**The analysis of *deep frames* in political discourse or how long is a conceptual metaphor's mandate?**

Our research focuses on two critical points in the longitudinal type of study of conceptual metaphors in the corpus of transcripts of spoken discourse used by Zoran Milanović, a former Croatian Prime Minister in the period when he was a candidate and during his term of office.

The corpus rendered a schema of underlying *deep frames* (Lakoff 1995; 2008), described as structures employing certain metaphorical models in order to derive *surface* or *lexical frames* as working metaphors activated in particular situations. They were diachronically processed to reveal any significant changes in their distribution during the PM’s position in power.

Following Lakoff’s dichotomous distribution of deep frames as reflections of idealised family models, we detected conceptual metaphors pertaining to both the *Strict Father* and the *Nurturant Parent* model. In addition, in the social democratic discourse a new frame of a *responsible manager* was recognized prompted by the political and economic situation at the beginning of the study.

The aim of the paper is to use the method of corpus analysis (Pragglejaz group 2007) of conceptual metaphors in a longitudinal research in order to establish the extent of active use of particular conceptual metaphors and to see whether the position of power influences their use in the Croatian political discourse.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, Croatian political discourse, deep frames

**1 Introduction**

The literature on metaphor in political discourse has a very rich history, mostly due to the very nature of politics as a rather abstract and elusive system of rituals which requires an elaborate method of deciphering the rules behind the rituals. That system is mostly a network of abstract, construed notions of complex social interactions among people relying on concepts such as morals, ideology, patriotism, ethics or equality. As such the notions are conducive to various interpretations, being the target of more concrete concepts by means of which they are explained to the members of a particular social circle. This mechanism is typical of the cognitive dimension of metaphor as it is recognised in the Cognitive or Conceptual Theory of Metaphor (Gibbs 1994; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Kövecses 2002) where conceptual metaphors (CMs) are recognized as “conventional patterns of thought” (Semino 2008: 5). While target domains tend to be relatively abstract, subjective or complex (in our case politics), source domains are (more) concrete, simple(r) or physical, e.g. war in the politics is war CM (Kövecses 2002; Semino 2008).

In our approach to metaphor research we relied on diachronic natural data retrieved from various sources of Croatian spoken political discourse in order to detect possible patterns in metaphor use and to hypothesize about their changing sociopragmatic context. This bottom-up approach to metaphor research is inductive and does not strive towards providing some definitive evidence of the concepts behind various metaphorical expressions but compares our corpora against some established models of CM research, such as Lakoff’s *deep frames.*

The 2011 and 2013/2014 corpora were analysed following the MIP procedure as explained in Semino (2008) in order to create a schema of the most frequent linguistic metaphors which were then checked against the network of lexical items pertaining to specific CMs to be accounted as *surface frames* of underlying *deep frames* as suggested by Lakoff (1995; 2002; 2008). The *Strict Father* and *Nurturant Parent* frames reflect the idealized cognitive models of a family as viewed by the conservatives in the case of the Strict Father model, or by the democrats in the case of the Nurturant Parent model. This dichotomous view can be applied to the American political system, but it is not clearly delineated in the heterogeneous Croatian political arena. It is thus no wonder that despite some strong ideological opposition pertaining to the never resolved issues of the influence and repercussions of the role of Croatians in World War II (the former communists vs. nationalists), Social Democrats and Conservatives tend to share the majority of surface frames typical of the Strict Father deep frame or the most dominant source domains path/journey, containers, sports, war and people (i.e. personification) (Semino 2008: 92).

A further analysis of metaphorical expressions revealed a high level of the moral accounting CM which provided an alternative deep frame which we named the *Responsible Manager* model and which was based on what we detected to be a neoliberal dogma. This frame became a focal point of the case study presented in this paper, since the most prominent participant of this model turned out to be the present Croatian PM, and in 2011 the prime contender for the position. Observing the changing frequencies of particular surface frames or CMs in this particular model over the span of one mandate served by Milanović, we hypothesized that the change in his role in the specificities of the Croatian political life influenced the choice of metaphorical expressions he used, signalling rather effectively his position of power in the process of manipulation (van Dijk 2006) or as Semino (2008) calls it, persuasion.[[1]](#footnote-1) It turned out that the Responsible Manager frame remained solid, but that the position of authority clearly influenced the PM’s increased use of CMs from the Strict Father frame.

The paper is organized in six basic parts so that after a brief introduction we discuss the relationship between political discourse and the so called *deep frames* as proposed by George Lakoff (2008). In the third part we provide an overview of the metaphor research in political discourse. In the fourth section we discuss the Croatian political scene and its organization along the lines of the (non)existing deep frames and in the fifth and sixth parts we explain the research methodology and discuss the results of the corpus study which is followed by some general conclusions on the repercussions of the longitudinal study of CMs.

