comuni a persone della stessa cultura e lingua, come il significato delle parole.

Studi sulla sua organizzazione e relazione interna hanno portato alla formulazione di vari modelli della memoria semantica. Tra i modelli più diffusi, molta influenza ebbe il 'modello a rete semantica', introdotto per la prima volta da M. Ross Quillian nel 1968. Le reti semantiche sono modelli dichiarativi che utilizzano la teoria matematica dei grafi per rappresentare le conoscenze. In tale modello, i concetti vengono rappresentati come nodi e le relazioni semantiche tra i concetti mediante archi che collegano i nodi (Frixione 1994, 1997). Nello specifico, Quillian utilizzò la struttura reticolare per proporre un modello computazionale della memoria semantica basato su meccanismi associativi per simulare capacità linguistiche umane (Quillian 1968), come il confronto tra significati. In seguito al lavoro di Quillian, molti studi applicarono il modello a rete semantica. Tra i contributi più importanti vi è un secondo lavoro di Quillian del 1969 in collaborazione con Allan M. Collins, nel quale svilupparono un 'modello gerarchico' in cui i concetti sono organizzati in reti tassonomiche con proprietà ereditate (Collins & Quillian 1969, Frixione 1994). Infine, nel 1975, Allan M. Collins ed Elizabeth F. Loftus introdussero un modello più flessibile - chiamato 'modello ad attivazione diffusa' - basato sull'attivazione diffusa, in cui la forza delle connessioni riflette la distanza semantica tra i concetti (Collins & Loftus 1975).
Questa organizzazione permette di gestire le informazioni in modo strutturato, ottimizzando il loro utilizzo futuro grazie alla collaborazione e all'attivazione selettiva dei sistemi mnestici appropriati (Cornoldi *et al.* 2018).

4. Elaborazione metaforica e processi mnemonici

L'elaborazione metaforica coinvolge meccanismi cognitivi come l'accesso alla memoria a lungo termine, l'attivazione di domini semantici, la capacità inferenziale e il riconoscimento di contesti linguistici. In letteratura, tre approcci principali sono stati proposti per spiegare come le metafore vengano elaborate a livello cognitivo ed essi presuppongono il coinvolgimento di processi mnemonici:

> Ipotesi della priorità del letterale. Secondo quest'approccio, la comprensione del significato metaforico si svolge attraverso una sequenza di passaggi. In primo luogo, viene elaborato il significato letterale dell'enunciato che viene successivamente rifiutato in quanto inappropriato rispetto al contesto. Solo a questo punto, dopo il rifiuto del letterale, viene elaborato il significato figurato. Questa ipotesi, dunque, mostra che il processo metaforico sia intrinsecamente sequenziale e dipendente da un'analisi iniziale del significato letterale (Bobrow & Bell 1973).
> Ipotesi dell'accesso diretto. In contrapposizione con l'ipotesi della priorità del letterale, questa teoria suggerisce che il significato metaforico possa essere compreso direttamente, senza una codifica iniziale del significato letterale. Secondo questo approccio, infatti, le persone sono in grado di accedere immediatamente al significato metaforico di un enunciato senza necessariamente effettuare un'analisi letterale preliminare (Gibbs 1992, Glucksberg 2001).
> Ipotesi della salienza graduale. Questo approccio distingue l'elaborazione delle metafore in base alla salienza dell'enunciato per l'individuo. Le metafore familiari, il cui significato figurato è già

> memorizzato, vengono elaborate rapidamente attraverso un recupero diretto dalla memoria a lungo termine. Al contrario, le metafore nuove richiedono un'elaborazione sequenziale più approfondita, partendo dall'interpretazione letterale. La difficoltà di elaborazione dipende quindi dalla salienza dell'enunciato, non dalla sua natura letterale o figurata (Giora 1997).

Le tre prospettive evidenziano il ruolo centrale della memoria nell'elaborazione delle metafore: la memoria a lungo termine facilita il recupero di metafore familiari, mentre la memoria di lavoro gestisce l'interpretazione di metafore nuove attraverso processi come attenzione e codifica (Iskandar & Baird, 2014). Questo legame sottolinea l'importanza di studiare i deficit mnemonici, come nel caso della schizofrenia, per comprendere il loro impatto negativo sulla comprensione del linguaggio figurato e sulle capacità comunicative.

5. Deficit di memoria e linguaggio nella schizofrenia

La letteratura scientifica (Bagner *et al.* 2003, Krabbendam & Jolles 2003, Chen *et al.* 1994, Chen *et al.* 1996, DeLisi 2001, Spitzer *et al.* 1993, Faust & Kenett 2014, Matsumoto *et al.* 2023) ha evidenziato compromissioni della memoria nella schizofrenia, in particolare nella memoria di lavoro e semantica. In questo paragrafo si esamineranno questi deficit e le loro ripercussioni sulla comprensione metaforica.
La memoria di lavoro è fondamentale per il sistema cognitivo, poiché permette di monitorare, gestire e utilizzare in tempo reale le informazioni necessarie e rilevanti durante l'esecuzione di compiti o il perseguimento di obiettivi (cfr. paragrafo 3). Quando la memoria di lavoro è compromessa, come nel caso di persone con schizofrenia, emergono problemi significativi che colpiscono la comunicazione e il pensiero.
Uno dei principali effetti riscontrati a livello di memoria lavoro riguarda la difficoltà di mantenere le informazioni pertinenti attive e organizzate manifestando una capacità ridotta di monitorare e inibire stimoli o elementi non pertinenti al contesto; di conseguenza, vengono compromessi la chiarezza e il flusso del discorso. Le informazioni irrilevanti possono interferire con il pensiero logico, generando confusione e rendendo complicata la costruzione di un discorso coerente ed efficace (Bagner *et al.* 2003, Krabbendam & Jolles 2003). Queste problematiche si riflettono in fenomeni linguistici specifici quali tangenzialità e deragliamento (cfr. paragrafo 2), i quali sono deficit linguistici comuni nella schizofrenia.
Ecco un esempio significativo:

