"VICIOUS CIRCLE" OF WAR: METAPHORIZATION OF RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE IN ÉRIC ZEMMOUR'S TWITTER COMMUNICATION

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In the crucible of conflict, the discourse employed by political leaders transcends the mere conveyance of information, delving into the realm of strategic communication and persuasion. Twitter, with its brevity and widespread usage among political actors, offers a rich source for investigating political discourse dynamics. Particularly notable is the pervasive use of metaphors by politicians during times of crisis, a linguistic phenomenon that extends beyond its conventional literary function to assume a critical role in shaping public perceptions, fostering unity, and framing the narrative of conflict. This article focuses on the analysis of political communication of Éric Zemmour, a prominent figure in the contemporary French political landscape, on Twitter to reveal main functions of metaphors during the first year of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The research has been conducted using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main approach and elements of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). By integrating these methodologies, the study revealed that Éric Zemmour employs conceptual and traditional metaphors to present to explain relations between France-Ukraine-Russia, enhance own credibility and trustworthiness, shape public opinion, simplify the complex geopolitical event, evoke emotional responses, appeal to the national pride and identity, construct social actors and events, underscore the urgency and seriousness of the current situation, and personify the subjects. The paper thus provides a more nuanced understanding of the linguistic and conceptual mechanisms of metaphors in Zemmour's Twitter communication during a crucial geopolitical event.
Key words: metaphors, critical discourse analysis, conceptual metaphor theory, Éric Zemmour, Twitter Communication

Сідень О.І. **"Порочне коло" війни: метафоризація вторгнення Росії в Україну у твіттер комунікації Еріка Земмура**
У горнилі конфлікту дискурс, яким користуються політичні лідери, виходить за рамки простої передачі інформації, заглиблюючись у сферу стратегічної комунікації та переконання. Твіттер, з його стислістю та широким використанням серед політичних акторів, пропонує багате джерело для дослідження динаміки

політичного дискурсу. Особливо помітним є повсюдне використання метафор політиками під час кризи, лінгвістичне явище, яке виходить за межі своєї традиційної літературної функції та відіграє вирішальну роль у формуванні суспільного сприйняття, зміцненні єдності та оформленні наративу конфлікту. Ця стаття зосереджується на аналізі політичної комунікації Еріка Земмура, видатної фігури сучасного французького політичного ландшафту у твіттері, щоб виявити основні функції метафор протягом першого року повномасштабного вторгнення Росії в Україну. Дослідження проводилося з використанням критичного аналізу дискурсу (КДА) як основного підходу та елементів теорії концептуальної метафори (ТКМ). Завдяки об'єднанню цих методологій дослідження показало, що Ерік Земмур використовує концептуальні та традиційні метафори, щоб пояснити відносини між Францією, Україною та Росією, підвищити власну довіру та надійність серед аудиторії, сформувати громадську думку, спростити складну геополітичну подію, викликати емоційні відгуки, звернутися до національної гордості та ідентичності, конструювати соціальних акторів і події, підкреслити актуальність і серйозність поточної ситуації, персоніфікувати суб'єкти. Таким чином, стаття забезпечує більш детальне розуміння лінгвістичних і концептуальних механізмів метафор у комунікації Земмура у твіттері під час вирішальної геополітичної події.

Ключові слова*: метафори, критичний дискурс-аналіз, теорія концептуальної метафори, Ерік Земмур, твіттер-комунікація*

Introduction. In the contemporary landscape of political communication, the analysis of social media platforms has emerged as an indispensable tool for understanding, interpreting, and dissecting the dynamics of public discourse (Shafaq et al., 2022; Nguyen, T. A., Bui, T. C., & Sokolovskiy, K., 2022; Čuljak, 2023; Letho & Kaldeio, 2023). The prevalence of social media in political communication necessitates a nuanced exploration, as it provides a real-time reflection of societal sentiments and political trends. Among these platforms, Twitter stands out as a particularly rich source for investigation due to its brevity, immediacy, and widespread usage among politicians, pundits, and the public alike. In the crucible of conflict, the discourse employed by politicians transcends the mere conveyance of information, delving into the realm of strategic communication and persuasion. Particularly notable is the pervasive use of metaphors during times of pandemic, crisis and war, a linguistic phenomenon that extends beyond its conventional literary function to assume a critical role in shaping public perceptions, fostering unity, and framing the narrative of conflict (Ritchie, 2003; Zinken, 2003; Cammaerts, 2012; Musolff, 2017; Castro Seixas, 2021).

