Metaphors in Political Discourse from a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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The paper focuses on various ways in which metaphors in political discourse reflect the cultural and linguistic environments from which they emerge. It discusses conceptual metaphors and their linguistic realisations in popular pre-election discourse in English, German, and three Euro-Mediterranean languages (i. e. Slovene, Italian and Croatian). One of the main aims of the paper is to present a contrastive analysis model which combines quantitative and qualitative methods on the one hand, and top-down and bottom-up approaches to metaphor research on the other. Reference will be made to the results of a case study based on the contrastive analysis of a corpus of pre-election articles related to the American elections in 2008 which has been undertaken to validate the proposed model. It will be argued that while the selected languages conceptualise elections in similar ways, there are also significant variations which have cultural implications.

Key Words: conceptual metaphors, pre-election discourse, cross-cultural differences, contrastive analysis

INTRODUCTION

The present paper is geared towards establishing ways in which metaphors reflect the linguistic and cultural environments from which they emerge. To this purpose, metaphors in political discourse were examined from a cross-cultural perspective, involving five different languages. Since the initial stage of the analysis opened a number of methodological questions, I decided to address them systematically with a contrastive analysis model which will be presented in the paper as a proposed procedure for related kinds of research. Rather than a procedure to be followed strictly, the different stages are meant as a set of guidelines substantiated with some central theoretical considerations in metaphor research. There are clear

tendencies to combine quantitative and qualitative methods on the one hand, and top-down and bottom-up approaches to metaphor research on the other. Reference will be made to the results of a case study undertaken to validate the proposed model.

[4]   The case study was focused on conceptual metaphors and their linguistic realisations in a corpus of pre-election articles related to the American elections in 2008 in English, German, and three Euro-Mediterranean languages (i. e. Slovene, Italian and Croatian). The analysis was aimed at establishing the degree of universality and/or variation in conceptual metaphors and their realisations between the five languages. The results have shown that the selected languages share many metaphorical conceptualisations of elections, such as the conceptual metaphors ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE and ELECTIONS ARE A CONTEST. However, the results also suggest that there are variations in the use of metaphors between and within the languages analysed. Three such variations will be discussed below, variation in the degree of conventionality, variation at source domain level, and variation in the form of preferential conceptualisations. I will therefore argue that while the above languages conceptualise elections in similar ways, there are also important variations which have cultural implications.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

From a broad methodological perspective the present research is related to two theoretical traditions which are focused on metaphors as forms of organising conceptual structure, i. e. the conceptual theory of metaphor as one of the more prominent frameworks within cognitive linguistics and critical metaphor analysis as an off-spring of critical discourse analysis. It has been suggested that valuable methodological tools for researching metaphors in political discourse can be gained by combining these two traditions (Charteris-Black 2004; Goatly 2007; Cienki 2008). In this respect, a dialogue between the above mentioned frameworks can be achieved by using the methodological apparatus of the conceptual theory of metaphor (i. e. the definition and idea of conceptual metaphor, the theory of domains, etc.) while employing the reasoning of critical metaphor

analysis in the sense of the significance given to metaphors in a discourse and the role metaphors play in conceptualizing our social reality (Charteris-Black 2004; Musolff 2004).

Several researchers have argued that metaphor should be studied by taking into account its linguistic features as much as its cognitive [5] and communicative aspects (Cameron 1999; Gibbs 2008). However, analysing metaphors contrastively by considering all these facets raises a number of methodological questions, such as which segment of language is to be considered for analysis and comparison, how to compare and contrast metaphors at both linguistic and conceptual level and what are the criteria for establishing universality or variation. The model presented below is an attempt to tackle some of these questions in a systematic fashion. It consists of seven different stages, namely (1) determining the purpose of the analysis, (2) selecting relevant sources, (3) extensive reading of texts, (4) intensive reading of texts, (5) identifying metaphor systematicity, (6) establishing universality and/or variation, and (7) the interpretation of results. Each of these stages can be related to numerous studies as well as large bodies of work in metaphor research. However, given constraints on space, I will only be able to highlight and make limited reference to some of these approaches.

