Language is a *'Beautiful Creature'*, not an *'Old Fridge'*

Direct metaphors as corrective framing devices

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Direct metaphor has been widely studied from the cognitive perspective, but its functions in the communicative dimension (Steen, 2011) remain less well understood. This study investigates direct metaphor as a tool of metaphorical framing (Ottati et al., 2014; Ritchie & Cameron, 2014) in discourse, by examining a corpus of British newspaper texts on the topic of language and language change. The analysis of direct metaphors is sufficient to point to major ideologies of language and communication in the observed media context, which echo broader anxieties over social change, social organization and control. Most notably, unlike the meanings stressed in existing studies, the vast majority of direct metaphors are here found to serve the specific role of relational argumentation. This function is achieved through a kind of 'corrective framing', which explicitly juxtaposes two conflicting representations through an 'A is B and not C' type of metaphor. The findings are discussed with respect to deliberateness, metaphorical framing and rhetorical goals in discourse. It is hypothesized that corrective framing is among the major functions of direct metaphor in public discourse, which can influence public opinion in ways different from other metaphorically created representations.

Keywords: direct metaphor, metaphorical framing, corrective frames, deliberate metaphor, language ideology

1. Introduction

Direct metaphors have recently attracted renewed interest following the call for three-dimensional understanding of metaphor (Steen, 2011, 2015) that distinguishes between the linguistic, cognitive and communicative dimensions. Linguistically observed, direct metaphors contain an explicit cross-domain

mapping (cf. Glucksberg, 2008) given in language (e.g., *argument is like war*) while in indirect metaphors the target is not explicitly realized in language (e.g., *He attacked my argument*).[1] However, it is the communicative functions of direct metaphors that have recently been cast in a new light, upheld as arguably clear examples of deliberate use of metaphor (Beger, 2011; Negrea-Busuioc & Ritchie, 2015; Steen, 2011). Not surprisingly, the very idea of deliberateness has sparked controversy (Charteris-Black, 2012; Gibbs, 2015; Steen, 2011, 2015), as deliberate metaphors are contrasted with the 'unconscious', 'automatic' metaphors that have long been emphasized in cognitive metaphor theory. Even though the existing analyses make a good case for direct metaphor as deliberately employed in discourse, understanding the communicative aspects of metaphor directness and deliberateness is complicated by the fact that direct metaphor has to date not been fully explored from the purely discursive perspective.

Clearly, similes of the type 'A is like B' in particular have long attracted interest in cognitive studies and psycholinguistics.[2] It has been stressed that similes may promote different comprehension strategies from other metaphor, reflecting distinctions between comparison- and categorization-based processing, though this differentiation remains a complex question (Gentner & Bowdle, 2001; Shibata et al., 2012; Xu, 2010). In addition, from psycholinguistic experiments it has become clear that the use of direct metaphors has a powerful influence over how people address and conceptualize important social issues (e.g., Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011, 2013; Thibodeau & McClelland, 2009). The effect nevertheless appears to be more subtle than previously thought (Reijnierse et al., 2015), moderated by numerous aspects of metaphor type and context (van den Broek, 2015). For instance, in Thibodeau and Boroditsky's famous stimulus formulation 'crime is a virus' we could still ask which kinds of meaning are prompted, or whether the use of an indirect metaphor instead of the direct one would have the same effect.

These kinds of question are all the more difficult to answer given that direct metaphor is one type of metaphor whose functions in extended discourse, from discursive and communicative perspectives, are still less than perfectly understood. There are indications that direct metaphors are preferred in cases where the comparison is hard to understand or requires focusing (Chiappe et al., 2003). They seem to be typically followed by further explanations (Roncero et al., 2006), though this does not seem to be equally the case in all genres (see Low, 2010). In

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1. The term 'direct metaphor' understood in this sense will be used throughout the paper, following Steen (2011); for a discussion of the distinction between metaphor and simile, see e.g., Aisenman (1999), or Israel et al. (2004).

2. Together with the vast interest in simile in literature and philosophy, which is however of less interest for this study.

addition, Israel et al. (2004) give numerous single-sentence examples that show metaphors of the type 'A is like B' as serving the basic rhetorical functions of description and evaluation, but in ways that generally force a construal of their source concept as a sort of exaggerated instance of the compared property. The 'likeness-exaggerating' property has been upheld as an important feature of this type of metaphor (Barnden, 2015), which could potentially influence the specific effects of direct metaphorical frames. However, the major part of existing findings on the role of direct metaphors are still drawn from isolated sentences, while less is known about the meanings of direct metaphors in real-life discourse use.

The present paper aims to address this gap by looking at the discourse functions of direct metaphors in one kind of discourse setting – in a corpus of British newspaper texts about language and language change. The analysis shows how direct metaphors are used to frame two opposing views of language, which reflect different language-ideological positions, and invite different public policies. Most notably, unlike in existing analyses of direct metaphors, the vast majority of them are found to serve the specific role of relational argumentation, through a kind of 'corrective framing' that explicitly juxtaposes two conflicting representations. It is hypothesized that corrective framing is among the major functions of direct metaphor in public discourse, which can influence public opinion in ways different from other metaphorically created representations. The results are discussed with respect to "verbal hygienic" anxieties (Cameron, 2012) in British media discourses, and with respect to deliberateness, metaphorical framing and rhetorical goals in discourse. It is argued that more nuanced investigation of direct metaphor in contexts of real language use can bring a deeper understanding of both the rhetorical functions of metaphor and its influence on reasoning.

