

# Construing Asylum

## A case study of metaphoric use in English and French media discourse

Anissa Berracheche @: aberracheche@gmail.com

### Abstract

Despite the descriptive power of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 1991, 1996), it can be criticised for its inability to integrate social and discursive variation into the descriptions based upon it. This study seeks to adapt the profile-based methodology (Geeraerts et al. 1994; Glynn & Robinson 2014) for the descriptive analysis of metaphors structuring in an inherently discursive question: the construal of asylum seekers. Specifically, we wish to ascertain if the metaphors are used just as it is in the two languages, especially with respect to the different types of news press.

The case study is based upon news editorial texts published on one-year period (2016) in 4 English and 4 French newspapers. The selection of editorials is based on keyword research of asylum seekers allowing for papers' style (Broadsheets and Tabloids) and their political stance (right-leaning and left-leaning). The study examines 120 metaphoric uses of asylum seekers.

The method involves three steps. Firstly, through a careful reading, all occurrences that metaphorically refer to asylum seekers are extracted with extended context. The second step involves manually tagging the examples for a source concept and a range of usage features. The annotation of the occurrences draws heavily upon Appraisal including judgements of evaluation (Martin & White 2005). The third step consists to submit the usage-annotation to quantitative analysis. Correspondence Analysis will be used to generate specific hypotheses which will then be tested using Loglinear for more complex interactions between source concept and discursive intent and evaluation.

Preliminary investigation has revealed the most frequent metaphors to be that of FLOOD and OTHERNESS. There appears to be no significant difference in the types of metaphors used in English and French. However, it is expected that the discursive use of the metaphors will vary significantly between the languages, especially when the text type is controlled for.

### Problem

**To what extent can Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 1991, 1996) inform Critical Discourse Analysis?**

We suppose that Conceptual Metaphor Theory offers tools to analyze representation in texts, yet it raises two problems:

**Analysis:** Although it has powerful descriptive tools, does not account for social variations.

**Method:** Based on introspection which makes falsification of results difficult.

### Data

News editorials (Jan – Dec 2016)

4 British English newspapers: (*Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*)

4 French newspapers: (*Aujourd'hui France*, *Libération*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*)

The choice of news editorials controlled for politics (left, right), culture (French and English) and papers' style (Tabloids and Broadsheets)

960 occurrences retrieved with reference to asylum seekers

108 uses of metaphors are identified

### Method

**Tokenisation:** No-keywords for data retrieval

Referential tokens/units: all evaluative lexemes or expressions used to refer to asylum seekers implicitly or explicitly (identified by 2 coders)

**Step1.** Qualitative analysis – manual annotation of **contextualized** examples for a set of features.

**Step2.** Quantitative analysis – Multivariate statistics examination of results

- Exploratory techniques: identify patterns of use

- Confirmatory techniques: test the predictive power of the results

### Results

**Class not politics or language determine the choice of metaphors:**

The working-class media use metaphors of ANIMAL and OBJECT to construe asylum.