> I am writing on paper. The pen which I am using is from a factory called 'Perry & Co.'. This factory is in England. I assume this. Behind the name of Perry Co. the city of London is inscribed; but not the city. The city of London is in England. I know this from my school-days. Then, I always liked geography. My last teacher in that subject was Professor August A. He was a man with black eyes. I also like black eyes. There are also blue and gray eyes and other sorts, too. I have heard it said that snakes have green eyes. All people have eyes. There are some, too, who are blind […] (Bleuler 1950: 17).

Come si può osservare in questo estratto, il paziente mostra una chiara difficoltà nel mantenere un discorso coerente. Il filo conduttore della conversazione si perde rapidamente (tangenzialità), poiché l'attenzione si sposta da un tema specifico a una serie di dettagli ed elementi non pertinenti, apparentemente legati solo da associazioni superficiali o casuali (deragliamento). Di conseguenza, l'eloquio viene compromesso dalla presenza di questi deficit, risultando apparentemente privo di senso e significato.

Accanto alla memoria di lavoro, anche la memoria semantica è essenziale per il linguaggio, poiché organizza concetti e conoscenze in domini interconnessi tramite relazioni di vicinanza semantica, formando una rete strutturata di significati (cfr. paragrafo 3).
Tra i principali problemi si riscontrano:

> Iper-inclusività, ovvero la presenza di un allentamento nelle associazioni semantiche che si manifesta nella relazione tra concetti semanticamente distanti tra loro (Chen *et al.* 1994);
> Iper-diffusività, ovvero l'attivazione e priming tra concetti distanti che indica associazioni concettuali anormali. Nelle persone con sviluppo tipico, la velocità e accuratezza della risposta ad uno stimolo è maggiore quando questo è preceduto da stimoli correlati semanticamente (priming), ad esempio il concetto 'strisce' viene elaborato più velocemente se preceduto dalla parola 'zebra'. Al contrario, le persone con schizofrenia mostrano un'attivazione concettuale più diffusa; dunque, in presenza di uno stimolo si attivano velocemente anche concetti non direttamente correlati (Spitzer *et al.* 1993);
> Coefficiente di clustering ridotto, cioè la presenza di domini semantici meno rigidi e specifici (Faust & Kenett 2014).

Inoltre, è importante sottolineare che le rappresentazioni semantiche non risultano completamente disorganizzate. Difatti, viene conservata la categorizzazione generale ma la struttura interna delle categorie risulta più casuale o non pertinente (Matsumoto *et al.* 2023).
Questi deficit si traducono, a livello linguistico, in una compromissione nell'organizzazione del linguaggio, portando a generare categorie internamente incoerenti e, di conseguenza, alla difficoltà di mantenere un discorso chiaro e coerente in quanto meno strutturato e con la presenza di informazioni irrilevanti o fuori contesto. La presenza di questi deficit amplificano ulteriormente le difficoltà di comunicazione esistenti nelle persone con schizofrenia.
Ecco un esempio che illustra i deficit a livello di memoria semantica:

> Thus a woman patient, who was reporting about a walk with her family, began with enumerating the members of her family, "Father, Son," then adding, "and the Holy Ghost". She then proceeded to tack on, "the Holy Virgin", her thoughts having been distracted further in the direction of the bible phrase (Bleuler 1950: 26).

In questo caso, è facile notare come la categoria semantica "famiglia" non abbia confini rigidi e definiti. Anziché rimanere ancorato agli elementi tipici che definiscono la famiglia (madre, padre e figlio/a), il paziente include concetti semanticamente distanti, come lo 'Spirito Santo' e la 'Santa Vergine', che non hanno alcuna connessione logica con il contesto dell'eloquio. Questa intrusione di elementi estranei dimostra una difficoltà nel mantenere le categorie semantiche rigide e ben strutturate. Il paziente, infatti, sembra non riuscire a distinguere tra i concetti pertinenti e quelli non pertinenti, e aggiunge concetti estranei, che porta a una risposta non correlata alla domanda fatta.
Queste difficoltà indicano una compromissione dei meccanismi cognitivi responsabili dell'organizzazione semantica e suggeriscono dunque che le persone con schizofrenia possano avere una capacità ridotta nella costruzione e nel mantenimento di categorie semantiche rigide. Di conseguenza, questi deficit a livello di memoria ostacolano la produzione e la comprensione del linguaggio, il quale può manifestarsi in risposte incoerenti e talvolta poco comprensibili.