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS MODEL

Determining the Purpose of the Analysis

Broadly speaking, the purpose of analysing metaphors in a discourse cross-linguistically can be of a twofold nature, i. e. we can either aim at universality, trying to establish whether particular conceptual metaphors can be found in discourses across languages and cultures, or at variation, looking for various degrees of variation in the use of metaphors in different languages. The question of metaphor universality, which was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980 and is still relevant today, worked around the premise that certain metaphors could be regarded as universal or near-universal and therefore independent of the time and place in which they occur. This is one of the main underlying assumptions of the cognitive view of metaphor which relates the universality of metaphor to the claim

that human experience is largely universal. In this regard, particular attention has been paid to studies of metaphors related to emotions which imply a universal form of physiological embodiement for a particular emotion, such as anger. The conceptual metaphor which is frequently analysed in this context is ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER which has been identified in a number of unrelated languages, such as English, Hungarian, Japanese, Woof and others (Kövecses 2005, 40–41). In addition, by analysing metaphors related to anger in Tunisian Arabic, Maalej (2004) has shown that there are other aspects of embodiement related to anger besides its physiological effects, such as culturally specific embodiement which takes into consideration the cultural aspects of different parts of the body. Another issue which has intrigued many cognitive linguists and psychologists is the conceptualization of time. Although it has been argued that time is conceptualised largely in the same way across languages, some studies suggest that there are important variations between languages (Boroditsky 2001).

[6]

While the question of metaphor universality is still subject to some debate, the fact that there is cultural and linguistic variation involved in metaphors is usually taken for granted. Since according to the cognitive view, metaphors do not function merely at the linguistic level but also on the conceptual, physical (bodily), and sociocultural level, it should not come as a surprise that they are subject to variation across and within languages. On the other hand, universality and variation can be seen as two sides of the same coin as, in the majority of cases, they presuppose each other, so we can always expect to find degrees of both in our research. In the case study presented here, the purpose of the analysis was to establish both cross-linguistic variation and universality in the use of metaphors in pre-election political discourse.

Selecting Relevant Sources

The selection of relevant sources has been the topic of lively discussions in metaphor research. In the past, the conceptual theory of metaphor has often been criticised for basing its conclusions on linguistic data gained exclusively through introspection. Today, vari-

ous corpora, which are undoubtedly superior in terms of data coverage and processing, are seen as a much more reliable source of linguistic metaphors. Most commonly, corpora are used quantitatively to extract information on frequency, although they can also be used to identify metaphorical patterns in a language sample, which was convincingly argued by Stefanowitsch (2006) with metaphorical pattern analysis. However, despite numerous methodological benefits, there are still two major obstacles to corpus research. First, linguistic metaphors are usually accessed through pre-selected lexical items, while many linguistic metaphors are not easily connected with a particular source domain or the corresponding conceptual metaphor on the lexical level and cannot be retrieved automatically. Another obstacle is the limited access to metaphor productivity offered by corpus research. By analysing a list of pre-selected lexical items related to a particular conceptual metaphor, we may leave out potentially relevant data. In the case study, the conceptual metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A CONTEST proved to have great generative power as it yielded numerous and diverse linguistic metaphors extending the source domain to unpredictable regions. I would like to argue that in order to account for this variability, it is worth analysing metaphors on the level of text or a collection of texts (mini corpora) which are more manageable and can be analysed both in terms of frequency of key lexical items and in terms of metaphor productivity. Cienki (2008) discusses the issue of using large corpora for metaphor research and following Mussolf (2004) and Cameron and Deignan (2003) argues in favour of using a representative small corpus in the first stage of the analysis and only then analysing a larger corpus for frequency and patterning of occurrence of particular aspects identified in the smaller corpus.

