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Review

Metaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse

Carmen Llamas Saíz and Ruth Breeze (Eds.)

Published by EUNSA, Pamplona (2020), 214 pp.

M*etaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse* aims at reflecting on the central role metaphor plays in political discourse. Coordinated by Carmen Llamas Saíz and Ruth Breeze (Universidad de Navarra), it gathers together the contributions of six authors that try to shed light on how metaphor works in a variety of contemporary political contexts with the global rise of populism in the background.

The book is organised into seven chapters. Preceded by a preface written by Andreas Musolff (University of East Anglia), who underlines the relevance of approaching metaphor as something transcending what is purely linguistic, Chapter 1, authored by Ruth Breeze (Universidad de Navarra), establishes the theoretical bases for understanding metaphor in politics. Breeze puts forward the idea traditionally defended by Critical Discourse Analysis scholars that texts usually become fighting arenas that show the footprints of discourses and ideologies, and so language cannot be undervalued (see Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, *Métodos de Análisis Crítico del Discurso*, Barcelona, Gedisa, 2003). She argues that metaphor, therefore, beyond being an effective tool for learning about new concepts –as claimed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)–, may act as a device used in political speeches for influencing or manipulating public opinion. As stated by Arantxa Capdevila and Carlota Moragas-Fernández this is especially relevant in the case of conflictive issues, where the definition of the issue being discussed in the public sphere is under negotiation (*Usos políticos de la metáfora. Medios, instituciones y ciudadanía en la definición de conflictos en la esfera pública*, Barcelona, Icaria, 2019). The prevalence of a certain metaphor can, thus, led to determine the way in which we think about that issue and our attitudes towards the possibilities for action.

Controversy or conflict is precisely the thematic axis under which Chapters 2 to 7 are bind together despite dealing with different contexts and methods. In Chapter 2, Jenni Räikkönen (Tampere University), analyses over six thousand contributions in British parliamentary debates on EU-related issues from 2000 to 2016. By looking at pro-EU and anti-EU speakers' speeches, the author points out they both use Journey metaphors for framing EU and UK's relationship, but that they do it by developing opposed scenarios. For the former, the EU is moving forward and the driver for change is the UK, whereas the latter present the EU as the driver "and the member states only passengers without any control over what happens" (p. 51). Chapter 3 focuses on a key feature of populist discourses: the appeal to the people. Here, Margaret Rasulo (University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli'), looks at how the people are conceptualized in a corpus made up of 138 speeches delivered by US Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump and UK Prime Ministers David Cameron and Theresa May. Her study shows there are mainly two ways of addressing them: the one understanding the people as "endeavouring individuals" (p. 76) with an active civic engagement (used by Obama and Cameron) and the one regarding them as "yielding collectivities" (p. 77) fully identified with the politician himself (which appears in Trump's and May's discourses). Carola Schoor (Maastricht University) also delves into populist

communication features by comparing a populist, an elitist and a pluralist speech in Chapter 4. In doing so, she detects various conceptualizations for elements such as the people, the political elite, democracy/government, politics and the political context depending on which political style is employed, which lets her state, for instance, that people are conceived as a homogenized group “depicted as ‘the rightful owners of a country’” (p. 106) in the populist speech.

How populist ideology is condensed in political discourse is also a matter of concern for Lorella Viola (Utrecht University) who, in Chapter 5, studies Salvini’s 2018 end-of-the-year Facebook speech. She identifies at least three metaphor scenarios that connect Salvini’s speech to populist rhetoric: the proud Italian (the beloved heartland as opposed to the hostile EU), the Robin Hood (Salvini is the only leader looking after the people), and the rescuer (presenting Italy as escaping EU’s ‘big cage’ and becoming a model for other countries). Chapter 6, authored by Liudmila Arcimavičienė (Vilnius University), reviews metaphor’s role in foreign policy by taking the conflict between Iran and the US as a case study. After analysing Donald Trump, Hassan Rouhani and Sergey Lavrov’s speeches, she concludes there is an underlying frame in the narratives they promote, that of the standardization of confrontational and competitive foreign policy “legitimised by force and intervention” (p. 171). Finally, Chapter 7 takes us to Spain in order to see how was the Catalan crisis that took place after October 1st portrayed by newspaper editorials. Here Ricardo-María Jiménez Yáñez (UIC Barcelona) and Ruth Breeze (Universidad de Navarra) highlight the differences between the metaphor scenarios built by Barcelona-based and Madrid-based media. Whereas the former use War and Natural disaster metaphors for stressing the devastating effects of the crisis in the Catalan society and make both Catalan and Spanish politicians accountable for the situation, the latter clearly blame and delegitimise secessionists by conceptualizing them as a Disease and a Farce (p. 201).

Despite this volume confirms scenario is a key concept when dealing with CMT, it still remains unclear how to address its construction in a systematic and agreed way. This means that the studies mentioned above these lines rather than setting out a unified method will offer the reader a diversity of approaches to metaphor analysis. And this turns out to be particularly interesting, as they are not limited to identification, but introduce the pragmatic dimension of metaphor, which is paramount for understanding how meaning is built and negotiated, either in political conflicts or in populist political communication.