

# *Waterphors 2024*

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**4-5 April 2024**

University of Lyon (Jean Moulin Lyon 3)

MILC Amphitheater, 35 rue Raulin, 69007 Lyon



**Conference organized by the Linguistics Research  
Center – Corpora, Discourses & Societies at the  
University of Lyon (UJML3), France**

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- ~ **Charlotte TAYLOR** (University of Sussex, UK)



## Presentation

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*"Come hell or high water", "It's water under the bridge", "The project is dead in the water" ...*

We are literally swimming in water metaphors in everyday conversation, even if the word *water* does not even appear linguistically in most of them: *"drown in work", "go with the flow", "jump in at the deep end"*, etc. These few examples are proof that WATER as a notional domain surfaces in language through various linguistic avatars corresponding to different types of water: *"a sea of faces", "rain on one's parade", "a cascade of problems"*, to human activities associated with water: *"swim against the tide", "ride the wave of uncertainty"*, or cultural references to water disasters: *"Will we fight over the last remaining life vests as our ship sinks into the frigid waters of this pandemic?"* (Coronavirus Corpus). These analogies usually evoke a large amount of water, but lack of water can also be a motif to express scarcity: *"feel drained", "leave someone high and dry", "We never miss the water till the well runs dry"*, etc.

The ocean of water metaphors is vast, which raises a cascade of questions: why do we use three times as many water metaphors as metaphors analogically based on other elements (earth, air, fire) (Omori, 2008)? Secondly, is it possible to map the domain WATER to decide what ultimately a water metaphor is and what it is not, considering the protean nature of the element itself, and the diversity of associations spontaneously suggested by native speakers?

Over the past decades, linguists as well as sociologists (Bauman, 2000; Bernardot, 2016) have investigated liquidity as a metaphor for behaviours observed in modern societies (see selected bibliography). However, notwithstanding the obvious overlap between liquid metaphors and water metaphors, we may wonder what other characteristics single out water metaphors as a unique type.

Beyond verbal communication, water metaphors stand out as a prolific multimodal means of expression. The press is replete with visual metaphors, such as cartoons, which freely use the graphic motif of the tidal wave to represent migrants, Brexit, climate change or even a recession preparing to flood the supposed shore of civilisation, as well as scandals literally *leaking* into the White House.

Visual representations are universal and so are water idioms, to a large extent, notwithstanding rich lexical and cultural variety (Kövecses, 2005); they seem omnipresent in all languages: *"Still waters run deep", "Méfiez-vous de l'eau qui dort", "L'acqua cheta rovina/rompe i ponti", "Stille Wasser sind tief", "Aguas mansas son profundas", "Stille wateren hebben diepe gronden"*, and so on.

As suggested by these few examples, analogies with water rarely depict positive situations despite the vital role water plays in human and terrestrial life. The ongoing

cognitive investigation into the reasons why WATER proves to be such an ambiguous *source domain* will benefit from a cross-examination of water images to be found in diverse topical environments such as ecology, economic studies, literature, psychology, politics, poetry, philosophy, psychiatry, sociology, theology, neurosciences, etc., as well as from a comparative linguistic perspective revealing similarities and differences across languages.

**The list of following topics may be addressed (but not exclusively):**

- ~ What do water metaphors refer to? What are the topics usually associated with water?
- ~ Is there a form of coherence between *target domains* using WATER as a *source domain*? Can we posit the existence of conceptual metaphors based on the pattern SOMETHING IS WATER?
- ~ What are the emotions regularly associated with water metaphors?
- ~ Motivation of water metaphors: what do water metaphors tell us about the way we think?
- ~ Multimodal water metaphors used to depict political and social phenomena such as immigration, the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, etc.
- ~ Water metaphors in visual arts and literature
- ~ Water metaphors across languages: comparative approaches

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## Program

Thursday 4 April 2024

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8h30 Conference registration, Amphitheater MILC