2.   Context: Metalinguistic discussions in public discourse

Metalanguage, or talk about talk, typically lingers on the margins of linguistic study, though increased metalinguistic sensitivity is often upheld as one of the "hallmarks of contemporary social life" (Jaworski, Coupland & Galasinski, 2004, p. 4; see also Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994; Thurlow, 2006, 2007). To some extent, folk linguistic beliefs have gained legitimacy for study in different social groups as they reveal much about how people view language and its role in their lives, in the context of increasingly globalized and less pre-structured social spheres (Bogetić, 2016; Geeraerts, 2013). Still, the relevance of metalanguage for socially-oriented scholarship goes far beyond this. In many local and national contexts, questions of language are sparking passionate public debates, which spill into realms that have seemingly little to do with language. In 21st century Europe in particular, a

public discourse on language has become both widely pervasive and politically salient (Cameron, 2012). It is this specific cultural and political significance that discourse on language tends to assume which makes metadiscourse worthy of study.

The passionate interest in language is hard to ignore in British[3] public discourse generally. A number of national newspapers run regular columns about language, the online versions of which are followed by dozens, sometimes hundreds of reader comments; popular literature on language matters does not cease to attract the public; a Google search for "saving the English language" returns countless results, including Facebook and Tumblr groups with this name that would leave an uninformed person with the impression English is a seriously endangered language. Concerns over language in the UK have also been described as part of what has been called 'the complaint tradition', or the belief that the state of language is constantly on the decline, which has had a long history in British public metadiscourse (Milroy, 2001). However, from a purely sociopolitical perspective in the UK in particular, it has been argued that there has recently been a "sea-change" (Cameron, 2013, p. 27) in the interest in language, with discourse on the status of English in Britain becoming more ubiquitous than ever. Anxieties over language change, multilingualism, as well as language and technology, are commonly voiced in the British press, with considerable space dedicated entirely to language.

A large body of texts in the present corpus reflect similar concerns with language change and its effects on society. Topics range from the impact of digital communication on language in general, over the colloquialisation of English and teaching English while acknowledging such changes, to the influences of American English and migrant Englishes. Negative predictions about the future are typical on the whole, though these are sometimes countered by more moderate voices who emphasize that there is no cause for worry, especially when it comes to the English language. Concerns over language expressed in the articles often tap into other anxieties regarding social change, confirming the idea that ideologies about language are rarely if ever about language alone (Woolard, 1998).

My corpus shows that many of these discussions are framed via the use of metaphors, which work to negotiate specific views of language, and views of the potential consequences of language change. Different metaphors reflect perspectives on language that are interwoven with various social, moral and ideological issues. In the rest of the present text, however, I will focus only on direct metaphors and their functions, which appear to be somewhat more narrow, but nevertheless telling about dominant language positions in media discourses.

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3. Most certainly, this is not limited to the British national context.

3.   Data and method

The initial observation from data collection is that discussions about language are common and passionate in the UK newspapers – language-related articles are published every 5–6 days, and their online versions are followed by dozens, and often hundreds of reader comments. The initial corpus collected thus included almost 900 articles from a five-year period, which would evidently make discourse analysis of data difficult. However, it turned out that not all of these articles were equally 'about' language; for practical purposes I thus specified narrower criteria, excluding texts dealing with English in other parts of the world, English as learnt by foreign celebrities, texts about a single word and its usage and solely instructive texts to do with grammar. The search was performed using "language" as a keyword[4] in online search archives of each newspaper, in the publication period between 2010 and 2015. 118 articles about language fitted this criterion and were retained in my corpus.

Specifically, the present analysis draws on a sub-corpus of 40 articles, randomly selected from the corpus, published in the period between 2010 and 2015 in five major UK daily newspapers: "The Times", "The Guardian", "The Daily Mail", "The Telegraph" and "The Independent". The smaller corpus facilitated careful metaphor identification and classification, and allowed for in-depth discourse analysis of texts, while still allowing a sufficient insight into hundreds of metaphorical expressions related to the concept of language. While all the texts specifically deal with language issues, the possibility of non-language related articles containing metaphors of language cannot be excluded;[5] nevertheless, we can expect that these are comparatively infrequent. Since we are here interested in the use of direct metaphors in discussions that are to do with language, the material is seen as appropriate.

The identification of metaphors in the texts was performed following the guidelines of MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010) as the first explicit and reliable procedure for identifying metaphorical use in discourse.

When identifying the metaphors of language, i.e. the metaphors of interest in this analysis, one modification to MIPVU was introduced. As this analysis only focuses on metaphorical conceptualizations of language, and not on all metaphors in text, the procedure was modified by adding one additional step. This step involves the initial identification of what will be called 'key discourse terms', as terms

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4. This keyword proved to be sufficient, as searches using other keywords, such as "English" or "grammar", did not return any new results.