6. Deficit di memoria e interpretazione metaforica nella schizofrenia

L'analisi dei deficit di memoria, in relazione ai processi cognitivi implicati nella comprensione metaforica nel caso della schizofrenia, contribuisce a comprendere fenomeni linguistici come

il concretismo, nonché rappresenta un ambito di ricerca fondamentale per comprendere come i disturbi cognitivi influenzano l'elaborazione del linguaggio figurato.
Nel paragrafo precedente si è sottolineato come la presenza di deficit di memoria di lavoro compromette il monitoraggio attivo delle informazioni e l'inibizione di stimoli non pertinenti. Nell'ambito della comprensione metaforica, queste compromissioni possono impedire all'individuo di mantenere attivi elementi cruciali del significato durante le fasi successive di elaborazione, spesso portando all'accettazione del significato letterale, nonostante l'intento figurato dell'enunciato o del discorso (Chiappe & Chiappe 2007). In aggiunta, la difficoltà nell'inibizione di elementi non pertinenti – che nel caso di un enunciato metaforico è il significato letterale – rende più difficile l'accesso al significato figurato, portando l'individuo a prediligere il significato letterale in quanto più immediato.
Anche la memoria semantica, come la memoria di lavoro, gioca un ruolo cruciale nell'elaborazione metaforica. Difatti, le metafore creative sono tra le parti più complesse del linguaggio e come tali richiedono una elaborazione semantica che può non essere immediatamente naturale. La creatività, ossia la capacità di generare qualcosa di inedito e allo stesso tempo adeguato al contesto (Mednick 1962), è un processo che richiede la combinazione di un processo cognitivo flessibile che combini le proprietà di più domini cognitivi semanticamente distanti e un processo che garantisca il mantenimento di strutture stabili di significato. In questo contesto, la memoria semantica è cruciale per creare connessioni coerenti tra concetti distanti, garantendo la stabilità del significato e la coerenza dell'enunciato. Con la presenza, dunque, di una compromissione nella struttura dei domini concettuali nella memoria semantica, diventa più difficile elaborare enunciati metaforici in modo efficiente.
Come è stato menzionato, la schizofrenia si caratterizza spesso per la memoria semantica instabile e ciò comporta una struttura instabile del significato poiché ammette relazioni semantiche distanti ed inconsistenti, non soddisfacendo dunque i criteri di coerenza e stabilità che richiede l'elaborazione di un prodotto creativo.
Sebbene le persone con schizofrenia possano fare associazioni più libere e trovare nuove connessioni, mancano della struttura stabile necessaria per mantenere significati coerenti e ben definiti. Questo influisce anche sulla corretta interpretazione delle metafore, dove è essenziale un equilibrio tra flessibilità e stabilità (Faust & Kenett 2014, Iakimova *et al.* 2005).
Nonostante che siano stati condotti numerosi studi sui deficit di memoria, sia di lavoro sia semantica, e sulla comprensione metaforica, manca ancora un'analisi che integri il ruolo congiunto della memoria di lavoro e della memoria semantica nell'interpretazione delle metafore nella schizofrenia. Questa lacuna è dovuta alla complessità delle ricerche sperimentali necessarie per affrontare simultaneamente tutti questi aspetti. Per tale motivo, nel prossimo paragrafo si esplorerà il potenziale contributo del modello computazionale di memoria BRDL (*Behavior Reasoning Description Language*, Cerone 2019; Cerone *et al.* 2020, Cerone *et al.* 2021), valutando se e in che modo questo approccio possa rappresentare uno strumento utile per approfondire i meccanismi mnemonici coinvolti nella comprensione metaforica nelle persone con schizofrenia, contribuendo così ad ampliare la letteratura scientifica esistente.

7. Un nuovo approccio computazionale: programma basato sul linguaggio BRDL

Antonio Cerone, Graham Pluck, Diana Murzagaliyeva, Nuray Nabiyeva, Ben Tyler e Pluck Graham (2021) hanno sviluppato un modello computazionale della memoria finalizzato a simulare sia l'organizzazione e l'immagazzinamento delle conoscenze nella memoria, sia il recupero delle informazioni da essa in contesti adattabili alle simulazioni in silico. Tale modello si basa sull'architettura della memoria modale di Atkinson e Shiffrin (1968) e sul modello a

rete per la rappresentazione dei concetti nella memoria semantica (cfr. paragrafo 3). La modellazione del significato nel linguaggio BRDL (*Behavior Reasoning Description Language*) è, quindi, strettamente connessa a questa struttura. BRDL è un linguaggio progettato per descrivere il comportamento e il ragionamento umano, adatto a modellare diverse teorie cognitive. Per questo motivo la sua sintassi è semplice e concisa, facilitando la comprensione e l'apprendimento, mentre la semantica varia a seconda delle teorie cognitive utilizzate (Cerone 2019). In particolare, BRDL rappresenta i seguenti aspetti:

- Percezioni: i dati in ingresso provenienti dall'ambiente, che avviano i processi cognitivi;
- Azioni: le risposte dell'essere umano all'ambiente in seguito ai processi cognitivi;
- Informazioni cognitive: fatti memorizzati nella memoria semantica, obiettivi, azioni deliberate e automatiche, nonché regole d'inferenza.

Questi elementi risultano fondamentali per simulare processi cognitivi quali, ad esempio, il recupero delle informazioni, In particolare, il linguaggio BRDL è stato implementato in un software che permette di effettuare sperimentazioni in silico; si tratta di uno strumento che consente di eseguire esperimenti sui processi mentali legati alla memoria. Tale software è dotato di un'interfaccia semplice che lo rende molto accessibile grazie all'utilizzo di Python GUI, di un database MySQL e del linguaggio di programmazione Real-Time Maude su cui viene tradotto il linguaggio BRDL. Nel dettaglio, la memoria sensoriale è modellata tramite le percezioni ambientali, mentre la memoria semantica contiene regole d'inferenza, fatti e attività deliberate. La memoria procedurale immagazzina le attività automatiche, e la memoria a breve termine è inizialmente vuota, consentendo di impostare vari parametri, come la capacità e la durata delle informazioni (Cerone & Murzagaliyeva 2020).
L'attuale versione del programma permette di realizzare due tipi di esperimenti:

- Esperimento basato sull'apprendimento: una sequenza di fatti e domande generate nell'ambiente che innescano processi cognitivi come il recupero delle informazioni dalla memoria semantica e inferenze.
- Esperimento 'corretto': domande generate dall'ambiente che stimolano il recupero di informazioni dalla memoria semantica, seguite dal trasferimento delle risposte nella memoria a breve termine.