8h50 **Conference opening**

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**Dr. Caroline Crépin** (University of Lyon (UJML3)), **Prof. Denis Jamet** (University of Lyon (UJML3), France & University of Arizona, USA) & **Bérengère Lafandra** (University of Lyon (UJML3), France)

### Political waters

9h-10h **Plenary: "WATER metaphors in the press: What's the norm?"**

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**Prof. Charlotte Taylor** (University of Sussex, UK)

10h-10h30 **"WAVES and TIDES in politics: water metaphors for change"**

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**Dr. Dolores Porto** (Universidad de Alcalá, Spain) & **Dr. Manuela Romano** (Universidad Autónoma, Spain)

10h30-11h Coffee break

11h-11h30 **"Eaux politiques : le peuple comme matière aquatique"**

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**Prof. Marc Bernardot** (Mesopolhis, Aix-Marseille Université)

11h30-12h **"Swimming in cash, drowning in debts: a corpus-assisted analysis of water metaphors in the language of finance and economics"**

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**Dr. Cecilia Boggio & Dr. Ilaria Parini** (ESOMAS, University of Turin, Italy)

12h-12h30 **"Sailing the Cosmic Seas: water metaphors in the context of outer space"**

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**Kajsa Törmä** (Umeå University, Sweden)

12h30-14h Lunch at la Rotonde (18 rue Chevreul, 69007, 6<sup>th</sup> floor)

## The poetics & polemics of water images

### 14h-14h30 "Feminist reclaiming of water metaphors"

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**Dr. Ann Coady** (*Études Montpelliéraines du Monde Anglophone (EMMA), Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier*)

### 14h30-15h "Unraveling the Aquatic Symbolism in Margaret Atwood's Poetry and Fiction"

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**Prof. Christine Évain** (*Linguistique – Ingénierie – Didactique des Langues (LIDILE), Université Rennes 2*)

### 15h-15h30 "'A subaqueous condition of the mind': Madness and Water Metaphors in Janet Frame's Asylum Stories"

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**Dr. Diane Gagneret** (*Institut d'Histoire des Représentations et des Idées dans les Modernités (IHRIM)*)

### 15h30-16h Coffee break

### 16h-16h30 "Water/works : images et passages de l'eau dans la poésie de Lotte Kramer"

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**Prof. Nathalie Vincent-Arnaud** (*Centre for Anglophone Studies (CAS), Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès*)

### 16h30-17h "'Sea More Blue' : Des métaphores vivantes pour bleuir nos imaginaires à l'aune de la crise écologique"

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**Mascha Canaux** (*Laboratoire 3L.AM, Université d'Angers et du Mans*)

Friday 5 April 2024

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## Fluid metaphors across languages

**9h30-10h**     **“Be water my friend: A Comparative Study of Water Metaphors in Chinese and Spanish”** (online)

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**Zhongmei Xiong** (Typological and Experimental Linguistic Research (GILTE), University of Granada, Spain)

**10h-10h30**     **“Water metaphors in Austrian, Czech, Italian, UK political discourse”**

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**Dr. Mario Bisiada** (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain), **Dr. Dario Del Fante** (Università degli Studi di Ferrara, Italy), **Irene Elmerot** (Stockholms Universitet, Sweden), **Prof. Charlotte Taylor** (University of Sussex, UK)

**10h30-11h**     **Coffee break**

**11h-11h30**     **“De l’emploi pragmatique des métaphores aquatiques dans les discours numériques au sujet du conflit russo-ukrainien”**

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**Dr. Polina Ukhova** (PRAXILING, Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier 3)

**11h30-12h**     **“Métaphores aquatiques et moyens d’action humains dans le discours de presse en français et en allemand”**

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**Dr. Anne-Laure Daux-Combaudon**, (Sorbonne Nouvelle)

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**12h-14h**     **Lunch at la Rotonde** (18 rue Chevreul, 69007, 6<sup>th</sup> floor)



## Troubled Waters: Cognition & Emotion

14h-14h30 **"Climate change, Covid-19 and other stories... the Titanic Metaphor as a parable to depict modern shipwreck"**