Another important factor when deciding on the relevant sources of metaphors in a discourse to be analysed contrastively is to select sources which lend themselves to comparison, such as using parallel texts in different languages related to the same topic. In this respect, the main reason for choosing the American elections was the assumption that the event would receive wide media coverage in the selected languages. The sources of the articles were two major

[7]

TABLE 1 Corpus Structure

Language (publications)	(1)	(2)	(3)
English (*New York Times, Washington Post*)	31	1278	42,723
Slovenian (*Delo, Dnevnik*)	29	766	22,202
German (*Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine*)	32	785	25,135
Croatian (*Večernji list, Jutarnji list*)	26	369	9,619
Italian (*Repubblica, Corriere della sera*)	22	797	17,541
Total	140		117,220

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) number of articles, (2) average article length in words, (3) number of words.

daily newspapers from countries where the selected languages are spoken. Besides circulation (all the newspapers are among the publications with the highest circulation in the respective countries), the selection was based on two main criteria. The first was the assumption that the newspapers would follow the election activities closely and at some length since they are all high-quality publications with a strong emphasis on daily news, as well as political and social issues in general. Secondly, the main reason for the selection of two rather than a single newspaper is related to the attempt to account for a balance in terms of general editorial stance. The articles, which were collected over a period of ten days before and the first day after the elections, were chosen according to their relevance to the topic in question. The majority of the articles selected for analysis have focused directly on the election activities of the parties and the presidential candidates involved. The discrepancy in the size of the corpora can be seen to reflect the amount of attention the newspapers paid to the election activities in the USA (and hence also the size of the English corpus). Table 1 shows the corpus size for each language, including the publications and the number of articles reporting on the event.

Extensive Reading

The third stage allows us to get a broad understanding of the content and a general idea of the conceptual domains which pervade the text. By acquiring this first information about the predomi-

nant metaphorical concepts, we can become more susceptible to particular instances of linguistic metaphors at the intensive reading stage and all the possible metaphorical entailments. For example, the analysis of the English corpus revealed six major metaphorical conceptualisations of elections, i. e. elections as contest, fighting, journey, gambling, show, and sea voyage. Of these, the domains of contest and battle were realised on the linguistic level in the highest number of different linguistic metaphors, 118 for battle and 76 for contest (compared to 21 occurrences for journey, 14 for gambling, and 6 for show and sea voyage each). However, as we shall see below, the linguistic realisations of particular conceptual metaphors are not always easy to identify. In such cases, being aware of the overriding metaphorical themes can considerably narrow down the possible domains. [9]

(1) *Take off seven points* for hidden racial animus. *Subtract another five* for polling error. *It is down to two points …*

Example (1) conceptualises the performance of the election candidates in terms of collecting or subtracting points. The source domain could be linked to various domains, for example school tests, but the information about the predominant metaphors clearly points to the domain of contest.

Intensive Reading

At the intensive reading stage we scrutinize the whole corpus of texts manually with the aim of extracting all the possible linguistic realisations of a potential conceptual metaphor. However, if we aim to analyse the productivity of a particular metaphor, we need to consider that conceptual metaphors can be realised in a language in many different ways. The most important question at this point is which stretch of language to analyse as a linguistic metaphor. Examples (2) and (3) below point to the limitations of restricting the extent of linguistic metaphors to a particular segment of language (e. g. a word, phrase or clause) which could be isolated and analysed as a recurrent structure:

(2) McCain's *allies.*

(3) This once-red state is now a *raging battleground,* along with a few others where Mr. Obama has sought to *expand his electoral map.*

[10]   In (2), it is the noun phrase alone which contains enough information about both the source and target domains (i. e. elections and battle) to enable us to recognise it as a metaphor, while in the case of (3), the metaphor is spread over the whole sentence. By breaking it down into smaller units (for example, we could analyse just *Obama has sought to expand his electoral map*) we would lose the connection between the fighting (*raging battleground*) and the outcome (*expand his electoral map*). At the intensive reading stage we continuously need to make choices on the lexical level. While it would be too ambitious to try to account for all such instances with a single strategy or definition, a working approach suggested is to consider the minimal context necessary for identifying the source and the target domain and the cross-domain mappings involved as, for example, in (2), while at the same time retaining the full extent of the metaphor as in (3).