Questo approccio offre ai ricercatori la possibilità di testare e analizzare teorie e ipotesi sulla memoria umana, fornendo una piattaforma per simulazioni sperimentali in silico con applicazioni pratiche nella ricerca cognitiva (Cerone *et al.* 2021). Inoltre, essendo il software basato sul linguaggio semplice ma, allo stesso tempo, flessibile (ad esempio, il BRDL), potrebbe rivelarsi utile nello studio del linguaggio e della schizofrenia, in particolare per esaminare le implicazioni dei deficit mnemonici nella comprensione metaforica. A ben vedere, il programma permetterebbe di condurre sperimentazioni che coinvolgano sia la memoria di lavoro sia la memoria semantica. Tuttavia, per adattarlo a tale scopo, sarebbe necessario modificare alcuni aspetti: ad esempio, sarebbe utile individuare un modello a rete che rappresenti gli enunciati metaforici nella memoria semantica e modellare i processi di monitoraggio e inibizione nella memoria di lavoro. Sebbene il modello attuale non sia completamente adeguato a questa tipologia di ricerca, con le opportune modifiche potrebbe diventare uno strumento prezioso, in grado di superare i limiti dei modelli sperimentali attualmente in uso.

8. Conclusioni

La difficoltà nella comprensione del linguaggio figurato e, in particolare, delle metafore nelle persone con schizofrenia deriva da una combinazione complessa di deficit cognitivi e pragmatici. In questo articolo si sono esaminati in particolare i deficit mnemonici che sottendono le difficoltà di comprensione metaforica, rivelandosi fondamentali per comprendere la natura del concretismo e dei disturbi del linguaggio nella schizofrenia. Tuttavia, è importante sottolineare che, oltre ai deficit di memoria, anche altri fattori, come quelli legati alla Teoria della Mente, al quoziente intellettivo e alle competenze pragmatiche, giocano un ruolo cruciale nell'elaborazione metaforica, aspetti che non sono stati approfonditi in questo articolo.
Nel contesto specifico dei deficit di memoria, i modelli computazionali a rete, come il modello BRDL, offrono una prospettiva interessante per la ricerca sul ruolo della memoria nella comprensione di metafore nelle persone con schizofrenia in quanto consentono di simulare i processi cognitivi coinvolti, replicando risultati sperimentali e testando diverse teorie cognitive. Il modello BRDL, con gli opportuni adattamenti, si presenta come uno strumento utile per studiare non solo le dinamiche tra le reti semantiche, ma anche i tempi di recupero delle informazioni e il loro impatto sulla comprensione metaforica. Ad esempio, confrontando le reti di persone con schizofrenia e di un gruppo di controllo, sarebbe possibile ottenere nuovi risultati sui processi cognitivi coinvolti nell'elaborazione delle metafore.
Infine, è importante sottolineare che, sebbene la letteratura abbia ampiamente esaminato le difficoltà nella comprensione del linguaggio metaforico nella schizofrenia, vi è una significativa carenza di studi sulla produzione di metafore. Contrariamente a quanto ci si potrebbe aspettare, dati i deficit cognitivi, ricerche recenti hanno evidenziato che le persone con schizofrenia tendono a produrre una quantità di metafore simile a quella di individui con sviluppo tipico. Questo potrebbe suggerire che i deficit che influenzano la comprensione non intaccano in modo significativo i processi cognitivi legati alla produzione di metafore. È quindi fondamentale che la ricerca esplori anche la produzione di metafore, per comprendere meglio come le persone con schizofrenia elaborano il linguaggio figurato, sia in comprensione che in produzione.

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Chapter 25.
"Dynamische Sprache".
The Epistemological Role of Metaphor in the Creation of Quantum Mechanics Concepts

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Abstract

After the birth of Quantum Physics, German scientist Werner Heisenberg and the other members of the Copenhagen School soon realized that the traditional concepts used in Classical Mechanics (*CM*) such as space, time, or trajectory could not represent the phenomena of the subatomic world. One of the issues that the founders of Quantum Mechanics (*QM*) had to deal with concerned the epistemic limits of language. Therefore, to find the most effective way of addressing the epistemological and linguistic problems raised by *QM*, the Copenhagen physicists often employed metaphors. In this paper, I discuss the role of metaphors used by the Copenhagen School physicists to forge new concepts that are viable to represent subatomic phenomena. I will investigate how the use of metaphors in the early stage of *QM* bypassed the problem of classical logic and epistemology of *CM*.
By borrowing Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of «*perspicuous representation*» (*übersichtliche Darstellung*) and Werner Heisenberg's idea of «dynamic language» (*dynamische Sprache*), I will claim that metaphor works as a dynamic means to show inner connections: Wittgenstein maintains that philosophical problems arise when «we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words [and therefore] a perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in "seeing connections"» (Wittgenstein 1958: § 122); and for Heisenberg, a concept is «a "static" description of a part of reality» while the metaphor is a 'dynamic' representation, which «is not meant to be as faithful» as a concept, but «to be the seed for further series of ideas since it searches for the infinitely complex associations among other domains of reality to which we can point» (Heisenberg 2019: 27). In the end, I will analyse the meaning of selected metaphors extracted from Niels Bohr's works to explain why they successfully represent, name, and expound the phenomena of *QM*.