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**Dr. Caroline Crépin & Prof. Denis Jamet** (*Centre d'Études Linguistiques - Corpus, Discours et Sociétés (CEL), Université Jean Moulin, Lyon 3*)

14h30-15h **"Exploring water metaphors through positive emotions and sustainable well-being"**

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**Dr. Alena Soloshenko** (*Transferts Critiques Anglophones (TransCrit), Université Paris VIII Vincennes - Saint-Denis*)

15h-15h30 **"The relevance of Bauman's concept of fluidity as reflected in current discourse narratives"**

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**Dr. Izabela Dixon** (*Faculty of Humanities, Koszalin University of Technology, Poland*)

15h30-16h **Coffee break**

### (Un)conventional water metaphors

16h-16h30 **"Entre convention et créativité : métaphores liquides dans les discours scientifiques"**

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**Prof. Micaela Rossi** (*Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca sulle Metafore, (CIRM) Università di Genova, Italy*)

16h30-17h **"Plongée aux origines littéraires des métaphores liquides : Analyse des textes du XIIe siècle"**

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**Dr. Samuel Molin** (*Lycée Berthollet d'Annecy*)

17h-17h30 **Concluding remarks**

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## *Book of Abstracts*

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### **Political waters**

**9h-10h**      **Plenary: “WATER metaphors in the press: What’s the norm?”**

**Prof. Charlotte Taylor** (*University of Sussex, UK*)

This talk is based on ongoing research and focuses on contemporary UK press discourse. The argument I make is that we talk about metaphor use in relation to representation of a particular phenomenon (e.g. migration in my case) but we typically lack a baseline: how common are metaphors of water in generally in that context? what do they typically describe? what evaluations do they typically offer? Without this information, we are poorly equipped to say whether the use of water metaphors in a given discourse is marked or unmarked compared to the genre norm. In this paper, I would outline the typical use and frequency with reference to the UK context and discuss how this might impact previous findings.

**10h-10h30**    **“WAVES and TIDES in politics: water metaphors for change”**

**Dr. Dolores Porto** (*Universidad de Alcalá, Spain*) & **Dr. Manuela Romano** (*Universidad Autónoma, Spain*)

Water metaphors are pervasive in everyday language, either to characterize events as natural disasters or just to point out to the dynamicity, intensity or variability of the target concepts. Political discourse, commonly packed with metaphors to provide a certain construal of reality (Charteris-Black 2011; Musolff 2016), is also abundant in water metaphors like WAVE or TIDE, even more in time of elections, when rhetorical persuasion is especially needed.

Like most metaphors in political discourse, water metaphors allow to present a specific concept through different evaluations -either positive, negative or neutral-, hiding or highlighting different features of the source domain onto the target domain (Goatly 2008, Perrez & Reuchamps 2015). As prototypical embodied ‘oceanic’ metaphors, WAVES and TIDES provide very clear visual mappings to understand and communicate the more complex nature of socio-political movements. Our physical knowledge of water processes that imply motion and force allow us to conceptualize election processes as relentless, repetitive events in the life cycle of democracies (della Porta 2022) and as opportunities for change or, on the contrary, as a threatening natural disaster. The emergent meaning will depend on the context, the speakers’ intentions and also the listeners’ interpretations and previous beliefs.

Following the latest work within Critical Socio-Cognitive approaches to metaphor in politics (Breeze 2020, Charteris-Black, 2011, Chilton 2006, Musolff 2016, Porto & Romano 2019, Romano & Porto 2018), this paper analyzes the specific uses and effects of TIDE and WAVE metaphors in times of election (both pre-electoral campaigns and interpretation of results) in four different languages (English, French, Italian and Spanish). More specifically, we will analyze a small corpus of 250 occurrences in the news about

presidential elections in France and Italy in 2022, mid-term election in USA in 2022, and both regional and general elections in Spain in 2023.