**2 Metaphor research in political discourse**

* 1. *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics and discourse studies*

Many contemporary linguists study political discourse in the framework of Cognitive Linguistics (Charteris-Black 2005; Chilton 2004; Cienki 2007; Dirven et al. 2001; Gibbs 1994; Goatly 2007; Gradečak-Erdelić and Milić 2011; Lakoff 2002; 2008; Mussolf 2004; van Dijk 2006; Wodak 2006), especially since they find that the vantage points of pragmatics, discourse analysis or critical discourse analysis may blend their research methods with those of cognitive linguistics.

Metaphoric expressions have been detected as pervasive linguistic structures underlying various conceptual structures as CMs in different types of discourse, starting from everyday communicational patterns (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), but they seem particularly appropriate to represent the complexity of contemporary politics (e.g. Chilton and Ilyin 1993; Musolff 2004; Semino 2008). Within the field of discourse studies, CM is seen as an important element in both conceptualization and communication and it shifts the focus to authentic language data and away from invented or rare examples.

Chilton and Ilyin (1993) recognize the relevance of the cognitive approach to metaphor, as opposed to its rhetorical-literary inheritance, and claim that despite their basic cognitive nature, metaphors are actualized relativistically in discourse (cf. their detection of the birth and development of the ‘common European house’ metaphor). This view of metaphor in the framework of discourse studies is close to our findings, since our longitudinal study of the former Croatian PM Zoran Milanović’s use of metaphors showed a development of a particular set of CMs defined as a deep frame of the *Responsible Manager* at two critical points in the span of the four years of his being in power, showing a clear indication of the shift in Milanović's position from the contender to the actual PM, the leader of the government commanding a superior vantage point.

*2.2 Framing and metaphor*

In his research of the *Political Mind*, Lakoff (2008) elaborated on the idea of two systems of *deep frames* entrenched in the minds of the American electorate. They are structures which employ certain metaphorical models in order to derive the *surface* or *lexical frames* as working metaphors which are activated in particular situations (*issue-defining frames*) and govern the communicational and conceptual patterns of a political community. Two such major models, the Strict Father and the Nurturant Parent, which stem from different understandings of the concept of family (underlying the metaphor society is a family), proved crucial in Lakoff’s analysis of the two most dominant U.S. political wings, the Republican and the Democratic. What directs the construal of the concept of family in those frames is the issue of morality within the so called *Moral Accounting Scheme*, which seems to be the underlying metaphor for both of his deep frames when applied in the political context (Lakoff 1995; 2002). Moral accounting is realised through some basic morality schemata such as reciprocity, retribution, restitution, revenge, altruism and is observable in many instances of political discourse, with examples on both sides of the political spectrum. Surface frames as underlying representations for morality used by the Conservatives would mostly be orientational metaphors of verticality, such as being good is being upright (good is up/bad is down), evil is falling down, or the ontological morality is strength. On the other hand, the Democrats (or Progressives, as Lakoff calls them) rely on orientational metaphors of horizontal distribution, so for them morality is fairness (equality for all), or the ontological one morality is happiness.

While studying the extracted metaphorical expressions in the 2011 corpus, we established that beside those two mainstreams within the Moral Accounting Scheme, our Croatian corpus produced a series of metaphorical expressions relying on lexemes such as ‘responsible’*, ‘*balance’,‘duty’, ‘debt’, ‘manage’, etc. Following this strand of the scheme we established the future PM to be the primary source of these metaphors. So we focused on his subcorpus and hypothesized the existence of the Responsible Manager frame, as a blend of two most prominent features in the frame, namely the responsibility and managing ability of the Social Democrats. The issue defining frame in the foreground of this deep frame is the economic crisis of 2008 with its repercussions being felt even during the 2011 election campaign*.* The solution offered by Milanović and his party was deeply rooted in the tenets of the Moral Accounting scheme and may be traced in the neoliberal policy found to be particularly well-suited for the social and economic situation of the moment, albeit contrary to social democratic roots of Milanović’s party (cf. Kasapović’s view on neoliberal tradition of European socialists below).

Following this venue of the Responsible Manager frame, we created a more recent corpus in the period of 2013/2014, where Milanović’s metaphorical expressions were once again elicited from the transcripts and surface frames were retraced in this subcorpus. It turned out, the Responsible Manager frame had quite a long shelf life with its frequency on a steady rise, but more prototypical CMs gained ground, the reasons of which will be discussed in the discussion section of the paper.