Keywords: Quantum Mechanics, metaphor and physics, *perspicuous representations, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr.*

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1. Introduction

After the birth of Quantum Physics, German scientist Werner Heisenberg and the other members of the Copenhagen School soon realized that the traditional concepts used in Classical Mechanics (henceforth *CM*) such as space, time, or trajectory failed to represent the phenomena of the subatomic world. One of the issues that the founders of Quantum Mechanics (henceforth *QM*) had to deal with concerned the epistemic limits of language.
In natural science, for a system to be consistent, its concepts and general laws must be «defined with complete precision, and this can be achieved only by means of mathematical abstraction» (Heisenberg 1958: 149). For centuries, the scientific epistemological system had remained the same, and the isomorphism between the meanings of the concepts and the mathematical symbols had remained valid, too: Heisenberg writes that even in the case of Einstein's revolutionary theory of relativity, «it was obvious in which way the mathematical symbol had to be correlated with the measurements and with the terms of ordinary language» (*Ibid*.: 151). With the Copenhagen theory, the correlation between mathematical symbols, measurement, and concepts ceased to function, which impliead, as Heisenberg writes, «the fact that our common concepts cannot be applied to the structure of the atoms» (*Ibid*.: 153). Such incompatibility represents an exceptional event in the history of science because, for the first time, the limits of the logical principles and concepts used to describe the scientific knowledge of the macro-world were revealed.
The members of the Copenhagen School were aware that the findings of their quantum experiments and theories would appear absurd, contradictory, and aporetic if interpreted through the principles, models, concepts, and philosophical premises of *CM*. However, those findings would result fully consistent if looked at through a new epistemological paradigm; thus, to find the most effective way of addressing the epistemological and linguistic problems raised by *QM*, the Copenhagen physicists often employed metaphors. In the following paragraphs, in order to answer these questions and show what role metaphor had in the epistemological definition of *QM*, I will borrow Werner Heisenberg's idea of a «dynamic language» (*dynamische Sprache,* 1958), developed in *Reality and Its Order* (*Ordnung der Wirklichkeit*) and Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of «*perspicuous representation»* (*übersichtliche Darstellung, 1986*), and I will claim that metaphor works as a dynamic means to show inner connections. In the end, I will analyse Niels Bohr's metaphor *an atom in a stationary state has a free choice*.

2. Metaphor as dynamische Sprache

Between 1941 and 1942, Heisenberg wrote *Reality and Its Order* in an attempt «to describe the whole of reality confronting the human being – from physical and chemical phenomena to biological systems up to the orders of society and the ideas of art and religion» (Heisenberg 1958: 2). For Heisenberg, science is not the only way to understand the phenomena of reality. On the contrary, different ways correspond to various human activities, ranging from the most subjective form of knowledge corresponding to artistic production, to the most objective form of knowledge, the epitome of which «is classical physics (mechanics, electrodynamics, phenomenological thermodynamics, special and general relativity)» (Schiemann 2019: 111). Heisenberg organizes this wide range of activities in a scale of layers (*die Schicht der Wirklichkeit*). On the first layer, the influence of the means used to attain knowledge is so minimal that it does not affect the representation; this is objective knowledge. As one proceeds through the following layers, the means used to observe reality increasingly influence the final

representation. Therefore, although it is still applied, the adjective objective becomes problematic, and knowledge reveals itself as essentially probabilistic, such as that concerning the subatomic phenomena. On the layers closest to subjectivity, the influence of the means used to attain knowledge is so strong that the concept of objectivity can no longer be applied: this is the case with artistic representations. Finally, on a purely subjective level, knowledge cannot be separated from its means, that is, individual beliefs, perceptions, feelings, and character. This distinction is fundamental because «the notion of levels of Reality will lead us to a general philosophical understanding of the nature of indeterminacy. If there was only one region or level of reality, it was [sic] impossible to conceive what means a true, irreducible indeterminacy, like the quantum one» (Nicolescu 2000: 130). For Heisenberg, every layer produces a specific type of knowledge, not only the objective one based on the Cartesian-like distinction between subject and object. In Heisenberg’s view, there is not even a clear division between the layers, which are instead connected by words that can be used on more than one layer: for example, the word *wave* can be found both on the more objective level of *CM*, in *QM,* and on the more subjective level of emotionality. Generally speaking, words are used on an objective level with the same meaning; conversely, as one gets closer to a subjective layer of reality, the possibility that words may be used with different meanings increases. For this reason, Heisenberg states that «concepts are the conspicuous points at which the different layers of reality are interwoven» (Heisenberg 2019: 25).