Preliminary results show that WAVES are far more frequent than TIDES in the context of political elections, even if they seem to be used as synonyms when referring to a change in trend in government. No fixed associations seem to be linked to their usage, as the wave metaphor can be used by either side of the political spectrum (the blue wave or the red wave), either with a positive or a negative evaluation (i.e., as an expected, desired change or as a threat that must be prevented). Instead, it is the concept of CHANGE and the FORCE and CYCLE schemas which are highlighted in these metaphors. And only the contextual discourse can reveal the speakers' intentions and evaluation in their usage.

**Keywords:** politics, elections, change, waves, tides

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### About the authors

**M. Dolores Porto** is a Senior Lecturer in English Linguistics at the Universidad de Alcalá (Spain). Her research interests are framed in the field of Cognitive Linguistics and concern the close relationship between discourse interpretation and the understanding of social issues, with a particular interest in the role of conceptual metaphors in the process. More recently, she has focused on the analysis of multimodal discourse, particularly of digital

news, from a sociocognitive perspective. She has been a member of several research projects funded by the Spanish Ministry, the last one: Polarization and Digital Discourses: Critical and Socio-Cognitive Perspectives, coordinated by Isabel Alonso-Belmonte and Manuela Romano. Among her last publications, Framing CONFLICT in the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Multimodal Representations in the Spanish and British Press (2021); Variation and Socio-cultural Embodiment in Metaphors for Social Change (2021), Water metaphors and Evaluation of Syrian Migration: The Flow of Refugees in the Spanish Press (2022) and Polarización en periódicos españoles: significado y contextos de uso (2023).

**Manuela Romano** is Senior Lecturer in English Linguistics at the English Department, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. In her academic career, she has been active in several fields studying the relations between language, cognition and society developed within different Funded Research Projects that she has coordinated since 2006 and related all to Socio-Cognitive Applications to Language and Discourse. Her last Research Project is Polarization and Digital Discourses: Critical and Socio-Cognitive perspectives. The main areas she has specialized in are: (i) Theoretical contributions to the study of language and discourse by bringing together the tools coming from Socio-Cognitive Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Morpho-dynamic models. (ii) Applications of Critical, Socio-Cognitive models to Metaphor Theory and Schematization. She has international publishing and editing experience and has published her work on immigration, austerity, protest discourse and new feminisms, among other topics, in journals such as *Discourse and Society*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Text and Talk*, *Narrative Inquiry*, *Metaphor and Symbol*, *Metaphor and the Social World*, *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, among others

### 11h-11h30 **“Eaux politiques : le peuple comme matière aquatique”**

**Prof. Marc Bernardot** (*Mesopolhis, Aix-Marseille Université*)

Je propose une analyse lexicale et iconographique d'affiches et de slogans contemporains présentant le Peuple, la Foule ou les masses en lien avec des éléments aquatiques et marins. Je replace ce corpus dans une perspective politique (de Hobbes à Mao en passant par Zola dans *Germinal* et le tableau italien « Fiumina -La marée humaine» de Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo) de l'association entre la « multitude » et une masse aquatique, ou bien décrite en recourant à des analogies avec l'halieutique, l'hydrologie ou l'hydraulique, les animaux marins, la marine. J'analyse en particulier les motifs de la "vague" et les formules du « débordement », du « déferlement », de « l'ébullition », de la « volatilité » ou de « l'évaporation » et d'autres états (solides et gazeux) tant dans les représentations populaires, les discours de précaires ou des slogans identitaires que dans les lexiques policiers (par exemple la technique dite du chaudron en anglais *Kettling* - qui compare le confinement des manifestants à de la vapeur dans une bouilloire -) et des politiques publiques (les urgences hospitalières, ou tout autre guichet, "saturées", "engorgées", "débordées"). Ces tropes désormais généralisés faisant le lien entre populations et éléments aquatiques ou liquides sont replacés dans les discours contemporains à propos de la liquidité (circulation, flux, fluidité, assèchement, inondation, stagnation, gel, rétention, barrage, digue, filtre, sas...), en particulier en

politique, en économie, dans les sciences du numérique et des migrations et récemment sur les métaphores générées à l'occasion de l'épidémie de Covid-19.