Within the realm of contemporary French political discourse, Éric Zemmour emerges as a notable figure distinguished by his frequent and adept use of different stylistic devices, metaphors in particular, as a strategic tool in communication. In the context of the first year of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022

Zemmour incorporated the war into his discourse particularly because of his participation in the 2022 French presidential elections. It was crucial for the electorate as well as for the international audience to understand the position of the politician regarding the war in Ukraine which also affected France. While employing the war related context, Éric Zemmour used various metaphors and other rhetoric and stylistic devices. However, what is the function of metaphors related to the war in Ukraine? What is the reason for using them in political discourse? This paper aims to invest into academic discussion of discursive strategies in times of crisis by analyzing the utilization of metaphors in Éric Zemmour Twitter communication during the first year of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Theoretical Background. The analysis of metaphors has consistently been integral to a highly discerning language study methodology, aligning with the earliest critical linguistic perspectives that inform research agendas in critical discourse analysis (CDA) within historical-discourse approach (Fairclough, 1995; Reisigl & Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2009; Wodak & Chilton, 2005). The traditional approach to examining metaphor, from Aristotle to Davidson, involves distinguishing between literal-metaphorical language and emphasizing novel metaphors. According to Lakoff (1993), metaphor in Classical Theory (CT) is defined as a novel or poetic expression used outside its conventional area of usage in order to express other similar concept.

In semantics and pragmatics, metaphor and other figurative forms of expression were traditionally considered as 'indirect' or secondary aspects of meaning, necessitating specific lexical rules referring to the 'creative' or 'productive' aspect of the lexicon which allows to form new words or to derive new meanings for existing words (Leech, 1981, pp. 214–219; Lyons, 1977, pp. 103–104). In opposition to the inclination to categorize metaphors and semantic or figurative speech as pragmatic phenomena, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, authors of the groundbreaking book "Metaphors We Live By" (1980), consider metaphors as pragmatic phenomena deeply rooted in cognitive processes and everyday experience. Researchers argue that metaphors are not just "decorated language" but an integral part of how we conceptualize and understand the world around us.

The renowned metaphorical work, titled in alignment with the programmatic ideas, serves as a cornerstone text for the emergence of 'cognitive'-oriented theory

of meaning, which is called Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define conceptual metaphor as a cognitive mechanism by which abstract concepts are understood and structured in terms of more concrete domains. They are pervasive in human thought and language, shaping how we perceive and understand the world around us. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that conceptual metaphors are not mere linguistic expressions, but are fundamental to our conceptual systems, influencing our reasoning, perception, and behavior. These metaphors help us understand the sense of abstract concepts by relating them to more concrete sensorimotor experiences, thereby providing a framework for understanding complex ideas in terms of more familiar domains. For instance, at the very beginning of the book, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp.7-9) provide an analysis of conceptual metaphor "TIME IS MONEY": time, which is abstract and intangible, is conceptualized and understood as if it were money, which is concrete and measurable. Authors continue with similar subcategories as "time is a limited source", "time is a valuable commodity" in order to show how we conceptualize abstract phenomena of time, which is tied to our culture.