     The question of precise identification of specific linguistic terms related to conceptual metaphors has long been at the very heart of the criticism aimed at the conceptual theory of metaphor. Calls for a more scientific and methodologically sound approach to identifying metaphorically used language resulted in the proposal of a special identification procedure, first developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), and later refined by Steen et al. (2010). The metaphor identification procedure (MIP) is an explicit and systematic tool which consists of five steps (see Cienki 2008 for an overview) and is used to establish whether particular lexical items are used metaphorically or not. It can be seen as a useful strategy in resolving instances of uncertainty about particular lexical units. The primary goal of the MIP procedure is to establish the contrast between the contextual and a more basic sense of the lexical item analysed. The role of context is laid out in the third step of the MIP procedure: 'For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, i. e. how it applies to an entity, relation or attribute in the situation evoked by the text

(contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.' (Cienki 2008, 247–8). In example (4) the use of the word 'aides' might be seen as ambiguous in the sense that its basic meaning ('aide-de-camp,' a military officer assisting his superior) can be related to the domain of battle, which is reinforced by the lexical unit 'ground troops' in the same sentence. Broadly following the MIP guidelines, we can see that the contextual meaning (here reflected by Mr. Obama in the role of presidential candidate) clearly contrasts with the basic meaning of the word, thus indicating that the meaning of the word is metaphorical.

[11]

(4) Mr. Obama's *aides* said that he would be hesitant to commit American *ground troops,* who are in short supply because of the demands of Iraq and Afghanistan.

While the MIP can be seen as a useful and transparent strategy for identifying more ambiguous cases of metaphorically used meanings of particular lexical items and their underlying conceptual structures, its application has several practical limitations. First of all, applying MIP on a larger scale (to whole texts) would be extremely time-consuming. Moreover, by focusing on particular lexical items, the procedure fails to account for the variety and complexity of different instantantions of metaphors which are realised above the word level (such as in example 3 above). This also presupposes a much wider and more complex definition of context. In the case of the expression 'aides' in (4) above the context is not only evoked by the situation or what comes before and after the lexical unit but also by one of the major metaphorical themes permeating the corpus.

Identifying Metaphor Systematicity

Having recorded all the linguistic metaphors, the next stage is to look for recurring patterns leading to different degrees of systematicity. Systematicity in the form of recurring metaphorical patterns can be seen at various levels. Cameron (1999, 16) has identified three such levels, i. e. local, global and discourse systematicity. Local systematicity refers to the development and realisation of a

conceptual metaphor within a particular text, while global system-
aticity reflects systems and layers of metaphors from a range of
discourse types. Discourse systematicity, which is focused on spe-
cific discourses, can be placed between these two. The data collected
[12] from the case study of American elections show clear systematicity
of the metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE both at the lo-
cal level and discourse level. In individual articles analysed as texts,
several aspects of the source domain of battle are developed system-
atically and this is reflected also at the corpus level. In addition to
this, various degrees of systematicity were identified at specific lev-
els of metaphors, such as the lower-level instantiation ELECTIONS
ARE CONQUERING LAND discussed below which is congruent
with the higher-level metaphor.

At this stage, the related conceptual domains and the cross-
domain mappings are identified and, finally, conceptual metaphors
are established. However, as data collected in this way are rarely neat
and easily analysable, simple conclusions about their nature are of-
ten difficult to arrive at, such as associating a particular lexical item
with a corresponding domain. In the case study, this was particularly
difficult to establish with expressions related to the two predomi-
nant domains of BATTLE and CONTEST, as they share a number of
lexical items. For example, where does the lexical item 'win' belong?
Which definition of 'win' do we take as the basic meaning: 'achieve
a victory' or 'finish first in a competition'? The case study showed
that the distinction between the domains of battle and contest are
more often than not blurred. Goatly (2007, 78–87) touches upon this
issue in his discussion of the adversarial system. He suggests that
the adversarial system has developed in Western societies as a ba-
sic schema of force dynamics. In this context, we can see the two
conceptual metaphors, ELECTIONS AS BATTLE or CONTEST, as
specific-level metaphors of a generic adversarial schema.