5. The articles not related to language were not retained in the corpus, so it is unfortunately not possible to check this.

in relation to which metaphor of interest is used. After careful reading of the corpus, nine key discourse terms were selected for analysis (*language, English, speech, grammar, words, sentences, punctuation*). Thus, in a sentence such as *They are butchering language*, the question is if *butchering* is metaphorical when referring to language (cf. Cameron & Maslen, 2010). It is important not to make the selection of key discourse terms too narrow (for instance, focusing purely on metaphors related to the item 'language' would overlook many metaphorical representations of language-related concepts (e.g., words, or grammar); for later searchability and practical purposes, it may also be useful not to make the specification too broad (in this case, excluding terms occurring fewer than five times in the corpus). Overall, the step allows the analyst to collect and analyze only those metaphors that relate to aspects of language, and it is seen as a necessary starting point when inductively investigating the metaphorical representations of a particular concept.

The other steps follow the MIPVU procedure closely. First, the whole corpus was read to establish a general understanding. Lexical units were then determined (typically single words, but also including compounds and phrasal words; following Steen et al., 2010, pp. 28–30); subsequently, the contextual meanings of each unit were determined, and compared with the more basic meanings (if applicable). Following MIPVU, if the contextual meaning of a lexical unit was sufficiently distinct from the basic meaning and could be understood by comparison, that unit was marked as metaphorical. Contextual and basic meanings were determined relying on the "Macmillan Dictionary", while bearing in mind the limitations of any dictionary (Dorst & Reijnierse, 2015) and occasionally consulting other sources.

The metaphorical expressions identified were then also coded for directness/indirectness. Metaphors were marked as direct in all instances where the use of a word could potentially be explained by some form of cross-domain mapping to a more basic referent present **in the text**" (Steen et al. 2010, pp. 38–39, boldface added by myself), as in, for instance, *language is like a tree*. The lexical flags such as *like* here are frequently used as signals of direct metaphor, but were not coded at this stage. Classification required very careful attention to the actual meanings of metaphor flags where present, more than MIPVU envisages, but overall the procedure proved to be non-problematic in my dataset.

4. Results

4.1 Frequency of direct metaphors of language

As the focus of this study is metaphors of language, and not all metaphors in text, elaborate quantitative results to do with direct metaphor are beyond its scope.

Nevertheless, the frequency of language-related direct metaphor use is given below for some orientation:

Table 1. Direct and indirect metaphors of language

	Metaphors of language			Total words
	Indirect	Direct	Total	
Count	320	66	386	20,114
%	1.6	0.33	1.93	100%

In total, 66 direct metaphors of language-related concepts were found in the corpus. This means that each of the texts in the corpus contains on average one or two direct metaphors of language. It is also worth noting here that the direct metaphors of language represent the vast majority of the direct metaphors in the corpus overall (72 in total). In other words, most of the direct metaphors are related to the main theme of the articles, which gives some clues as to their functions. Indeed, of all the lexical units in the corpus, 0.33% (66) are direct metaphors of language, and 0.4% (72) are direct metaphors. The figure is somewhat higher than that found in existing studies on direct metaphors in discourse (shown to account for 0.2% of the metaphors identified, see Steen et al., 2010 or Krenmayr, 2011). The greater frequency of direct metaphors could be related to discourse strategies when discussing complex issues, as suggested by Perez and Reuchamps (2014);[6] this will be the subject of investigation in the following sections.

4.2   Discourse functions of direct metaphors

4.2.1   *Explanations and relational argumentation*
It has been noted before that deliberate direct metaphors can be useful tools for explaining difficult concepts or offering a new perspective on these concepts (Beger, 2011). This does seem to be one function of the direct metaphors used in my corpus, as best illustrated in (1) below. In this article the author sets out to explain that the idea of "untranslatable" words, as words from particular cultures referring to concepts which cannot be understood in other cultures, is merely a romanticised idea. He rejects language determinism, and then introduces the idea of "structuralism", aware of the fact that the term may be new to readers. When the word

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6. Perez and Reuchamps found a very high proportion (over 20%) of direct metaphors in their data of citizen discourse, but the results are not comparable to mine or Krenmayr's, due to their very different metaphor identification method, which did not consider the metaphorical nature of every individual lexical unit in the corpus.

"structuralism" is mentioned for the first time, the author resorts to the following metaphorical explanation:

(1)   Think of it like this: **the real world is a plain patch of ground,** and **language is a net we throw over it.**[7] Each time the net falls, every one of the diamond-shaped holes lands on a slightly different patch. The net's a bit worn out, and some of the holes are torn, meaning they cover more ground. Some bunch up and cover less. Think of **words as being like these holes**: so *saudade* might mean something slightly more than homesickness, whereas *dépaysement* means something less, referring only to that kind of homesickness you get from being in a foreign country. Linguists have called the semantic space words occupy a "lexical field". […] In short: no word is completely untranslatable, but then no word is precisely translatable either. And, I promise you, that's no *schnapsidee*.   ("The Guardian", 21 August 2014)

The author introduces a somewhat complex novel metaphor here, where language is directly compared to a net thrown over the real world. The comparison is introduced by an explicitly given signal (*think of it like this*). This seems to be a classic case of deliberate metaphor in Steen's (2011, 2015) sense, in that it explicitly invites the reader to look at the target from a different perspective, a different conceptual domain (Steen, 2008, p. 222). In the very first sentence, by applying their knowledge of the basic sense of a net to language, readers can understand more about how language "covers" real world phenomena. The unusual direct metaphor is immediately followed by several sentences that explicate it further to the reader. The contextual sense thus becomes clearer in the following description, where *worn out* and *torn* holes that cover uneven patches of ground describe words in different languages that do not cover exactly the same "patches" of a concept. At the end, the author explicitly states his point in a non-metaphorical manner, summing up the entire preceding metaphorical description.