In CMT metaphors are divided into orientational (spatial orientation, e.g. "HAPPY IS UP, BAD IS DOWN"), ontological, which are subcategorized into entity, substance and container metaphors; personification (e.g. Inflation is eating up our profits.) and metonymy (e.g. We need some new blood in the organization.). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state about entity metaphors, "Things that are not clearly discrete or bounded, but human purposes require to impose artificial boundaries that make physical phenomena discere just as we are: entities bounded by a surface" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.25). Researchers believe that by framing our experiences within the conceptual realm of tangible or physical entities, we have the ability to distill abstract experiences and ideas, perceiving them as tangible objects or concrete substances. Container metaphors are defined as physical objects that are bounded by surfaces (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.29), whereas personification is viewed as nonhuman entities that are specified as being a person, have human motivations, characteristics, and activities (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 33).

Generally, Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) differs from the Classical Theory or Classical Metaphor, which defines metaphor by representing another concept related to the original one. Black (1955, 1979), Richards (1936), and Searle (1979) argue that this relation does not invariably involve similarity; it

could entail analogy, extension, narrowing, loosening, or a subordinate metaphorical or metonymic shift.

Since the publication of "Metaphors we live by" CMT has found application in various fields, including the realm of politics. Lakoff (2002) himself scrutinized the discourse of conservatives and liberals in the United States in order to understand the underlying cognitive and conceptual foundations that shape their political ideologies and beliefs. Subsequent researchers have emulated Lakoff's approach, examining conceptual metaphors like those found in phrases such as the "advance of freedom" or the "building of American society" that are employed in American inaugural addresses to evoke specific images in the minds of listeners. For instance, Xue et al. (2013) delved into Donald Trump's conceptual metaphors, illustrating how he framed himself as a positive and beneficial president while portraying his opponents as adversaries to both himself and America. In a study conducted by Dragojević (2023), an examination was undertaken on conceptual metaphors, such as "politics is war" and "unity is a tool," present in the inaugural addresses of Donald Trump, Joe Biden, and Barack Obama, in order to explore how politicians with distinct rhetorical styles employ shared conceptual metaphors to convey their perspectives on leadership, political landscapes, and priorities.

Investigating social media, and Twitter in particular, allows researchers to glean insights into the framing of political narratives, the mobilization of public opinion, and the strategic communication choices made by political figures, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics of political discourse in the digital age (Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2013; Jungherr, 2015; Castanho Silva, & Proksch, 2021; Fontenla-Pedreira et al., 2022; Miguel et al., 2023). Politicians aiming to employ rhetorical devices, especially metaphors, must exercise caution since the brevity inherent in tweets necessitates a precision of expression, compelling political actors to strategically utilize rhetorical tools to communicate intricate ideas within the confines of limited characters (Goroshko & Poliakova, 2018; Ramanathan et al., 2018; Alshahrani, 2020; Elliott-Maksymowicz et al., 2021).

The analysis of French politicians' communication on Twitter is a crucial endeavor in unraveling the intricate tapestry of contemporary political discourse. French political communication is inseparably linked to global issues, which provides an opportunity to study how international factors contribute to the complexity of modern political discourse. France's rich political history and cultural context shape its political communication, providing insight into the

influence of historical events, cultural values and traditions on contemporary political debates. The nuances of the French language, including rhetorical devices and specific vocabulary, complicate the analysis of political communication. Moreover, the proliferation of French political communication through various media channels, from traditional to social platforms, sheds light on the evolving nature of contemporary political discourse. Consequently, studying the tweets of French politicians offers valuable insights into their communicative strategies, rhetorical choices, and the ways in which they navigate the digital sphere to utilize Twitter as a PR tool (Frame & Brachotte, 2015), convey political messages during elections (Frame & Brachotte, 2020), to frame terrorist incidents (Rizakis, 2023) etc.

As an experienced political commentator and public intellectual, Zemmour's rhetorical arsenal employs metaphors as powerful instruments to convey his ideas appealing to culturally shared ideas, leaving space for ambiguous interpretations of his statements. His proclivity for metaphorical expression reflects a deliberate and calculated approach to political communication, wherein linguistic nuances become integral to the dissemination of his ideological perspectives (Martin, 2023; Moïsi, 2021; Ivaldi, 2022, 2023).