For the purposes of the case study presented here, it was never-
theless important to make a distinction between the two domains.
One of the aims of the study was to find out whether elections were
conceptualised more as a battle or as a contest. The method used was
to examine a larger portion of context, looking for contextual clues
or the prevailing conceptual metaphor in the text analysed.

Establishing Universality and/or Variation

The contrastive analysis stage is carried out both at the linguistic and conceptual level. Although different aspects of metaphor can be subject to variation, it is the source domain which is the most productive supply of variation and likely to contain cultural content. The cultural embeddedness of metaphors is expected particularly at the specific level of metaphors, while the generic-level metaphors are more likely to be good candidates for universal or near-universal metaphors. On the other hand, there are several distinct kinds of conceptualizations across languages which are not confined to specific-level metaphors. [13]

A useful set of criteria is proposed by Kövecses (2005, 67–86) who discusses three possibilities of cultural variation, i. e. congruent, alternative and preferential metaphors. Congruent metaphors are metaphors which are in congruence with the generic schema but may lead to unique cultural content at lower levels, for example the anger-related expressions in Japanese which are grouped around the concept *hara* (lit. 'belly') (p. 68). Secondly, there are several distinct kinds of alternative conceptualizations across languages, such as the alternative to the common conceptualisation of time, according to which the future is 'in front' and the past 'behind us,' in some languages (such as Maori) in which the past is conceptualized as being 'in front' and the future 'behind' (p. 71). And thirdly, while in many cases two or more languages may share some conceptual metaphors, the speakers of a language may show preference for a particular conceptual metaphor. Kövecses (2005, 84–5) gives as an example the results of a survey in which a group of American and Hungarian students were asked to select common source domains for the target concept LIFE. The findings revealed that although the participants generally shared the source domains, there were differences in the preference for particular domains, with Hungarians showing preference for the conceptualisation of life as a struggle and the Americans for the perception of life as a precious possession.

There is another aspect of variation which could be added to the above three, namely different languages may share the same conceptual metaphor but may differ with respect to the degree of conventionality. This aspect needs to be addressed with particular sensitiv-

ity especially when metaphorically generated terms are translated, i. e. when metaphors are transferred across language and cultural barriers (Kocbek 2013, 34). An eloquent example of such variation is the ubiquity of metaphorically motivated jargon and terminology [14] related to the metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE, which was recognized in the American pre-election discourse. While expressions such as 'battleground state,' 'camp,' 'column,' 'stronghold,' 'allies,' and 'blitz' all clearly belong to the domain of battle, their role and importance in the context of elections varies considerably. This is also evident from the following examples of metaphors from the case study:

(5a) … presidential *campaign* …
(5b) … McCain's *camp* …
(5c) … *long march* on the White House …

Today *campaign* clearly belongs to election terminology, referring to organised pre-election activities. This means we hardly see it as a metaphor in the first place, its etymology (from Italian *campagna* meaning 'field' or 'military operation') largely forgotten. From a diachronic perspective we can argue that as it is a dead metaphor, it has acquired terminological status. On the other hand, the word *camp* in (5a) in the context of elections has not lost all its metaphorical power as we can still recognise it as a metaphor. Yet this expression is frequently used for organisation units of a political party during elections, which means that its meaning has become conventionalised. In this case, we could argue that *camp* belongs to metaphorically motivated pre-election jargon. However, the expression *long march* in (5c) is clearly a live or active metaphor as its interpretation requires a wider context. Analysing metaphors in business discourse in which the military domain also appears to be dominant, Koller (2006, 247) argues that:

While the lexemes in question are certainly not consciously employed by all speakers in every single instance, their presence is still significant as it ties in perfectly with that of other lemmas from the war domain that are perceived as more metaphoric, for example *blitz* or *troops*.