1. **The Croatian political arena and conceptual metaphor**

In her book on the parliamentary and electoral system in Croatia, Mirjana Kasapović (1993) talks about the insubstantiality of any ideological profiling among Croatian political parties. Her opinion coincides with our hypothesis that there is no clear division according to the two basic frame models, i.e., between the social democrat (prototypically represented by the Social Democratic Party (SDP)) and the central-conservative (promoted by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)). Kasapović claims (1993: 113): “Ideological and political self-proclamation of the parties does not overlap with their actual nature and politics.” More than twenty years later, her experience is supported by her observation that the big left-wing party (SDP) can win the elections only if it comes nearer to the political centre, or even crosses to the right-wing pole (Kasapović 2014: 78).

The problem that we face in the methodological part, namely, that there is no discrete line between the metaphorical expressions used by the members of different Croatian parties, reflects the general political behaviour those parties exhibited over the stretch of several decades. We may become aware of the general tendencies, but with the fluctuation of the topics that come and leave the focus of the public and the policy makers, some ideologically relevant issues (e.g. unemployment), are treated linguistically in quite a similar manner by both political wings.

What was confirmed in Kasapović's (2014) overview of the Croatian politics is the general tendency of the SDP to shift rather perceptibly toward neoliberal ideas, especially during their mandate. The tendency seems to be in stark opposition to their starting positions during the 2011 parliament elections. It seems to be a general principle of the political pendulum in the European political arena that the rule based on neoliberal foundations distances those political parties from their original ideological principles and their electorate, leading to the party's crisis and, eventually, the loss of power. As was evident in the case of Schröder's Social Democrats in Germany, the “ultraliberal” Hartz's laws implemented during their mandate between 1995 and 2008 indirectly caused their defeat in the 2009 elections. A similar scenario was evident in the case of the British, Swedish and Spanish left wing parties (Kasapović 2014: 79).

**4 Research methodology**

The principal method of collecting data for our research concentrated on the spoken discourse elicited from televised talk shows, panels and filmed public speeches of representatives of different political parties during the parliamentary election campaign from August to November 2011. The materials were transcribed according to the system applied in the transcription manual by Dresing and Pehl (2011). The corpus was narrowed to the strings uttered by Milanović and this subcorpus was closely inspected for examples of lexical metaphors (table 1). The same transcription method was used in our more current spoken corpus (October 2013 to November 2014), which enabled a more rigorous concentration on the lexical metaphor retrieval method or “metaphor identification procedure” (MIP) as used by Semino (2008) following the Pragglejaz group (2007: 3).

Table 1 The size of Milanović’s corpus.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sample** | **Number of transcripts** | **Word count** | **Number of examples** |
| 2011 | 33 | 17518 | 1180 |
| 2013/2014 | 8 | 4186 | 313 |

The data collected reflect processes described by Lakoff and Turner (1989: 67-72), with lexical expressions triggering the creation of conceptual mappings in the human experience which are then extended, elaborated and questioned. We relied on the lexemes suggested by Lakoff (1995) as operative in specific CMs pertaining to the deep frames of Strict Father and Nurturant Parent and to the Moral Accounting Scheme in general. Many elements were found to cut across different conceptual categories, e.g. *dužan* ‘indebted; owing; obliged to do something, to have a duty’ may be considered an element instantiating both the accounting schema and personal obligation. In such cases we opted for the categories that seemed salient in the context.

Since our research was mainly qualitative, it aims at describing the wider deep frame influencing the choice of lexical metaphors, but there is a quantitative aspect in the sense that we conducted a longitudinal study where we compared T1 (2011 corpus) with T2 (2013/2014) in the corpus of a single speaker. The data were qualitatively and quantitatively processed by providing interpretations of the role of particular CMs in creating frames. In addition, the percentage of CMs against the total of the collected examples of lexical metaphors was used to support the observations on the behaviour of the deep frames over the time span of four years.

After the pools of the surface or lexical framesas working metaphors in particular issue-defining frames were delineated in the 2011 corpus, the Responsible Manager model became a focal point of our research and Milanović its primary source in the period of the election campaign. The 2013/2014 corpus concentrated solely on Milanović as the PM of the Republic of Croatia in which we elicited examples of CMs from 9 different talk shows and interviews in which he participated as the sole guest of the host.