Methods. The present work integrates Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as predominant research focus, with the elements of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in order to study the metaphors of Éric Zemmour during the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In the examined literature, CDA is observed as "a fast growing and increasingly interdisciplinary movement", firstly aimed to articulate the relation between discourses and the social practices (language as one of forms of social practice) in which they are embedded, and which then moved towards more explicit dialogue between social theory and practice, richer contextualization, greater interdisciplinarity and greater attention to the multimodality of discourse (van Leeuwen, 2006). Within CDA the use of discursive strategies stands out as a crucial element in communication. It includes a wide range of techniques and linguistic maneuvers employed by individuals and entities to communicate and mold their messages. These strategies entail purposeful choices of words, phrases, and rhetorical devices aimed at influencing how information is interpreted and received. Examining these strategies reveals the fundamental mechanisms that drive effective communication, illuminating the role of language as a potent tool

for conveying meaning and shaping perceptions. Wodak (2009, p. 94) defines discursive strategies as "a more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices), adopted in order to achieve a particular social, political, psychological, or linguistic goal." Wodak (2009, p. 95) suggests five discursive strategies: referential/nomination; predication; argumentation; perspectivization, framing, or discourse representation; intensification/mitigation, however in this research we will concentrate on nomination, argumentation and intensification/mitigation strategies, the objectives of which are to investigate discursive construction of social actors, objects/phenomena/ events, and processes/actions; justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness, and modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances.

Aligned with the focus on CDA, the article carries forward a CDA-oriented metaphor analysis, which is an analytical approach that applies the principles of CDA to the study of metaphors in discourse. Metaphors are investigated through the lenses of CMT, which has deep historical roots, drawing upon centuries of scholarly exploration that views metaphor not merely as a decorative linguistic element but rather as a conceptual instrument with the capacity to structure, reshape, and even bring about the construction of reality. Far from merely contributing to the rhetoric by conveying information, metaphors are perceived as inherently 'conceptual' and pivotal in shaping social reality. As suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), "Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 156). It is evident that perspectives that treat metaphors as conceptual cognitive mechanisms are not only significant but also central to understanding their impact.

In the study, following Lakoff and Johnson, we define conceptual metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon where one conceptual domain is understood and experienced in terms of another conceptual domain, e.g. "TIME IS MONEY". In addition, following classical theory, we distinguish traditional metaphor, which we characterize as a novel or poetic expression used outside its conventional area of use to express other similar concept, e.g. "she has a heart of gold". In the paper CDA, as a broader framework, focuses on critically examining language use in order to understand how the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine is reflected and

constructed through discourse in the Twitter account of Éric Zemmour. CMT is used as a cognitive approach to investigate the function of metaphors in the context of nominative and argumentative strategies.

The dataset of the paper encompasses tweets originating from the Twitter account of Éric Zemmour throughout the first year of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The temporal selection of this period is predicated upon the heightened prevalence of tweets directly or indirectly associated with the conflict in the year 2022. Utilizing Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) as a mechanism for information retrieval from publicly accessible sources concerning individuals, organizations, and events, the author systematically acquired the data. Subsequently, a manual analysis was conducted by the author with the objective of discerning metaphors within the tweets authored by Éric Zemmour. The analytical process identified 31 tweets characterized by the presence of metaphors. After identifying the tweets containing metaphors, they were analyzed through the lenses of CMT. Subsequently, their functions were determined within the framework of nomination, argumentation, and intensification strategies.

Results and discussion. Through a preliminary analytical process it appeared that throughout the year 2022, Éric Zemmour's Twitter account featured 3412 tweets in total. Among them, 73 tweets (2.13%) were related to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with 31 of these containing metaphors. This indicates that nearly half (42.24%) of the tweets implicitly/explicitly mentioning the war in Ukraine incorporated metaphors. This underscores the significance of analyzing metaphors in the Twitter account of Éric Zemmour since they fulfill a crucial function in his political communication. Within the analyzed material, various conceptual metaphors were identified and further investigated, among them ontological, container and entity ones. Classical metaphors as well as metaphorical namings were found. The analysis has shown that most of them had negative meaning and were predominantly used to build nomination (construction of social actors and events), argumentation (persuading audiences of the truth and normative rightness of his claims), and intensification (magnify the illocutionary force of utterances) strategies.