   The example illustrates two common and often interrelated functions of direct metaphor: explanation (in this case, of the complex idea of language as a net we throw over a patch of ground) and problem definition (in this case, upholding one way to see language, even though many other ways to see it are available). However, the discourse functions of direct metaphors in the corpus go beyond mere definition and explanation. More specifically, direct metaphors are typically used to give a different perspective on the topic (e.g., of language as a web whose holes cover concepts more or less evenly, rather than leaving spaces that can exist in one language and not in another), in response to another existing perspective.

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7. Here, and in the following, the direct metaphors (incl. sources, targets, and metaphor flags) relevant to the discussion are given in boldface.

For instance, the excerpt below is from a text written in response to claims that language rules need not be followed strictly in all situations. The author responds:

(2)   But languages function successfully because they have rules. **Grammar is the peg on which we hang our ideas.** There is a logic as to why we abide by such seemingly proscriptive grammatical regulations. These subtleties – be it employing an apostrophe, a colon or a comma – all facilitate clarity of expression and enable our thoughts to be better understood – surely the point of language and communication.   ("The Daily Mail", 13 January 2012)

The metaphor of grammar as *a peg on which we hang our ideas*, along with the subsequent 'because' type explanation (Roncero et al., 2006) is used to stress the importance of grammar in contrast to some other claims. By drawing on the basic sense of a peg, readers can understand the author's position on the importance of grammar, where grammar serves as not only physical support for ideas, but also the physical area along which to organise them. The image of hanging clothes on a peg also evokes the opposite, leaving clothes everywhere, resulting in a mess and chaos which makes the use of clothes difficult. Without such a "peg", ideas expressed in language would be in a mess as well.

More often, however, the opposing perspective is explicitly mentioned and rejected:

(3)   Of course, **language is not a fixed thing that must not be tampered with**. It has been evolving for 1,500 years, and in that time English has absorbed the vocabularies and grammars of half the world.
                                                          ("The Daily Mail", 29 June 2012)

(4)   Did we, as genuinely hundreds of people are tweeting, just break the English language? Or did we, as totally tens of bloggers are writing, prove that **the English language is a beautiful, organic creature that is forever slipping out of our control?** Well, no: to be precise, we have done something mildly annoying.   ("The Guardian", 13 August 2013)

In all these examples, direct metaphors are not solely used for problem definition and explanation, but also to present a contrast to other perspectives. In (3), the direct metaphor to do with a *fixed thing* is negated, and given in opposition to the indirect metaphor of language *evolving* on its own, like a natural organism. Example (4) similarly contains one indirect metaphor, of language as a breakable object, contrasted with the direct metaphor *the English language is a beautiful, organic creature that is forever slipping out of our control*. The rich direct metaphor appears to be used somewhat ironically, as signaled by the use of colloquial *totally* associated with youth language, and is in any case explicitly rejected in the following sentence. The author seems to also reject the other view of language

as a breakable physical object, describing ongoing language changes as simply *mildly annoying.*

An important notion in understanding examples such as this in discourse is that of relationality and addressivity (Bakhtin, 1981). In the present material, direct metaphors like the above all work to address and contradict the voices of 'absent others', who have expressed different views of what language is and how it should be treated. What this direct metaphor does at the level of discourse is thus not just facilitate explication of complex arguments, but negotiate one's perspective (in this case, on the meaning of 'language') in response to another's. However, having said this, most of the direct metaphors in the corpus are of one specific, not previously discussed type, as will be explained in the following sections.

4.2.2 *'A is B and not C': Direct metaphors and corrective frames*

Perhaps the most striking result that emerges from the analysis of all direct metaphors in the corpus is that the majority of them are direct metaphors of the type A is B *and not C.* The rejected, 'C' perspective is sometimes implicitly present in the text, as in the above examples, but most typically it is an explicit part of the direct metaphor. Consider for instance the following examples:

(5) Any struggle against the abuse and impoverishment of English online (notably, in blogs and emails) becomes what Orwell called "a sentimental archaism". Behind this belief lies the recognition that **language is a natural growth** and **not an instrument we can police for better self-expression**. To argue differently is to line up behind Jonathan Swift and the prescriptivists.
("The Guardian", 20 May 2013)

(6) Allow the learners' language to reach down to itself, and treat the language used by everyone in the room as, in Rose's view of the brain, **"something organic, holistic, a living system"**. **Language isn't a machine**, and any method which implicitly treats it as one makes robots of the people trying to speak it.
("The Guardian", 24 June 2011)

Both examples are good illustrations of the common 'A is B and not C' pattern, giving a positive view of what language is and a rejected view of what it is not. Example (5) deals with technology and language change, and (6) deals with language teaching, but both contain direct metaphors of language as a natural organism, opposed to direct metaphors of language as *an instrument* or *a machine*. Example (6) goes a step further by adding an opposition between people as robots and people as human beings, which corresponds to the opposition between treating language as a machine and treating it as a living system. In both examples, the

negated metaphors are not just a contrast to the adopted standpoint, but clearly echo other existing views on the same topic.