What does the metaphor *concepts are conspicuous points* mean? The word *conspicuous* stems from the Latin *conspicuus*, a derivation of *cum-spico*, meaning what attracts the gaze and is clearly visible.[1] In Heisenberg’s context, the word means that a concept can be used in different ways. That makes it possible to create a reliable system described as «a rigid schema of rules governing the connections between concepts, and then again between concepts and the contents of experiences, allowing an unambiguous determination of whether a sentence using this conceptual system is “correct” or “incorrect”» (*Ibid*.: 26). Heisenberg defines this secure modality of representing states as *static*. Static representations, i.e. those in which the word is used by one meaning so as to always represent the same state of affairs, belong to an objective, secure, and universally valid system. Security, however, is granted at the expense of the «infinitely complex association among words and concepts without which we would lack any sense at all that we have understood anything of the infinite abundance of reality» (*Ibid*.: 27). Alongside this modality, Heisenberg also conceives a dynamic state, which is characterized by the unlimited connective potential of words: «An idea expressed in this way is not meant to be as faithful a representation of reality as possible but to be the seed for further series of ideas. The issue is not the accuracy but the fruitfulness of concepts» (*Ibid*.). Just as the concept is the preferred form in the static mode, the metaphor is the preferred form in the dynamic mode. One can thus state that the concept is to static language, as the metaphor is to dynamic language. Heisenberg also sees the limits of the two modes: the concepts of the static mode risk becoming merely formal representations without content, while the free connectivity of the dynamic mode risks becoming too vague and incomprehensible. In order to avoid this risk, one needs to use the two methods in the appropriate contexts: therefore, in science, whenever a concept is adequate to define a phenomenon, it must always be used so as to prevent ambiguity; when the concept is not viable to define a phenomenon, then, the metaphor becomes, paradoxically, the best way to represent it.

[1]See https://www.dizionario-latino.com/dizionario-latinoitaliano.php?lemma= CONSPICUUS100.

3. Metaphor as übersichtliche Darstellung

Heisenberg was aware of Wittgenstein's work. In an interview in 1970, conducted by David Peat and Paul Buckley, he asserts: «I should first state my own opinion about Wittgenstein's philosophy. I never could do too much with early Wittgenstein and the philosophy of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, but I like very much the later ideas of Wittgenstein and his philosophy about language» (Peat 2016).[2]

In this passage, Heisenberg recognises in Wittgenstein's late philosophy an adequate conception of language capable of dissolving the epistemological paradox of *QM*. That is because in *Philosophical Investigations* (henceforth *PI*, 1958), Wittgenstein no longer applies the rules of logical systems to understand the complexity of language but uses analogies, examples, and metaphors. Wittgenstein already used metaphors in the *Tractatus* to express that which cannot be said (Piredda 2021). However, metaphors subsequently became an integral part of his method of analysing language. In my opinion, metaphors are part of the *übersichtliche Darstellung*, or rather they are particular forms of *übersichtliche Darstellung* (and therefore they have all the characteristics of those) as well as they are part of the *dynamische Sprache*. The expression *übersichtliche Darstellung* can already be found in *Remarks on Frazer's The Golden Bough*[3] (henceforth *RF*, 2018) and is the only expression of that text that Wittgenstein transported into *PI*.

The German expression *übersichtliche Darstellung* means a representation, whose elements are shown clearly and simultaneously, i.e. an image that can be grasped immediately. This expression does not have a lexical equivalent in other European languages, therefore Miles and Rhees, who were the first English translators of Wittgenstein's text, decided to adopt the term «perspicuous» which means transparent, evident, and clear.[4] Besides translation, the expression *übersichtliche Darstellung* is challenging because Wittgenstein never gives any exhaustive definition of it but only states: «For us the concept of perspicuous presentation is of fundamental importance. It designates our form of presentation, the way we see things. (A kind of "Weltanschauung" as it is apparently typical of our time. Spengler)» (Wittgenstein 2018: § 46); and he adds: «It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things (Is this a "Weltanschauung"?)» (Wittgenstein 1986: § 122).

Scholars have interpreted Wittgenstein's perspicuous representation in a variety of different ways. All interpreters agree in maintaining, as one can see in *PI*, § 122, that perspicuous representations have the function of providing clarity and therefore contribute to dissolving philosophical problems. Beyond this agreement, there are various hermeneutic declinations. The two most important interpretations are perhaps those attempted by Peter Hacker (2001) and Gordon Baker (2004). For the former, perspicuous representations are themselves perspicuous and completely clarify the philosophical problem they deal with. For the latter, perspicuous representations cannot be clear, much less provide total clarity.[5]

[2]Accessed on 10 April 2022.

[3] In one of the essays annexed to the English version, Stephan Palmié writes that «according to Rhees's version, Wittgenstein commenced writing on Frazer for a few weeks in June 1931 […] there was a second set of notes on *The Golden Bough*, jotted down on 'odd bits of paper, not earlier than 1936 [when Wittgenstein acquired a personal copy of the 1922 abridged edition] and probably after 1948'» (Palmié 2018: 1-2).

[4]See https://www.dizionario-latino.com/dizionario-latino-italiano.php?lemma =PERSPICUITAS100.

[5] Other interpretations: Daniel Hutto claims that philosophy must, first of all, clarify language: therefore, philosophy «employs perspicuous representations to bring "relevant connections" to light for the purposes of enabling us to understand and reflect on aspects of various domains of human being» (Hutto 2007: 299). Other interpreters aim to confute or maintain Backer's or Hacker's views; see, for example, Hutchinson & Read (2008: 141-160).