Examining the subsequent example of conceptual metaphor with building source domain - "RELATIONS IS A BUILDING" below: "Emmanuel Macron **was unable to build a relationship** of equals with Vladimir Putin, because he did not follow through with the logic of French independence" (fr. *Emmanuel Macron*

n'a pas pu construire *avec Vladimir Poutine* ***une relation*** *d'égal à égal, car il n'est pas allé au bout de la logique de l'indépendance française*). In the tweet Zemmour implicitly mentions the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine using building metaphor, which highlights the similarities between constructing a physical structure and creating relations. Like building a strong foundation, relations require strong investments, especially in the political context. In the tweet the meaning is added with a meaning of equal relations, suggesting the need for a balanced and equal foundation in dealings with Putin.

The conceptual metaphor with game source "POLITICS IS A GAME" can be observed in the following tweet: "I am not happy about the humiliation of France and the loss of its rank. Beyond politics, beyond the campaign, it is the place of France that is **at stake**." (fr. *Je ne me réjouis pas de l'humiliation de la France et de la perte de son rang. Au-delà de la politique, au-delà de la campagne, c'est la place de la France qui est* ***en jeu***.). In French the metaphor includes a word "jeu" which literally translates as a game. The conceptual metaphor here frames political activities and events as a strategy game in which players compete for power, influence, and success. Within this framework, the phrase "I do not rejoice in France's humiliation and loss of its rank" reflects the idea that political failures are viewed as defeats in the "game" of politics. Moreover, the subsequent statement "Beyond politics, beyond the campaign, it's France's position that's at stake" emphasizes the broader consequences of political actions and decisions. Here, the metaphorical use of "at stake" (fr. *en jeu*) suggests that France's position and its standing on the global stage are like pieces in a strategic game that can be won or lost based on political maneuvers.

FRONTIERS as container metaphors (a subcategory of ontological metaphors) were found in several utterances. In Zemmour's Twitter communication frontiers, besides its direct meaning, are also used as metaphors that "can be quantified in terms of the amount of substance [here territory] they contain" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 30).

- He [the future President] will have to protect its [France] **borders like a precious treasure**. (fr. *Il devra protéger* ***ses frontières comme un trésor précieux***). This metaphor compares the protection of borders to safeguarding something valuable, emphasizing the importance and care needed in ensuring national security.

- With this war, **borders** are now finally seen for what they are: **essential guarantors of the freedom, security and peace of peoples**. (fr. *Avec cette guerre,*

les frontières sont désormais enfin perçues pour ce qu'elles sont : **d'indispensables garants de la liberté, de la sécurité et de la paix des peuples**). The metaphor portrays borders as essential safeguards, highlighting their critical role in preserving freedom, security, and peace.

DESTINY as an entity metaphor (another subcategory of ontological metaphors) is present as well: "I want confidence because I want us to be able to rely on our own strengths without putting our **destiny** in the hands of a foreign country, a foreign leader, anyone other than ourselves." (fr. *Je veux la confiance parce que je veux que nous puissions compter sur nos propres forces sans remettre notre **destin** dans les mains d'un pays étranger, d'un dirigeant étranger, de qui que ce soit d'autre que nous-mêmes.*). This statement reflects the metaphorical understanding that destiny is conceived as a tangible entity that can be guided or shaped by individual actions and decisions, as well as controlled or influenced by external factors. The tweet also involves a classical metaphor (not a conceptual one) "relying on our own strengths" (fr. *compter sur nos propres forces*) emphasizing self-reliance and independence of France.