From the above examples it can already be seen that the observed descriptions work to achieve metaphorical framing (Brugman, 2015; Ottati, Renstrom & Price, 2014) in the language debate. Most notably, metaphor frames such as the above work to highlight or prime certain aspects of the issue in question, while de-emphasizing or disregarding others (Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005). Direct metaphors play a major role in this respect in the corpus, but they typically work to construct a type of corrective frame, in which readers are explicitly instructed to reject one possible conceptualization of the topic and to adopt another. The common 'A is B and not C' metaphors are a prime example of this kind of corrective framing. The frame created through direct metaphor is then available for deliberate extension (Reijnierse et al., 2015) through the use of related elements of the source domain (e.g., *machines, robots* in 6); interestingly, this is not often the case in the material – direct metaphors often merely sum up the main viewpoint of the text, followed by explanations, but with no frame extension. The following example illustrates the tendency to highlight the main point without further frame extension:

(7) Language is **not a plant that rises and falls, lives and decays**. It's a **tool that's perfectly adapted by the people using it**.   ("The Times", 16 Jan 2013)

The excerpt is the very ending of a (largely non-metaphorical) text on whether people should interfere with language development, especially in the case of endangered languages. The final metaphorical description drives the main point of the text home: The metaphor of language as a *plant*, or *natural growth*, is rejected here; the metaphor is clearly relational, in that it reflects another's view of language change (as well as the one expressed in 5 and 6) and rejects it. The direct metaphor of language as a tool upholds the frame in which language is a physical object that can be adapted by users. Adopting the tool frame rather than the plant frame has wide-sweeping consequences not just for conceptualizing language, but also for the kinds of policy or action to be taken in relation to language. Importantly, the meaning of the 'tool' frame becomes clearer and stronger through the corrective juxtaposition to the 'plant' frame.

Negated similes/metaphors such as *Language is not a plant* or *Language isn't a machine* have not been much described in the literature. Their understanding in text again crucially depends upon the corrective juxtaposition of frames (e.g., that language is not a machine, but an organic living system), in some contrast with which their meaning needs to be understood. Without these, a non-figurative meaning would likely be preferred. Moreover, corrective direct metaphors often

involve some kind of elaboration or explanation, especially of the negated frame. Here is another example from "The Times", from a text about the future of English:

> (8)   Laments about the decline of English are common. […] There is no possibility that their fears for the future of English will be realised. I say this with confidence not because I have powers of precognition but because they have misunderstood the faculty of language. There is no such thing as a **language that, like an old fridge, breaks down through inattention**. Linguists and anthropologists have never come across a society where changes in a language have destroyed (or even compromised) its coherence or reduced its range of meanings. It's never happened, and that's not down to chance: it's because **language is a self-regulating system**.
>
> <div align="right">("The Times", 20 June 2015)</div>

The author uses the direct metaphor of language as a *self-regulating system*, which is opposed to the direct metaphor of *language that, like an old fridge, breaks down through inattention* (presented as the view of many who *lament* the *decline of English*). The creative fridge metaphor is further explained in the following sentence, which repeats the point that language is not a thing that can be *destroyed* in ways imagined by some people. The adopted direct metaphor of a *self-regulating system* and the rejected one of a *fridge* present two opposing views of language. While both could be subsumed under the broad conceptual LANGUAGES ARE COMPLEX SYSTEMS metaphor, their realizations and juxtaposition in context do not support such a generalization. Self-regulating systems are originally associated with nature, living creatures and the body, and the very attribute of "self-regulating" suggests the lack of necessity to intervene. In this view, language, like a natural organism, regulates change on its own and cannot *break down through inattention*. This stance is placed in direct opposition to the view of language as a machine, which implies that language is breakable and that it requires regular care, checks, maintenance and fixing. Finally, it can be noted that the full meaning of the novel "fridge" metaphor is made easily accessible through the following explanation, as well as through its linguistic form – that of a direct metaphor, juxtaposed to another direct metaphor. The rhetorical effect of this and other novel direct metaphors, like *peg* or *net* above, comes from the interaction of linguistic and conceptual aspects of metaphor.

Some further observations need to be made at this point from the perspective of form and meaning. 'A is B and not C' metaphors are a strikingly frequent type of direct metaphor in the newspaper corpus (nearly one half of the language-related direct metaphors appear with this pattern).[8] They tend to be followed by further

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8. With many others involving an implicit contrast to another position mentioned in the text.

explanations (cf. Roncero et al., 2006), including common further elaboration on the source domain, such as the fridge breaking down through inattention in the above example. Postmodification of the source domain word is particularly common in the negated metaphors (e.g., *not an instrument <u>we can police for better self-expression</u>*, *not a plant <u>that rises and falls</u>*). It works to simultaneously clarify the metaphorical choice and to relationally echo others' voices. Further, overall, the meaning of the direct metaphors illustrated here can best be understood as relational contrast, rather than likeness exaggeration (identified e.g., in Barnden, 2015, or Israel et al., 2004). The point in (6), for instance, is not that language is very much like a self-regulating system, but that it is like a self-regulating system rather than *like an old fridge,* or a machine. The relational component plays a big part in almost all of the direct metaphors found, even when they are opposed to indirect metaphors as in Example (3) or (4).