By referring to these different interpretations, Christian Martin wonders «whether a perspicuous presentation is *itself* perspicuous, as well as […] to which extent it succeeds to make its subject matter perspicuous» (Martin 2016: 82). In my opinion, a perspicuous representation makes something plain, precisely because it is perspicuous in itself: that, however, does not mean that a metaphor is totally clear. In fact, a metaphor always possesses a certain degree of uncertainty, and therefore, the kind of knowledge it produces can never be exhaustive like scientific knowledge. In my opinion, therefore, a perspicuous representation has the same characteristics as Heisenberg’s dynamic expressions. Starting with § 122 and the above-mentioned propositions of *RF*, one can identify two main characteristics of perspicuous representations which are also the fundamental characteristics of metaphors: connectivity and the possibility that words may have different meanings. The proposition § 122 of *PI* derives from § 22 of *RF* where Wittgenstein states that the perspicuous representation produces knowledge not based on causal explanation, which is instead derived from the deductive logical process. That is so because a perspicuous representation is based on connectivity: «The perspicuous presentation transmits an understanding of the kind that what we see are “just the connections”» (Wittgenstein 2018: § 22). One difference between the proposition in § 22 and that in § 122 is the verb: in the latter, Wittgenstein writes that a perspicuous representation *produces* (and no longer *transmits*, as in § 22) comprehension. This change is fundamental because it indicates that a perspicuous representation is poietic. The same thing can be stated for the metaphor, whose meaning originates from the complexity of the connections between the two words that constitute it: therefore, by changing the subject of § 122, one can state that *a metaphor produces just that understanding which consists in “seeing connections”*. Seeing connections is a metaphor itself, and a fundamental one in *PI*. Here, the metaphor of *seeing* represents both the human way of seeing/knowing and the method that Wittgenstein adopts to investigate language errors. At the heart of the *seeing* metaphor lies the connection between propositions and images. For Wittgenstein, there are different ways of seeing: «There is such a thing as seeing in this way or that; and there are also cases where whoever sees a sample like this will in general use it in this way, and whoever sees it otherwise in another way» (Wittgenstein 1986: § 74). And further on, he writes: «Two uses of the word “see”. The one: “What do you see there?” – I see this” (and then a description, a drawing, a copy). The other: “I see a likeness between these two faces”» (XI, 193). We, therefore, have:

1) *simply seeing* when the word/picture is used by its common or primary meaning. This is the most widespread use of the term;
2) *seeing-as* when the word/picture is used by one of its secondary meanings: *seeing-as* means to recognise that *this is that*, viz seeing connections between things;
3) *seeing through*. This is a particular declination of *seeing-as*.

Wittgenstein mentions it in § 90: «We feel as if we had to *penetrate [looking through]* phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the “*possibilities*” of phenomena». While in the case of *simply seeing* the meaning can be grasped immediately because the habitual use of the word makes it automatically understandable, in the case of *seeing-as* an act of recognition is performed. Schematically, we can say that *seeing-as* has three declinations that allow us to grasp: 1) the meaning of a polysemous word/picture in a given context; 2) the meaning of a double image (*Kippbild*)/homonym; 3) the metaphorical meaning, which in this article I call *seeing through*. Seeing connections means seeing the intermediate members that link two things: «Hence the importance of finding intermediate links» (§ 46), writes Wittgenstein in *RF*, and «hence the importance of finding and inventing intermediate cases», he writes in *PI* (§ 122). Also in this

case, Wittgenstein does not say what intermediate links are but in *RF* he gives the example of the transformation of a circle into an ellipse. This example does not serve to affirm that the second figure, the ellipse, derives from the first, the circle, which would imply a causal relationship between the two figures, but only to point out that a series of internal, intermediate and not immediately visible shapes show the relationship between the two figures. In other words, to understand the relationship between the circle and the ellipse, we need to «sharpen our eye» and see the most hidden connections and intermediate shapes between the two figures (§ 22). In *PI*, the intermediate links are the connections that bind all the members of the same family (family resemblances), i.e. the similarities that allow us to recognise what a game is (§ 67) and that games differ from each other although they share similarities, connections, and intermediate links (§ 66-77).
The same method used to recognise that 'this is that' occurs in the metaphor where the two terms appear in the same structure and are not connected by any logical relationship, but by a series of internal, intermediate connections that are not immediately evident. In metaphors, and more in general in perspicuous representations, understanding consists precisely in the fact that we «see connections», that is, we see the possible meanings of the representation. Synthetically, one can state that words can be used in a proposition as concepts or as analogies and metaphors: in the first case, the concept gives a clear and exhaustive definition and establishes the meaning of a word, which stands in an isomorphic relationship with the object that it represents; in the second case, the word does not give an exhaustive definition referring to a single object. The word used in this way is 'perspicuous' and 'dynamic': when we use the word as a concept to indicate the same meaning, the word is therefore 'static', but when we use it in a metaphor it is 'dynamic'.
I will now move on to consider how the dynamism of metaphoric words produces uncertain but useful knowledge in certain contexts described in Niels Bohr's texts.

4. Bohr's metaphor: *An atom in a stationary state has a free choice*

In addition to scientific articles, Bohr wrote a series of articles where he speaks about «the essential aspects of the situation in quantum physics» and, at the same time, stresses «the points of similarity it exhibits to our position on other fields of knowledge beyond the scope of the mechanical conception of nature» (Bohr 1961a: 2). In those writings, Bohr uses many metaphors, clarifying that he is «not dealing here with more or less vague analogies, but with an investigation of the conditions for the proper use of our conceptual means of expression» and that «such considerations not only aim at making us familiar with the novel situation in physical science, but might on account of the comparatively simple character of atomic problems help clarify the conditions for objective description on wider fields» (*Ibid*.: 2).
As previously mentioned in the introduction, after the discovery of the subatomic world, many concepts and logical principles, on which the epistemological system of *CM* is based, can no longer be applied to understand and describe quantum phenomena. Thus, Bohr writes, «even the principle of causality, so far regarded as the unquestioned foundation for all interpretation of natural phenomena, has proved too narrow a frame to embrace the peculiar regularities governing individual atomic processes» (Bohr 1958b: 25). In other words, Bohr points out that in *QM* «we are faced with an epistemological problem quite new in natural philosophy, where all description of experiences has so far been based upon the assumption, already inherent in ordinary conventions of language, that it is possible to distinguish sharply between the behavior of object and the means of observation» (*Ibid*.). Since the concepts of determinism and cause-effect cannot be applied to understand atomic behaviour, Bohr, needing to describe the structure