Personification, as another type or subcategory of metaphor, shows a nonhuman entity being a person, having human characteristics, motivations, activities etc. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 33). In the subsequent tweet a nonhuman country is seen as a human: "Mr. President of the Republic, you have not yet succeeded in making **France's voice heard**." (fr. *Monsieur le Président de la République, vous n'êtes pas encore parvenu à **faire entendre la voix de la France**.*). Here France is personified, as if it were a person with the ability to speak and be heard. The phrase "faire entendre la voix de la France" (make France's voice heard) implies that France, as a nation, has opinions, perspectives, and interests that should be conveyed to others. By addressing the President directly and attributing the failure to hear the voice of France, the metaphor emphasizes the responsibility and authority of the country's leadership in representing the interests of the nation on the global stage. Essentially, this underscores the idea that the President, as the leader of the nation, has a responsibility to effectively advocate for the interests of the country. It portrays France not just as a geographical entity but as an active participant in international affairs whose voice deserves attention and respect.

Besides conceptual metaphors, classical metaphors (one of which was mentioned earlier) are also present in the Twitter communication of Éric Zemmour. For instance, a history related metaphor: "Because in History, we only

negotiate between lords, never with a vassal." (fr. *Car dans l'Histoire, on ne négocie qu'entre seigneurs, jamais avec un vassal.*). This statement includes the use of feudal terminology, comparing the relationship between France and the United States to that of a lord and a vassal. Zemmour suggests that unless France asserts itself diplomatically and differentiates its position from that of the United States, it risks being perceived as subservient ("vassal"). The idea is that in historical negotiations peers or equalsare more respected, and negotiating with a subordinate can reduce the perceived value of France's word in diplomatic matters. The metaphor draws on the feudal hierarchy to emphasize the importance of maintaining diplomatic independence and equality.

The culturally related metaphor is also presented. "I therefore ask you today to designate two "**France's emissaries for peace**": Nicolas Sarkozy and Hubert Védrine." (fr. Je vous demande donc de désigner aujourd'hui deux "**émissaires de la France pour la paix**": Nicolas Sarkozy et Hubert Védrine.). Here Zemmour addresses Emmanuel Macron to "send" Sarkozy and Védrine as emissaries. In order to understand this metaphor we need to know the cultural context, because knowing who these people are will prove that this statement contains metaphor in it. Both Sarkozy and Védrine have held prominent positions in the French government, Sarkozy serving as President of France in 2007-2012, who is known as a peacemaker in the context of many conflicts around the world, Middle East conflicts (Hershco, 2009) and the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008 (de Haas, 2009; Cohen & Hamilton, 2011). Hubert Védrine held key diplomatic roles, including Diplomatic advisor of the President in 1981-1998. While being a Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1997-2002 he was involved in addressing several international crises and conflicts. One notable example is his involvement in the Kosovo War in 1999. Védrine played a role in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict and was supportive of NATO's intervention in Kosovo, which aimed to stop ethnic cleansing and restore stability in the region (Auerswald, 2004; Campbell, 2007). He also was consulting later President Emmanuel Macron on foreign policy issues during the 2017 elections (Judah, 2017). Védrine also was invited by NATO Secretary Jens Stoltenberg to join a group of experts reflecting on further strengthening NATO's political dimension (*Secretary General Appoints Group, 2020*). The use of "emissaries" in the tweet implies sending representatives or messengers for peace. Consequently, the extensive experience of Sarkozy and Védrine in politics and diplomacy likely contributes to their perceived suitability as emissaries for peace initiatives on behalf of France. It is also used ironically

since in the whole tweet Zemmour argues that Emmanuel Macron fails to bring resolution to the war: "Mr. President of the Republic, you have not yet succeeded in making France's voice heard." (fr. Monsieur le Président de la République, vous n'êtes pas encore parvenu à faire entendre la voix de la France.).