**5 Results and discussion**

The principal disturbance in the methodological processing of the corpus is a high degree of rhetorical clichés produced in the general political discourse, evident, as Goatly (2007) noted, in the high frequency of several metaphorical mappings which appear more or less regularly in all political speeches and texts, e.g.: good is high, power/control is above, (political) competition is race, argument is war, time is movement, progress is journey, ideas are buildings, etc. It has been virtually impossible, in terms of the frequency of specific CMs to account for the inclinations of particular parties towards one or the other, so that the most frequent metaphorical mappings in our 2011 corpus were, besides the generally most frequent ones, such as politics is war/competition/sports (46%) or nation is person (18.75%), either clichés, in Goatly’s terms example 1), or obviously conservative, in Lakoff’s terms (examples 2 and 3):

progress is journey

1. Milanović (SDP):

…to smo razdoblje povijesti usvojili i **krenuli naprijed**. (2011)

‘…we’ve covered this period in the history and **moved forward.**’

nation is family/child; party is family

1. Milanović (SDP):

…**zaštitit** ćemo socijalno ugrožene skupine. (2011)

‘…**we’ll protect** the socially endangered groups.’

In table 2 below we present an overview of the most frequent CMs in both corpora with the only visible decline in frequency in the case of the change of the progress is journey CM, which we understand as an obvious distancing from the rhetoric of the parliamentary elections when this CM had its obvious merits in explaining basic notions such as future progress, economic rise or general improvement.

Table 2 eneral overview of the most frequent CMs in Milanović's spoken corpus.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Most frequent CMs** | **Total number of metaphorical expressions** | |
| 2011 | 2013/2014 |
| 1178 | 311 |
| POLITICS IS SPORTS | 111 = 9.42% | 49 = 15.76% |
| ACCOUNT METAPHOR | 26 = 2.21% | 19 = 6.1% |
| PROGRESS IS JOURNEY | 41 = 3.48% | 10 = 3.22% |

The most frequent CM present in Milanović's discourse is politics is sports, so that in the sense of the clichéd patterns of political discourse mentioned above, the PM's rhetoric does not diverge from its set directions and almost doubles in the 2013/2014 corpus from 9.42% to 15.76%. This surprising increase in this particular CM may be viewed as an indication of the shift in Milanović's position from the contender to the actual PM. His superior vantage point is reflected in the choice of metaphorical expressions when he uses this CM assuming the position of the experienced coach, powerful opponent and, generally, a more potent and infallible adversary.

politics is sports CM

1. …želite **pobijediti** i želite dobiti šansu da pokažete što znate. (2011)

‘…you want to win and you want to get the chance to show your competence.’

1. I svatko ima svoj kraj, ali još ne planiram! Planiram još **pobjeda**. (2013/2014)

‘And everyone comes to their end, but this is not my plan! I plan more victories.’

This is a standard CM present in the 2011 election campaign and it is a conventional device of political discourse in general. Its increase in Milanović's corpus shows the tendency towards 'the coach in charge' transformation of the initial responsible manager frame where he gradually develops his role from a managing to a governing leader. This leads us to the conclusion that both versions of the *Responsible Manager* frame are actually a more sophisticated type of the *Strict Father* frame.

As observed in section 3, among Croatian political ideologies there is no strict division in the use of issue defining frames as CMs. However, both corpora showed a high frequency of the Moral Accounting metaphor with all the typical lexemes pertaining to its use: *odgovornost* 'responsibility', *dužan* 'indebted', *vjera* ‘faith’, *povjerenje* 'trust', *jednak* 'equal', etc.

1. ...svatko od nas mora **položiti račune**... (2011)

’…each of us must **render accounts**…’

1. …mi smo **dužni** samo hrvatskim građankama i građanima…

’…we are **indebted** to the Croatian citizens only …’

1. Čekam **balans** u kojem se zna tko šta radi.” (2011)

’I’ve been waiting for a **balance sheet** in which it is clear who does what.’

1. …na takav način neće nikome biti **oduzeto niti gram** prava. (2013/2014)

‘…so, nobody will lose an ounce of their rights.’

1. Ja sam **odgovoran** biračima, represivna tijela nisu. (2011)

‘I am **responsible** to the voters, bodies of repression are not.’

The key word connected to the moral accounting metaphor in both corpora was *povjerenje* 'trust' which was used in the sense which combines the concept of scales and the equilibrium of trust necessary for a harmonised relationship between the political elite and the people with the CM politics is war so that the most frequent metaphorical expressions were *boriti se za/osvojiti /povratiti povjerenje ljudi* 'fight for/conquer/regain the trust of people'. In the 2011 corpus there were 18 metaphorical expressions of this type or 1.53%, whereas in the 2013/2014 corpus the percentage is a bit higher, 2.57%. However, in this corpus the trust is mostly not directed from the people to politicians, but from the ruling government toward other actors on the political scene. This is an interesting switch in the use of the same CM in two different situations which shows high adaptability of stock metaphors to various contexts and their entrenchment in the vocabulary of an individual.