**Mots-clés** : eau, liquidité, métaphore, peuple, politique

### Références

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### À propos de l'auteur

Professeur de sociologie à Aix-Marseille Université, je développe depuis 10 ans une approche sociologique de la globalisation contemporaine. Mes recherches portent sur les trois notions clés caractéristiques de la période contemporaine de mobilité, d'hybridité et de liquidité, à partir d'une démarche généalogique et cartographique de la manifestation de ces concepts iconiques émergents, appréhendés en tant que méta-métaphores, de leurs circulations entre les sciences sociales et les sciences en général et de leurs appropriations concurrentielles tant par les institutions étatiques ou marchandes que par les sociétés civiles. Mes investigations articulent des questionnements sur les politiques de gestion des migrations, les formes d'habitats non ordinaires, les usages alternatifs des dispositifs numériques et biotechnologiques, les stratégies de sortie des villes et du salariat, les représentations et les utilisations de l'eau sous diverses formes. Mes travaux

visent à déchiffrer les différents types de pratiques, de discours et de subjectivisations des crises et des situations d'exception à partir d'enquêtes empiriques, de corpus d'archives et de documents textuels ou esthétiques.

**11h30-12h “Swimming in cash, drowning in debts: a corpus-assisted analysis of water metaphors in the language of finance and economics”**

**Dr. Cecilia Boggio & Dr. Ilaria Parini** (ESOMAS, University of Turin, Italy)

It is a well-known fact that the language of finance and economics heavily relies on water metaphors. Expressions such as *capital flows*, *floating-rate loans*, *frozen assets*, *vaporized accounts* or *sinking companies* are to be found with extreme frequency in the economic and financial discourse in English. In fact, as Silaški and Kilyeni (2011) noted, WATER is very productive in the fields of economics and finance as a source domain in the process of metaphorization. Hence, the intuition that spurred this study is that MONEY –which is central to the smooth functioning of an economy— in its real, physical form, comes in the shape of notes and coins which are tangible, visible, and solid. However, MONEY in its more general and more abstract meaning is frequently structured by means of the conceptual metaphor MONEY IS WATER.

Starting out from these premises and using a critical cognitive framework which stems from Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Charteris-Black 2004; Kövecses 2010, 2015; Luporini 2019), this study intends to investigate the pervasiveness of water metaphors in a corpus of articles from the “Finance & economics” section of the online edition of the weekly magazine *The Economist*. The corpus, systematically organized according to diachronic principles, is composed of about 1000 articles published during the period that spans from February 2020 to November 2023, a time of global economic recession that started with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and was later worsened by the outburst of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

The analysis is both quantitative and qualitative, and it is conducted with the aid of the software Sketch Engine, using default settings. It posits the existence of the conceptual metaphor MONEY IS WATER and proceeds to retrieve and classify all the metaphorical expressions which are the results of conceptual mappings between the source domain WATER and the target domain MONEY. This study intends 1) to shed light on how ontologically and cognitively salient properties of the concept WATER –in all its physical states, i.e., liquid, solid and gaseous— participate in naming economic and financial concepts; 2) to discern, in the corpus, whether there are periods of more intense use of water metaphors and/or events whose descriptions imply a more frequent use of water metaphors.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor theory, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, ESP, financial and economic discourse

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## About the authors

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## 12h-12h30 “Sailing the Cosmic Seas: water metaphors in the context of outer space”

*Kajsa Törmä (Umeå University, Sweden)*

Throughout history, humans have continuously pushed the boundaries of exploration: first by traversing the expanses of the oceans, then by taking to the skies, and most recently, by entering the realm outer space. This expansion has not only pushed the physical horizon of humanity, but our conceptual and linguistic horizons as well as we have needed to comprehend, name and communicate these new experiences and innovations.