A commercial metaphor, as a subcategory of classical metaphor) was discovered during the analysis of Éric Zemmour's Twitter account. "Unlike many who are ready **to bargain for the identity** and independence of France, I am a French patriot." (fr. *Contrairement à beaucoup de ceux qui sont prêts à **brader l'identité** et l'indépendance de la France, je suis un patriote français.*). The statement was used in the tweet where Zemmour appeals to be firm with Moscow and seek a solution for peace, alluding to a diplomatic solution of the conflict. The metaphor "to bargain the identity" is used to criticize those who, in the view of Éric Zemmour, compromise the fundamental values and sovereignty of France (those people could be his counterparts in the Presidential elections 2002). The metaphor compares the actions or attitudes of certain individuals as merchants who sell something valuable for a low price, implying that these people are willing to sacrifice important aspects of France's identity and autonomy for personal gain or other reasons. Furthermore, by contrasting himself as a "patriote français" (French patriot), Zemmour emphasizes his commitment to preserving and defending the identity and independence of France. The use of the metaphor emphasizes a sense of betrayal or disregard for national values among those whom Zemmour criticizes.

During the investigation explicitly war related metaphors were found as well. For instance, "silence the weapons" (fr. *faire taire les armes*): "We need lasting peace, but the urgency now is to **silence the weapons**." (fr. Il nous faut une paix durable, maid l'urgence est desormais de **faire taire les armes**.). In this context, "faire taire les armes" is a metaphor for ending an armed conflict or achieving a ceasefire. The use of the word "taire" (silence) in relation to "les armes" (the weapons) gives the situation a sense of bringing tranquility by stopping the violent actions represented by the weapons.

The word "aggressor" (fr. *agresseur*) is used both in direct and indirect meaning as a metaphor in the following tweet: "Russia is the only **aggressor**. There is a difference between defining the **aggressor** and defining responsibilities. Historians will say so, but the time is no longer for this assessment. The **aggressor** is Vladimir Putin." (fr. *La Russie est le seul **agresseur**. Il y a une différence entre définir **l'agresseur** et définir les responsabilités. Les historiens le diront, mais*

*l'heure n'est plus à cette évaluation. **L'agresseur** est Vladimir Poutine.*). In the first two sentences "aggressor" is used in a direct meaning. However, in the last one it is used as a metaphor meaning that Zemmour puts all the blame and responsibility for the war on Putin, depicting him as the only one person who commits crimes, excluding the Russian army.

Apart from conceptual and classical metaphors, the usage of metaphorical naming of Ukraine was found in the context of nomination strategy that implies discursive construction of events which in the present research is the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In the tweets Éric Zemmour implicitly names Ukraine avoiding direct nomination by alluding:

1. "our European and christian brothers" (fr. *nos frères européens et chrétiens*). Here Zemmour to evoke a sense of kinship and common values between France and Ukraine. By describing Ukrainian refugees in this way, the politician aims to emphasize a sense of solidarity and cultural affinity, portraying them as part of the same European and Christian community.

2. "its [Russia's] neighbours" (fr. *ses voisins*). Zemmour intentionally implicitly means Ukraine possibly in order to maintain a certain level of ambiguity or inclusivity, since such indirect language can add a layer of subtlety or nuance to the utterance, allowing for interpretation by the audience or diplomatic counterparts.

The same situation can be observed in the naming of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine itself, which is the part of intensification strategy, which intensifies the illocutionary force of utterances:

1. "fratricidal conflict" (fr. conflit fratricide). "I unreservedly condemn the use of force by Russia and my first thoughts are with the victims of this **fratricidal conflict** and with those of our nationals who are still on Ukrainian territory." (fr. *Je condamne sans réserve l'usage de la force par la Russie et mes premières pensées vont aux populations victimes de ce **conflit fratricide** et à ceux de nos ressortissants qui se trouvent encore sur le territoire ukrainien.*). "Fratricidal" literally refers to the killing of one's brother, but in this context, it is used as a metaphor to convey the idea of a conflict between people who share a common heritage or background. The term suggests a deep and tragic division within a group that is normally considered to be united. In the context of the Russia-Ukraine war referring to brotherhood is perceived as following Russian propaganda narratives (Siden, 2023).