Further, from the perspective of local discourse meanings, a clear pattern can be discerned even when looking only at direct metaphors. While very different source domains are employed in the above examples, they can all easily be subsumed under two categories: natural organisms/systems (like *natural growth, a living system,* or *a self-regulating system*) and inanimate physical objects (like a *peg, instrument, old fridge,* or *machine*). The distinction reflects two overarching frames in which to conceptualize language. On one hand, natural systems have inherent ways of regulating the processes of growth and change, they constantly evolve, and outside interference with these changes is neither necessary nor helpful. On the other hand, physical objects and machines can break, they require some maintenance and attention; if language resembles a physical object, it needs to be actively maintained in order to never stop working, it may need to be fixed at times, but like any object it should not be *tampered with* carelessly, as it may be broken. In turn, adopting either of the two frames has real consequences in the social world, to do with language policy, especially when national level changes are discussed – the view of language as natural growth privileges an approach to language that involves little intervention, while the view of language as a breakable object calls for taking greater care of language, in aspects ranging from language policy and standardisation, through education, to tolerance of variation in the public sphere. More broadly, another implication of such contrasted frames is that they leave no room for acknowledging the multifaceted nature of language, with properties of both an organic system and a tool. The process is a good illustration of how ideological approaches tend to obscure and over-simplify the complexity of any abstract phenomenon.

Altogether, this negotiation of perspectives ties in closely with the "verbal hygienic" concerns that have come to characterize the UK public discourse about language. Cameron (2012) uses the term "verbal hygiene" when describing this

unusual linguistic interest, to refer to the practices of evaluating language, and making judgements on whether it is "good" or "bad" and on how to make it better. This kind of anxiety about language change and how to control it is hard to ignore here. The discussed metaphors in essence all tap into verbal hygienist concerns, even when the need for language regulation is rejected. The juxtaposed direct metaphors then work to highlight positions on language while echoing the rejected views of 'absent others'.

Though, as illustrated above, the majority of 'A is B and not C' metaphors work to illustrate views on language change in general and whether to be concerned about it, in rare cases in the corpus they are part of a more specific topic. In the example below, thus, the discussion focuses on politically correct language, and to what extent offensive language should be controlled:

(9)   Those who are zealous about politically correct terms and those who oppose them fall into the same trap of seeing **language as a fixed, controllable entity**. It isn't. Our language **is alive and in rude health**.

Still, even this case echoes the opposition between the two views: one of language as a controllable entity (which can then be modified) or as a living organism which in any case develops on its own. The first view is here rejected in a sentence following the direct metaphor, while the opposing one is given through an (in this case indirect) metaphor of language being *alive* and *in rude health* that cannot and should not be affected by people. As in all of the above examples, the author's perspective is stressed through the use of corrective frames that juxtapose two perspectives, one of language as a fixed object and another of language as a living being. The mention of "rude health" refers specifically to political correctness, with a hint of irony that also seems to be a feature of many corrective metaphorical frames, but remains beyond the scope of this analysis.

5.   Implications: Corrective framing in action

The analysis has shown that the vast majority of the direct metaphors in the corpus serve the purpose of relational argumentation. Though the findings are in line with previous observations on the explanatory power of direct metaphors (Beger, 2011; Roncero et al., 2006), they point to a much more specific function in discourse. Most of the direct metaphors found are used in relation to some existing claims or representations, and work to uphold one perspective in opposition to another. Many of them explicitly mention both positions through juxtaposed 'A is B and not C' metaphors, found to be particularly frequent in the corpus. This function of direct metaphors has not been discussed much in the literature, but

it has implications for understanding the role of metaphorical argumentation in public discourse.

Above all, the observed direct metaphor in the corpus works as a vehicle of metaphorical framing. While all metaphorical public rhetoric can be seen as a form of framing (Ottati et al., 2006), direct metaphors perform this role explicitly, by directly instructing the reader to adopt a particular frame. More importantly, however, the analysis shows that most of the metaphorical frames created through direct metaphors in the corpus are essentially relational, used to reject another possible or existing frame. The 'other' conceptualization is either referred to textually (cf. Barnett, 2009), or, more often, explicitly present as another direct metaphorical frame. The term corrective frames is used in the analysis to describe this type of juxtaposition of two possible conceptualizations.

The notion of metaphorical corrective framing fits easily with the definition of framing in communication science – it is an incentive to understand a phenomenon in a particular way (Benford & Snow, 2000), and an emphasis on the salience of certain aspects of the topic (de Vreese, 2005). Corrective frames described here clearly work to 'define problems', 'diagnose causes', and 'suggest remedies' (Entman, 1993). However, while frames are often described as having a covert, "stealthy" impact (Gamson et al., 1992; Van Gorp, 2007), corrective framing operates in a very different way, by explicitly inviting the reader to adopt a given frame and reject another possible frame. The cognitive impact of this type of framing remains a topic for further research, but the findings suggest that the dynamic, overtly oppositional metaphorical frames may have a more prominent role in public discourse than previously recognized.

In this analysis, the patterns of corrective framing through direct metaphors, even when observed in relative isolation from other metaphors in the text, were sufficient to reveal the dominant positions in debates over language in British newspaper metadiscourse. Specifically, direct metaphor framing revolves around two concrete source domains. One involves natural organisms/systems (like *natural growth, a living system,* or *a self-regulating system*) and the other involves physical objects (like an *instrument, tool, fridge,* or *machine*). The two, often explicitly juxtaposed, frames reflect radically different ways to conceptualize language, as part of the "language wars" (Hitchings, 2011) that characterize anglophone metadiscourse more generally. Importantly, adopting one of the two views has important implications for social action and language policy.