Table 2 shows a number of key lexical items which belong to the BATTLE domain and their systematic use in the pre-election context. The figure in brackets refers to the number of their occurrences in the corpus. While several of these lexical items were identified in all the languages analysed, such as the word 'battle' and its transla- [15] tion equivalents in the other four languages, it is also clear that the English set is the largest and, most importantly, the most systematically organised.[1] Bearing in mind the number of occurrences of the key lexical items in question I would like to argue that this aspect can be accounted for despite the admittedly larger size of the English corpus.

This claim is reinforced by the fact that in the Slovenian, German and Croatian corpora, a number of key lexical items from the domain of BATTLE were used in inverted commas (6a–d), pointing to the conclusion that their meanings were regarded as unconventional in the respective languages.[2] Here we also need to consider that translation was undoubtedly a strong element in reporting on the American elections.

(6a) … nekatera republikanska *'ozemlja'* …
    '… some Republican *"territories"* …'
(6b) … je Obami čestital ob njegovem *'triumfu'* …
    '… he congratulated Obama on his *"triumph"* …'
(6c) … krenuti na *'neprijateljski'* teritorij …
    '… go to the territory of the *"enemy"* …'
(6d) … *'Schlachtfeldstaat'* Ohio …
    '… *"battleground state"* Ohio …'

The second aspect of variation identified in the case study of American elections is related to the specific level of metaphors,

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[1] It is also worth noting here that the majority of occurrences (40) of the nominal use of 'kampf' were found in the compound 'Wahlkampf,' which is a metaphorically motivated pre-election term for pre-election activities.
[2] Italian is an exception in this case as in this language it is common practice to use words from other languages where there are no direct Italian equivalents. Several metaphorically motivated English terms, such as *running mate* or *swing states* were thus left in English.

TABLE 2   Cross-Domain Mappings in the Metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE in Different Languages

Election domain	English	Slovenian	German	Italian	Croatian
Pre-election activities	battle (11) fight (21)	boj (11) bitka (2)	Kampf (49)	battaglia (2)	bitka (2)
An increased intensity of the pre-election activities	attack (10)	napad (2) napadati (3)	Angriff (2)	attacco (3) attaccare (6)	napadati (5)
A group of people supporting the same candidate	camp (7)	tabor (7)	Lager (11)	campo (9)	tabor (2)
Supporter	ally (8)	*zaveznik	*Alliierte	*alleato	*zaveznik
Assistant	aide (14)	*pribočnik, *adjutant	*Adjutant	*aiutante	*adutant, pobočnik
Group of voters	column (5)	*kolona	*Kolonne	*colonna	*kolona
Place with a high number of supporters	stronghold (4)	*oporišče	*Stützpunkt, *Festung	*fortezza, roccaforte (1)	uporište (1)
Intensive pre-election activity	blitz (4)	*blitzkrieg	*Blitzkrieg	blitz (4)	*blitzkrieg
State where both candidates try to win the majority	battleground (18)	*bojišče	'Schlacht feldstaat'(6)	*campo di battaglia	bojište (4)
A specific pre-election activity	operation (5)	*operacija	Operation (2)	*operazione	*operacija
Exposed pre-election activities	front line (1) line of attack (4)	*bojna linija	*die vorderste Kampflinie	linea d'attacco (1)	*crta bojišnice

NOTES   *Translation equivalents which were not identified in the corpus of articles.

whereby languages varied with respect to the choice of source domain. An eloquent example are the equivalents in the selected languages for the metaphorically motivated term 'running mate,' commonly used for the vice presidential candidates. With reference to the female vice presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, examples of metaphors were found in the other languages related to different source domains than that of contest, i. e. JOURNEY in Slovene (*sopotnica,* 'fellow traveller'), PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS in Croatian (*partnerica,* 'partner') and BATTLE in German (*Kampfgefährtin,* 'fellow fighter,' 'comrade in arms').