2.“catastrophe” (fr. la catastrophe). “Because the **catastrophe** that would cost thousands of Ukrainian lives could have been avoided.” (fr. *Car* **la catastrophe** *qui coûterait des milliers de vies ukrainiennes aurait pu être évitée.*). In this context, the use of the word "catastrophe" conveys a sense of immense tragedy and disaster, emphasizing the gravity of the situation. The metaphorical use of "catastrophe" adds emotional weight to the statement, emphasizing the severity of the consequences that could have been avoided.

Conclusions and perspectives. The study has revealed that Éric Zemmour, a prominent figure in French politics, used metaphors during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the French presidential elections in his Twitter account. That year it featured 73 tweets related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 42.24% of which incorporated metaphors, indicating their crucial role in his political communication, predominantly used for nomination, argumentation, and intensification strategies.

Combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) this study explored that **conceptual metaphors** "RELATIONS IS A BUILDING" and "POLITICS IS A GAME" contribute to argumentation strategy aimed at shaping public opinion, enhancing his credibility and trustworthiness in the eyes of the public by criticizing approach of Emmanuel Macron.

Container metaphors contribute to the nomination strategy by constructing social entities within the framework of physical containers. When Zemmour portrays borders as "indispensable guarantors of freedom, security, and peace," he is naming borders as essential components of national identity and security. **Entity metaphors** contribute to intensification strategy by evoking strong emotional responses from the audience. Zemmour's utterance "putting our destiny in the hands of a foreign leader" intensifies the perceived gravity of the situation by emphasizing the consequences of surrendering control. **Personification** (as metaphor) contributes to the nomination strategy by discursively constructing France as a human-entity having a "voice" that needs to be heard, it is framed as a distinct actor with interests and responsibilities.

Zemmour uses **traditional metaphors**, such as feudal terminology and historical references, to reinforce his arguments with familiar and emotionally resonant imagery. When the politician compares France's relationship with the USA to that of "lords" and "vassals," he argues against subservience and asserts

France's sovereignty. At the same time it is employed to nominate France and the USA as distinct social actors within a hierarchical framework, which contributes to nomination strategy. As well as it contributes to intensification strategy by intensifying the emotional responses of arguments by appealing to national pride and identity.

Commercial metaphor, as a subtype of traditional metaphor, is employed to frame complex political concepts in familiar terms, by likening political compromises to "bargaining". As well it contributes to intensification strategy by intensifying seriousness of the actions and emphasizing the moral and ethical implications of political behavior. Zemmour utilizes culturally related metaphors, as part of traditional metaphors, to construct social actors within the framework of cultural narratives. When the politician refers to Sarkozy and Védrine as "emissaries for peace," he is nominating them as suitable representatives based on their cultural significance. Traditional metaphor "aggressor" is employed to discursively construct social actors within the framework of conflict and aggression. By labeling Putin as "the only aggressor," Éric Zemmour nominates him, excluding the Russian army, as the primary perpetrator of hostile actions in the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Metaphorical namings are used to discursively construct events (the Russian invasion of Ukraine) and social actors (France, Russia, Ukraine, politicians). By implicitly naming Ukraine as "our European and Christian brothers" and "its neighbors," Zemmour establishes a sense of solidarity and inclusivity, framing the conflict within a broader cultural and geographical context. Other metaphorical namings referring to the conflict as a "fratricidal conflict" and a "catastrophe" are utilized to intensify the illocutionary force of utterances, evoking strong emotional responses from the audience and underscore the urgency of the situation.

Future research opportunities of the analysis of Éric Zemmour's use of metaphors in political communication regarding the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine may include comparative analysis of Zemmour's use of metaphors with other prominent political figures or parties in France to understand variations in metaphorical strategies and their effectiveness in shaping public discourse.

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