It has been noted that media metadiscourses in the anglophone world convey an increasing concern with how to approach changes in language and communication (Thurlow, 2007), which has arguably become even more visible in Britain in the past decade (Cameron, 2013). The present material gives further evidence of a passionate concern with language in media discourses, which is closely intertwined

with other social matters. While it is difficult to arrive at definitive claims about the ideological underpinnings of the language discussions, as not all of the articles deal with exactly the same aspects of language, it is clear that the two positions repeatedly juxtaposed in corrective frames all echo the "verbal hygienist" (Cameron, 2012) debates over the nature and state of language. On one hand, then, the view of language as a "self-regulating organism" works to challenge such anxieties, while also promoting a more liberal, non-intrusive approach to social change. On the other hand, the framing of language as an object that can break and may need to be fixed invites action, highlights responsibility for protecting language, and encourages greater state and institutional control. In a way, as Cameron (2013) has pointed out, the logic behind the opposed frames of language rests on a tacit, common-sense analogy between the order of language and the order of society more broadly – thus, "fixing" language or protecting it from breaking becomes a symbolic way of "fixing" society. The main rhetorical function of direct metaphors observed in the corpus is to defend or reject the importance of such "fixing".

However, the findings on direct metaphor use and corrective frames have implications that go far beyond issues of language change. The focus here has been on journalistic metadiscourse, but contradictory frames are common in many other policy debates (Brugman, 2015; Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011), and corrective framing is likely to be a salient phenomenon in these. In any type of argumentative discourse, direct metaphors have the potential to highlight standpoints in a 'look-at-it-in-this-way-(and-not-in-that-way)' manner, which fulfills a different discourse function from other kinds of metaphorical framing. Corrective frames are in public discourse not only employed to stress one's position on a matter, but also in 'agenda setting' (Behr & Iyengar, 2001) ways that explicitly determine what aspects of an issue the public should think about. Direct metaphorical frames are not necessarily more convincing (quite possibly, covert frames are more effective, cf. Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011), but when given as part of explicit oppositions they decrease the accessibility of alternative interpretations (e.g., of language as a building, rather than living creature/tool). Whatever their effects, addressivity and relation to perspectives of others are likely to be major features of direct metaphors used in public discourse, even when the 'other' meanings are not explicitly referred to.

Interestingly, also, the 'likeness-exaggerating' meaning common in direct metaphor (Barnden, 2015) may be a likely interpretation when looking at the identified direct metaphors in isolation, but it does not really seem to hold when they are observed in the discourse context, particularly as part of juxtaposed corrective frames. Again, this is likely not a feature specific to metalinguistic discourse, but relatable to any argumentative public discourse, in which a likeness-exaggerating interpretation is in principle available, but can be overshadowed by

the argumentative functions of direct metaphors. Overall, the findings point to the importance of investigating the meaning of direct metaphor in broader contexts of real language use.

Finally, it can be noted that on the surface the opposing, mutually exclusive frames discussed here bear some resemblance to the recently described concept of "frame conflicts" (Ritchie & Cameron, 2014). In analyzing a transcript of a public meeting between the public and police officials following the police shooting of a young African-American woman, Ritchie and Cameron showed that the two sides used radically different frames: an episodic frame of a one-off tragic event, and a thematic, deliberately ironic portrayal of the police's "blind justice" (in the original sense, blind to differences among people, and in the new sense, blind to see obvious faults or crimes). Altogether, the different frames are shown to have precluded understanding and ultimately led to failure of the meeting. The metaphors used by the two sides are similarly oppositional as those in the present study. However, while in frame conflicts speakers/writers are unaware of frame contradictions, in corrective frames such contradictions are juxtaposed explicitly, in order to highlight both and uphold just one. In this sense, corrective framing as a discourse strategy can be the solution to problems experienced with frame conflicts – as Cameron and Ritchie note, in sensitive social situations, deliberate and careful attention to frame conflicts is needed, and corrective frames can work to achieve precisely that.

Overall, as framing devices in public discourse, analyzing direct metaphors can yield important insights in all three dimensions of metaphor upheld by Steen (2011): language, cognition and communication. It has been shown here that direct metaphors take different language forms (e.g., with or without metaphor flags such as *like*, in nominal form or other case forms), which may have implications for interpretation. From the cognitive perspective, their use in discourse raises a range of interesting questions that remain beyond the scope of this paper: do direct metaphor frames influence reasoning differently from other metaphorical frames? Are people's interpretations that are based on direct metaphors more 'overt', in that people recognize metaphors as influential in their decisions (unlike the 'covert' influences observed in, for example, Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011)? Does the use of corrective frames make the framing effects stronger? Or is it less efficient, since people are aware of the author's argumentative goals? These are just some of the questions with implications for the exciting question of how metaphors affect social reasoning. Moreover, especially in the case of novel metaphors, direct metaphors in corrective frames highlight the interaction of conceptual and linguistic aspects of metaphor in producing a communicative effect in discourse, which remains an important issue to be discussed in future studies. Finally, in the communicative dimension, the analysis has revealed frequent cases in which

article authors not only explicitly invite readers to view language in a certain way, but to view it in one way and to reject another existing conceptualization. This raises interesting questions about metaphor deliberateness; though deliberateness is not the main focus in this analysis, on the basis of observed data it merits a brief discussion.