Al-Azary (2020) shows that the advent of air travel resulted in a systematic transfer of water-words to also encompass air travel, and Törmä (2023) identifies that some of these maritime terms have carried over to the space lexicon as well. In describing motion in outer space, we find ourselves using water-related verbs like *float* and *drift* (Törmä, 2023), and we've coined compound terms such as *space ship*, *space navy*, and *space port* to name new phenomena (Törmä, forthcoming)

This paper dives deeper into these mappings between the domains of WATER and OUTER SPACE, with a particular focus on political discourse. Outer space is inherently political, as it remains accessible only to the most affluent political and non-political actors. Furthermore, space exploration played a significant role in the Cold War arms race. Investigating these metaphors in this specific context not only sheds light on the mappings themselves but also highlights the potential role that metaphors have played in shaping both space politics and the public understanding and conceptualization of outer space.

Comparing space to an ocean is not a new or unrecognized phenomenon. In the second century AD, Lucian of Samosata wrote a story in which a ship sails all the way to the moon and back. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Kepler stated that “When ships to sail the void between the stars have been built, there will step forth men to sail these ships” and in 1962 Kennedy announced America’s efforts to go to the moon using the words “We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won”. Additionally, modern works of science fiction make use of this imagery to such a large extent that it is a well-recognized trope among fans (TV Tropes, n.d.). Yet, no linguistic inquiry focusing solely on this metaphorical mapping has been conducted.

The present study utilizes spaceTexts (Caleb, 2017), a corpus of speeches from the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which serves as the primary forum for space diplomacy. This corpus comprises 888 statements made between 1961 and 1993. The identification of metaphors involved searching for water-related terms within the corpus and then manually analyzing concordance lines to ascertain whether the use of these terms is indeed metaphorical.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor, outer space, political discourse, water



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## About the author

Kajsa Törmä is a PhD Student at Umeå University, Sweden. In her thesis project she investigates the construal and conceptualization of outer space in American English. She has a cognitive linguistic perspective, focusing on the interplay between empirical knowledge, imagination and embodiment and investigates the phenomena by combining corpus linguistic methods and qualitative analysis.

## The poetics & polemics of water images

### 14h-14h30 “Feminist reclaiming of water metaphors”

**Dr. Ann Coady** (*Études Montpelliéraines du Monde Anglophone (EMMA)*, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier)

Water has long been associated with women and more recently with feminism: from referring to ships and storms as *she*, to the use of the wave metaphor in feminist historiography to recent feminist interventions in conceptualisations of water itself.

The metaphor of water when referring to women has often been used in a negative way to describe the innate nature of women. In *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), Ernest Hemmingway describes how the old man always thought of the sea as a woman, “as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them. The moon affects her as it does a woman, he thought”. The stereotype of women as being an uncontrollable natural force, especially around menstruation, is evident here. Indeed, between the 1950s and late 1970s in the USA, storms were named exclusively after women, drawing on a supposed link between women’s innately unpredictable, irrational nature and the nature of storms.

Feminism has, however, reclaimed water in a positive light. The waves metaphor is commonly used in feminist historiography to refer to the different periods of feminism,

beginning with the First Wave at the end of the 19th century to the current Fourth Wave, and has been useful to express feminist anger and frustration.

The metaphor of water as feminist resistance has also been used in feminist literature. This metaphor is what Suzette Haden Elgin is drawing on in *Earthsong* (1994) when one of the characters names a group of female linguists the “Meandering Water Tribe”. When asked why, he replies, “Because you linguist women don’t go in a straight line from A to B to C. You go this way a while, and that way a while, and this way again, instead. And you go gently and quietly. But you get there, always! You meander, as water meanders, headed for the oceans ... and then you arrive.” Margaret Atwood uses the same metaphor in *The Penelopiad* (2005) when Penelope’s mother says to her, “Water is patient. Dripping water wears away a stone. Remember that, my child. Remember you are half water. If you can’t go through an obstacle, go around it. Water does”.

More recently, feminism has criticised the way that water is often conceptualised as a “neutral, and passive resource [...] as an inanimate commodity to be regulated and managed” (Hayman, 2012:23), linking this to the way that the female body has historically been conceptualised in similar ways, and to how water scarcity disproportionately affects girls and women. Water scarcity is now therefore firmly on the feminist agenda. In order to tackle this problem, feminists are criticising the conceptualisation of WATER AS A COMMODITY, instead using the metaphor of WATER AS A COMMON GOOD in order to orient policy (UN 2023).