[17]

A separate analysis for each of the five corpora revealed that they were largely characterised by the same major source domains, i. e. the domains of BATTLE and CONTEST. Variations were expected at the specific levels of metaphors. For example, I expected to find extensive culture-specific variations in the distinct manifestations of CONTEST, such as different types of sports activities typical of a particular culture. In other words, I assumed the American corpus would uncover metaphors related to typical American sports, such as baseball or American football. Instead, the results revealed that the metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A CONTEST did not reflect cross-cultural variation in terms of culture-specific types of sports as only two such examples were identified, both in the English corpus. In one case, the pre-election activity is seen as 'an aggressive ground game,' which is a reference to American football (although it can be used also in relation to some other sports). The expression has entered pre-election jargon to refer to activities at the precinct levels. Another example is an analogy drawn between Barack Obama and 'a football player strutting towards the end zone, only to be tackled out of nowhere at the 1-yard zone, causing a humiliating fumble,' again evoking an activity associated with American football.

At the specific-level, conceptualisations of elections referred to various sports activities in all languages. For the majority of metaphors identified, it was impossible to determine specifically which sport was referred to although there was apparent emphasis on contests in which individuals rather than teams compete. While sports, such as running, car racing, horse racing and others were im-

plied, there were only a few clear references to them, i. e. running³ (5 different occurrences in the English corpus, 2 in the Slovene corpus, 1 in the Italian corpus, 2 in the German corpus), horse races (1 occurrence in the English corpus, 1 in the German corpus) and car races. There were also a few references to other types of sport, such as boxing (1 in the Italian corpus), fencing (1 occurrence in the Italian corpus), and sailing (1 occurrence in the English corpus).

[18]

Similarly, the results revealed that most variation in the form of fighting was not culture-specific. The linguistic realisations of metaphors identified suggest a prototypical battle rather than some specific form or type of fighting. However, numerous unconventional metaphorical entailments were identified across languages, suggesting explicit forms or styles of fighting, for example a duel as in (7a), the Wild West in (7b) feudal fights in (7c) and several others.

(7a) … das letzte *Fernsehduell* der Präsidentschaftskandidaten …
'… the last *TV duel* of the presidential candidates …'

(7b) … il candidato democratico ed il suo rivale repubblicano John McCain hanno trascorso l'intero week-end alla *conquista del Vecchio West* …
'… the Democratic candidate and his Republican rival John McCain spent the whole weekend *conquering the Wild West* …'

(7c) … una volta *feudi* repubblicani …
'… once Republican *feuds* …'

Variation was identified in the systematic use of certain aspects of the source domain of BATTLE. The lower-level conceptual metaphor ELECTIONS ARE CONQUERING LAND, systematically developed in Examples (8a–f), was found mainly in the American corpus.

(8a) … *conceding* Pennsylvania two weeks before the election …

(8b) … we have *ground* to make up, but we believe we can make it up …

(8c) … the shrinking *electoral map* …

³ The domain of running was also perpetuated in the English corpus with the pre-election term 'running mate,' which occurred 28 times.

TABLE 3   Productivity of the Metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE by the Number of Different Realisations

Language	(1)	(2)	(3)
English	42,723	118	2.8
Slovenian	22,202	51	2.3
German	25,135	91	3.6
Italian	17,541	55	3.1
Croatian	9,619	27	2.8

[19]

NOTES   Column headings are as follows: (1) corpus size in words, (2) raw frequency of different realisations of the metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE, (3) frequency of different realisations of the metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE (in per thousand).

(8d) … Obama in position to *grab* Colorado …
(8e) … *incursions* into Republican *territory* …
(8f) … Obama also is making a vigorous *push* in Florida …

The third aspect of variation, i. e. variation in terms of preferential conceptualisations, was identified by examining the productivity of individual conceptual metaphors as well as by analysing the frequency of selected lexical items. In the case of the metaphor ELECTIONS ARE A BATTLE, for example, German showed the highest metaphor productivity for linguistic metaphor with the largest percentage of different realisations (table 3).

The examples of linguistic metaphors in (9) reflect the generative power of the metaphor in German.