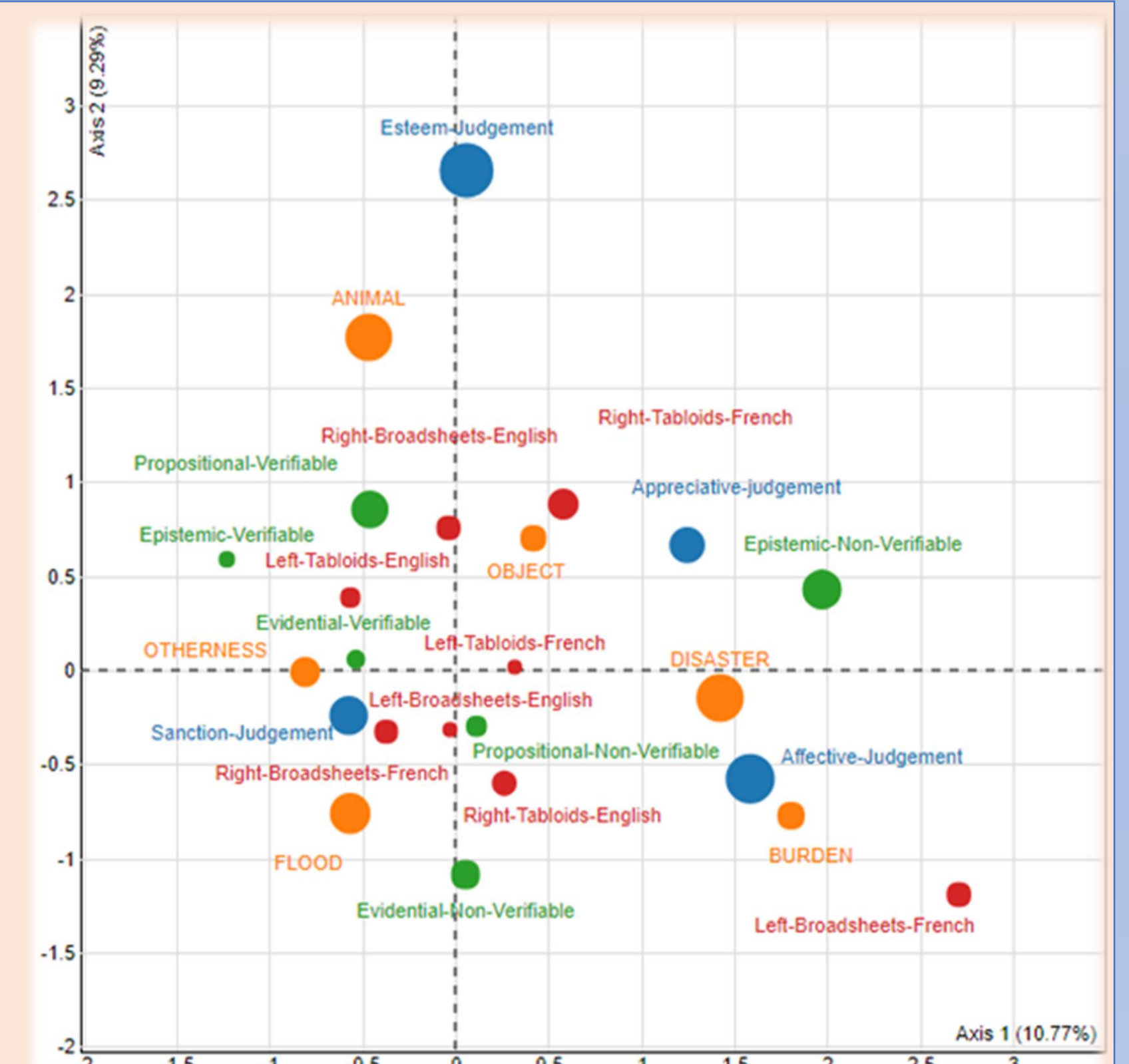
The middle-class media use metaphor of FLOOD

**Metaphors are motivated by Type of Attitude:**

The working-class media: Judgment (Construing attitudes of people and the way they behave)

The middle-class media: Affect (Registering positive and negative feelings)

**We have shown that the Appraisal could be used as powerful analytical tools to look for construal in figurative language.**



### References

- Charteris-Black, J. 2004. *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Geeraerts, D., Grondelaers, S., & Bakema, P. 1994. *The Structure of Lexical Variation: Meaning, naming, and context*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Glynn, D. & Fischer, K. (eds.). 2010. *Quantitative Cognitive Semantics: Corpus-driven approaches*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Glynn, D. & Robinson, J. (eds.). 2014. *Corpus Methods for Semantics: Quantitative studies in polysemy and synonymy*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Gries, St. 2003. *Multifactorial analysis in corpus linguistics: A study of particle placement*. London & New York: Continuum Press.
- Gries, St. Th. & Stefanowitsch, Anatol (eds.). 2006. *Corpora in Cognitive Linguistics: Corpus-based approaches to syntax and lexis*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Hart, C. 2010. *Critical discourse analysis and cognitive science: new perspectives on immigration discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lakoff, G. 1991. *Metaphor and War: The metaphor system used to justify war in the Gulf*. *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 2: 59-72.
- Lakoff, G. 1996. *Moral Politics. How liberals and conservatives think*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Krippendorff, K. 2004. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. London: Sage.
- Martin J.R. & White Peter, R. 2005. *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Read, J. & Carroll, J. 2012. Annotating expressions of Appraisal in English. *Language Resources and Evaluation* 46: 421-447.