6.   Are the metaphors used deliberate?

Direct metaphors have recently received considerable attention as clear examples of deliberate metaphors (e.g., Beger, 2011; Steen at al., 2010), in which readers/hearers are explicitly instructed to view one thing in terms of another. Though classifying all the metaphors used in negotiating language perspectives is difficult, it would appear counter-intuitive to deny the deliberateness of the discussed direct metaphors in the corpus. They exhibit varying levels of conventionality, but are all used for a very specific rhetorical purpose of defending one view of language as opposed to another. Moreover, the comprehension of unusual metaphors such as *grammar is a peg* or *the English language is a beautiful, organic creature* is facilitated precisely by the assumption that they are deliberately selected by the writer to make a certain point (Negrea-Busuioc & Ritchie, 2015). Above all, also, the fact that direct metaphors of this kind are typically used in contrast to another possible representation explicitly mentioned in text gives even more evidence of deliberate choices for argumentative purposes.

In fact, apart from the direct metaphors, all the metaphors used as part of corrective juxtaposition in text can easily be seen as deliberate. For instance, the statement that language is not "a fixed, controllable entity" but is "alive and in rude health", clearly points to deliberate use of two different metaphors that present two opposing views of language, even though the second one is expressed through indirect metaphor. Such alternatives need to be carefully evaluated and selected to fit the speaker's rhetorical goal. Any corrective framing that makes frame conflicts explicit can be taken as a textual signal of deliberateness (in addition to those discussed by Beger, 2011).

A more difficult question is establishing deliberateness of metaphor outside of these corrective frames explicitly signaled through metaphor. For one thing, many of the individual indirect metaphors used to argue for one or the other understanding of language appear to be very deliberate (e.g., *They're **smashing** language to **pieces***), particularly those belonging to frames of 'living system' or 'physical object'. What is more, given the purpose of the articles observed, from a social/discursive perspective at least, it makes sense to view all the metaphorical expressions employed in this two-sided argumentation as deliberately used. On the basis

of text, however, it proved to be very hard to arrive at any consistent coding of deliberate metaphors, even within the two described frames. Some cues can be relied on, such as metaphor clustering in text or the use quotation marks, but too many cases remain problematic.

The difficulty for the researcher in establishing deliberateness hints at the vague status of deliberateness in the addressee's processing of metaphor. With the exception of direct metaphor (where, arguably, the 'look-at-it-in-this-way' emphasis on two domains is likely to have implications for processing), all other metaphors, including those that are part of a directly created frame, might just as well work for the reader as any other 'automatically' produced metaphor, even if they are deliberately used in a text by the author. What is intended by the author as deliberate may not be recognized as deliberate by the reader, or the metaphor may not be recognized or processed from the source perspective at all. However, issues of processing are beyond the scope of this paper; further research is needed to arrive at non-speculative claims on this very important question in metaphor research (for the current debate and some experimental findings, see Gibbs, 2015; Steen, 2015).

Whatever its implications for processing, from the pure perspective of discourse analysis the category of deliberateness does not appear to be a "superfluous" (Gibbs, 2011, p. 21) one. In the present discussion of direct metaphors, even though the focus is not explicitly on deliberateness, it would be hard not to see the described metaphors of language as employed deliberately to promote a certain view of the topic, which in turn has further implications for language policy, education, and understanding of social change more broadly. As Musolff (2011) has pointed out, we need to acknowledge the aspects of metaphorical discourse as deliberate social action which creates social responsibilities, and the notion of deliberate metaphor helps us do precisely that.

7.   Conclusion

Even when they pose as merely descriptive, British newspaper texts about language tend to echo "verbal hygienic" anxieties over language and communication in a changing world. The analysis of direct metaphors turned out to be sufficient to tease out some of these tendencies – it has been shown that direct metaphors are used to create juxtaposed corrective frames of two possible views of language, which are by no means only to do with proper defining of language. Adopting one of the two frames has consequences for language policy, for approaching language change, and implicitly also for approaching the social, political and moral changes that appear to be the underlying concerns in media metadiscourses. Of course, in order to understand the observed language ideologies fully we would need to

study all the metaphors and other discursive devices in the texts. Nevertheless, direct metaphors merit attention on their own as the most explicit rhetorical tools consciously harnessed to frame the debate. Solely on the basis of text, of course, claiming whether these metaphors were chosen deliberately to uphold perspectives on language is a difficult matter, but the findings justify a broader view of metaphor deliberateness based not only on textual cues but also on the rhetorical functions of metaphor in (meta)discourse.

Still, the implications of the present findings go beyond questions of language. As Ritchie and Cameron (2014) have shown, in any approach to framing it is understood that people may offer competing and contradictory frames for topics under debate. The use of explicit, deliberate corrective frames is likely to have different effects from the more covert indirect metaphors, in terms of processing, as well as social reasoning. The present study has only aimed to highlight the understudied argumentative framing functions of direct metaphors, likely to be prominent in any socially or politically salient discussion. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the analysis has offered a sufficient glimpse of the argumentative uses of direct metaphor, enough at least to show that they are interesting rhetorical devices in their own right which can be fully understood only through more nuanced investigation in contexts of real-life discourse use.

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