of the atom and its functioning, proposes a metaphor that combines the fields of physics-chemistry with that of ethics: *An atom in a stationary state has a free choice*.
Before analysing this metaphor, it is necessary to understand what Bohr’s atomic model is and what it implies. In the history of quantum physics, Bohr’s atomic model has been a fundamental representation as it overcomes and resolves the problem of the instability of Rutherford’s model, which in turn surpassed Thompson’s model (Piredda 2024: 219). In Bohr’s model, the electrons rotate around the nucleus; the distance between their orbits and the nucleus is determined by the amount of energy, called energy levels, which is distributed on a scale of levels (level n=1, n=2, n=3, n=4, n=5, n=6, n=7). After every measurement, in the atom the electrons shift from one energy level to another. To describe this phenomenon, Bohr uses a metaphor, stating that whenever the electron absorbs or emits a photon, it ‘jumps’ from one level to another. However, this ‘jump’ is unpredictable and indeterminate and leaves the observer under the impression that the electron ‘decides’ how and where to jump, as if it has its own will. For that reason, Bohr coined the metaphor *an atom in a stationary state has a free choice*: in the article *An Atomic Theory and the Fundamental Principles Underlying the Description of Nature,* Bohr writes that «we are here so far removed from a causal description that an atom in a stationary state may in general even be said to possess a free choice between various possible transitions to other stationary states» (Bohr 1961b: 109).
Bohr simply uses the idea of free choice to represent and justify the behaviour of the electron within the atom, but without engaging in any ethical and theological discussion about free choice and free will. However, he accepts their general definition on which all scholars, either pro or against, agree. In the fields of morality and theology, the two concepts are viscerally connected and stand in contrast with the cause-effect principle and the concept of determinism. Free will presupposes two necessary conditions. First of all, in order to talk about free choice there must be several possible alternatives to evaluate. This condition implies that any agent may decide to act differently. The second condition is that choosing must be an autonomous expression of the agent’s willingness to choose: this condition implies that the free agent does not act deterministically.
The metaphorical connection between the behaviour of the electron inside the atom and free choice suggests that the electron is not bound to the cause-effect relationship, and that there are different positions where the electron can freely ‘decide’ to jump. As we have seen, according to Bohr’s model, the hydrogen atom has a certain number of stationary states which do not change in the absence of external perturbations. Apparently, any cause can make the electron emit or absorb a photon and ‘jump’ from one orbit to another, which suggests the idea that the electron decides spontaneously to displace itself.
Bohr carefully points out that this analogy is nothing but a metaphor, as well as that the cause-effect principle does not exist in nature but is a particularly fruitful way to represent the phenomena of our world: «Just as the freedom of the will is an experiential category of our psychic life, causality may be considered as a mode of perception by which we reduce our sense impression to order» (Bohr 1961b: 116-117).
Although Bohr needs to underline that the connections between human freedom of choice and the behaviour of the atom have only the purpose of clarifying one aspect of the second, this metaphor was later taken as the basis of John Conway’s theory. Conway postulated the so-called *Free Will Theorem*,[6] which asserts that «if indeed we humans [or experimenters] have free will, then elementary particles already have their own small share of this valuable commodity» (Conway 2009: 226) and, vice versa, «it is natural to suppose that this latter

[6] Cfr. «The axioms SPIN, TWIN and MIN imply that the response of a spin 1 particle to a triple experiment is free – that is to say, is not a function of properties of that part of the universe that is earlier than this response with respect to any given inertial frame» (Conway 2009: 228).

freedom is the ultimate explanation of our own» (*Ibid.*: 230). It is not possible to delve here into the debate that this theory based on a bad interpretation of Bohr's original metaphor has sparked, but I would like to quote Feynman's words that confine the theory of the atom's free will to mere nonsense:[7]

> If we have an atom that is in an excited state and so is going to emit a photon, we cannot say when it will emit the photon. It has a certain amplitude to emit the photon at any time, and we can predict only a probability for emission; we cannot predict the future exactly. This has given rise to all kinds of nonsense and questions on the meanings of freedom of will, and of the idea that the world is uncertain (Feynman 1963: 3.18).

Through the metaphor of free will, Bohr gives a representation that permits us to justify the fact that «this very situation forces us to renounce on a complete causal account of the light phenomena and to be content with probability laws based on the fact that the electromagnetic description of energy transfer remains valid in a statistical sense» (Bohr 1958a: 5).

Conclusion

Bohr's example permits us to better understand the difference between static and dynamic words and their use. The concept of free will has a precise and stable definition on the level of ethics but when is used as a metaphor on the level of *QM* it loses its stability and rigidity and becomes dynamic. Precisely thanks to this change of state, the concept within a metaphor like *an atom in a stationary state has free will*, becomes part of a perspicuous representation capable of showing the possible connections, even the most hidden ones, between the two terms and therefore producing knowledge, although not objective, of the metaphorized element.

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[7]Among the detractors, Valia Allori rejects the free will theorem because «it does not prove neither that if people are free, so are particles, nor that the property people possess when they are said to be free is the same as the one particles possess when they are claimed to be free» (2019: 3); Vasil Penchevalso rejects the idea of free will, discerning it from choice and claiming that «an electron has always a choice but not free will unlike a human possessing both» (2020: 185).

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