(9a) … *ganze Heere* aus Maryland … *in Marsch zu setzen* …
        '… to send whole armies from Maryland … on the march …'
(9b) … *Leihsöldner* im demokratischen *Bodenkrieg* …
        '… mercenaries in the democratic war for territory …'
(9c) … *Fußsoldaten* für Obama …
        '… foot soldiers [infantry] for Obama …'

Interpretation

At the interpretation stage we draw together the results of the contrastive study and compare our findings with conclusions from related studies. The case study of American elections has shown that

while there is a certain degree of universality in terms of the two pre-dominant conceptual metaphors, i. e. ELECTIONS ARE A BAT-TLE and ELECTIONS ARE A CONTEST, there are also impor-tant variations between the languages which might have cultural

[20]   implications. One possible interpretation for the systematicity and higher degree of conventionality of the domain of BATTLE in the English corpus with respect to the other languages, can be found in the differences between the respective election systems as well as the political environment in general. If we understand discourse from the perspective of critical discourse analysis as 'an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements' (Fair-clough 2003, 3), then we can assume that the social, in our case po-litical, context will also influence the choice of metaphor.

Let us take as an example the Slovenian and American political systems where three differences are worth mentioning, namely the number of major political parties, the role of the president of the State and the presidential elections. The political party system in the United States is a traditional two-party system with the Democrats and Republicans as dominant parties, while present-day Slovenia is characterized by a multi-party system in which parties usually form a coalition before or after the elections. We can assume that this will be reflected in pre-election discourse and in the way people con-ceptualize elections. In a related case study (Bratož 2010) in which the discourse of American elections was compared to the discourse of Slovene elections (which incidentally also took place in 2008), the differences between the two systems were also evident from the metaphors used; for example, in the Slovene corpus the conceptual-isation of elections as sports activities suggested also team sports, while the source domains used with reference to American elections were mostly related to typical individual sports (e. g. running, horse races or car races).

Secondly, in Slovenia the President of State who is elected by pop-ular vote has a mainly advisory and ceremonial function, while the executive and administrative authority is in the hands of the Prime Minister. In the USA, the role of President is much more crucial as s/he is head of both State and government. The significance of the

presidential function is reflected in a number of national symbols related to this position. One of them is the very residence of the President, the White House, as a symbol of the USA. Election metaphors, such as *long march on the White House* and *conquer the White House* make perfect sense in the American context, while they would sound rather bizarre with reference to elections in Slovenia where the residence of the President of State is a flat in an apartment block. The differences in the role of the President of State are related to the election system and the importance of the presidential elections in the USA. The systematicity of metaphor use identified in the American corpus is a clear reflection of the election system, in which *battleground states* have to be *conquered* in order for the candidate to win the elections.

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CONCLUSION

Metaphors come in all shapes and sizes. Trying to account for the diversity and variability of metaphors in natural language usage, especially if more than one language is considered, we are bound to come upon more questions than answers. The proposed model has dealt with some central methodological questions encountered in analysing conceptual and linguistic metaphors at discourse level cross-linguistically. Several of the issues discussed above have been dealt with at length in metaphor literature and would certainly deserve more thorough consideration. I have argued for a combination of different approaches, trying to show ways of combining qualitative and quantitative research. The model, which was validated on the basis of a case study focusing on pre-election discourse across languages, is intended as a set of guidelines and strategies for similar kinds of research.

The case study of the American elections has shown variations between the languages analysed which have cultural implications. The question remains whether the variations identified reflect different conceptions of this social phenomenon in the minds of the speakers of different languages. I am well aware that this research can only be seen as a starting point for claims about the conceptualisation of political discourse in different languages and cultures,

for which more extensive data would have to be analysed. A conclusion that can be drawn from the case study presented above is that while the source domains related to the conceptualisation of elections largely overlap, the fact that languages differ in the degree of conventionalisation of metaphors used or that there are degrees of preferences for a certain conceptual domain indicates that there are differences in the way speakers of the languages analysed perceive elections.

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