The image promoted in these examples is of a responsible but at the same time self-confident and authoritative person. This image tends to acquire an objectified and impersonal characteristic of someone who will account only for the results of one's actions, for a clear bill and for both moral and financial arithmetic of reciprocity. The rhetoric of an objective and impartial manager of national assets is also in line with an attempt to promote the party's clear conscience and future rule without any corruption or economic insecurity. During the SDP's coalition's campaign a clear idea of the Good Master was elucidated, both in the Biblical sense of the Good Shepherd, a divine protector and also in the more contemporary sense of the Responsible Manager who behaves according to the principles of good management based on efficient sobriety. This new emergent quality is slightly distanced from the pure Strict Father model and diverse in its very core from the basic principles of the Nurturant Parent model expected in the Social Democrat discourse (examples 11 and 12):

1. Mislim (...) da se nisu ponašali kao **dobri gospodari**. (2011)

‘I think (…) they didn’t behave as **good masters**.’

1. Samo oni koji pregovaraju u ovom slučaju države kao vjerovnika, trebaju biti **dobri gospodari**. (2013/2014)

‘Only those who negotiate, in this case of the state as a creditor, need to be **good masters**.’

Milanović wholeheartedly accepted this idea so that the phrase *dobri gospodar* 'good master', and other lexemes connected to this managerial position such as *upravljati* 'manage', *voditi* 'lead', *odlučiti* 'decide' appear in 2.78% of the instances in the 2011 corpus and in 6.75% of the later corpus.

**6 Conclusions**

By concentrating on one speaker, the former Croatian PM Milanović, and his use of specific CMs in the four-year diachronic study, we were able to establish the network of meanings created through metaphorical expressions. We established a framework of operative conceptual tools which serve as pillars in the course of the speaker’s communication with the public from two different points of view, as a member of the opposition and as the politician in power.

We were able to discern several CMs functioning as surface frames organized around more organic deep frames. Among the deep frames, the Responsible Manager frame proved to be the most prominent ideological frame exhibiting its techno managerial qualities and neoliberal economic profile which resisted the test of time. This frame provided evidence of the resilience of particular CMs over time, showing that their political expectancy seems to be much more solid than that of their users. The increase in the frequency of the more generic politics is war CM reflects the struggle of the politician to retain his position of power before the next parliamentary elections which took place in 2015.

Any solid conclusions pertaining to deep frames across cultures and conventions should be taken with caution and their reflection in language must be based on more than

metaphor data. We proceed, therefore, in full awareness that metaphor tells only a

part of the story and that a more complete picture would emerge from a full-scale(critical) discourse analysis of pertinent data.

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**Analiza *dubokih okvira* u političkom diskursu ili koliko traje mandate konceptualne metafore?**

Naše se istraživanje temelji na dvije ključne točke u longitudinalnoj studiji kojom smo analizirale uporabu konceptualnih metafora prikupljenih u transkriptima govorenog diskursa Zorana Milanovića u razdoblju od 2011. do 2014. godine.

Korpus je otkrio shemu temeljenu na *dubokim okirima* (Lakoff 1995., 2008.), kao strukturama koje potiču određene metaforičke modele kojima se dolazi do *površinskih* ili *leksičkih okvira*, zapravo metafora koje se aktiviraju u određenim situacijama. Dijakronijskom obradom smo pokušale utvrditi je li došlo do promjena u njihovoj distribuciji za vrijeme Milanovićeva mandata kao hrvatskog premijera.

Shodno Lakoffovoj podjeli dubokih okvira kao idealiziranih modela obitelji otkrile smo konceptualne metafore koje pripadaju i modelu Strogog oca i Brižnog roditelja, ali se u sociodemokratskom diskursu pojavio i novi okvir *Odgovornog menadžera* kao posljedice tadašnjeg političkog i gospodarskog stanja.

Cilj je rada metodom korpusne analize (Pragglejaz group 2007) konceptualne metafore u longitudinalnom istraživanju utvrditi razmjere aktivne uporabe određenih konceptualnih metafora te utječe li položaj moći na njihovu uporabu u hrvatskom političkom diskursu.

**Ključne riječi:** konceptualna meafora, hrvatski politički diskurs, duboki okviri

1. One possible approach to this topic might be within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (as described in e.g. van Dijk 1993; Wodak and Chilton 2005; Hart 2010) where the changing perspectives on policies and politics as well as ideologies are approached from a critical point of view with a thoroughly elaborated sociopragmatic context. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)