This presentation aims to explore how metaphors of water have been reclaimed by feminism, as well as how feminism is current trying to shape how we conceptualise water. The theoretical framework that informs this presentation is feminist theory and cognitive linguistics. I use various feminist corpora from UN policy documents to feminist literature and analyse them using critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black (2004)).

**Keywords:** feminism, water, critical metaphor analysis

### About the author

**Ann Coady** is a lecturer in English linguistics at Paul Valéry University, Montpellier. Her work focuses on gender and language, in particular feminist linguistic interventions, gender-inclusive language, and language ideological debates.

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## 14h30-15h “Unraveling the Aquatic Symbolism in Margaret Atwood’s Poetry and Fiction”

**Prof. Christine Évain** (*Linguistique – Ingénierie – Didactique des Langues (LIDILE), Université Rennes 2*)

Margaret Atwood, the acclaimed Canadian author, deftly employs a wide spectrum of water metaphors to convey a multitude of symbolic meanings in her poetry and fiction. This article explores the intricate tapestry of aquatic imagery woven throughout Atwood's literary oeuvre, unearthing its significance in themes ranging from life and death to exploration and transformation, while also pointing multiple layers of meaning. Our examination encompasses all 12 volumes of Atwood's poetry, complemented by select excerpts from her novels.

Drawing upon George Lakoff's theoretical framework, our methodology will include selecting water metaphors from Atwood's 12 volumes of poetry, categorizing each occurrence of "Water" within one or more of Lakoff's established conceptual metaphors and, finally, scrutinize potential deviations from these categories or instances of multiple metaphorical associations. This methodology will serve as a springboard for the following inquiries: Do Atwood's aquatic metaphors intermingle with and draw inspiration from other natural elements like earth, air, or fire? Can we discern recurring symbolic motifs within the watery domain of Atwood's poetry and fiction? This expedition delves into the ever-fluid nature of this elemental metaphor and the intricate associations it conjures within Atwood's creations.

Atwood's assertion that "Every image and every motif has got at least four different possible variants"<sup>1</sup> vividly exemplifies her creation of water metaphors as an adaptable motif. In her literary canvas, water transcends its physical form to become a potent symbol that resonates deeply with readers, eliciting a spectrum of interpretations. Atwood employs an eclectic array of techniques, ranging from vivid visual descriptions to innovative idiomatic expressions, often subverting or reimagining familiar aquatic imagery.

While parallels may exist between Lakoff's WATER metaphors and Atwood's water symbolism, this article also illuminates the unique construction of Atwood's metaphors, which endow them with their distinctive artistic value.

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### About the author

**Christine Evain** is a professor of didactics and language acquisition at the University RENNES 2 in France. With a background in literature (PhD in Canadian literature), her publications include more than a hundred articles on a wide range of subjects, several volumes of Margaret Atwood's poetry translated into French, several books on Canadian authors, and the publishing industry. In her current research, Christine Evain focuses mainly on linguistics, pedagogy, ICTE, literature and language acquisition.

#### 15h-15h30 **“A subaqueous condition of the mind”: Madness and Water Metaphors in Janet Frame’s Asylum Stories”**

**Dr. Diane Gagneret** (*Institut d’Histoire des Représentations et des Idées dans les Modernités (IHRIM)*)

From “the dead still water of hospital life” to “the waves in the mid-ocean of the room”, from stagnant pools to stirring seas, *The Lagoon and Other Stories* (1951) and *Faces in the Water* (1961) are steeped in water imagery. Both Janet Frame’s debut collection of short stories, published in New Zealand while she was still an inmate at Seacliff Lunatic Asylum, and her later novelistic account of an experience she refers to, in her singularly poetic style, as her “season of peril”, offer a literary epitome of “the age-old alliance of water and madness” (Foucault, 1972) through the prime vehicle for association that is metaphor.

However, as seminally emphasised by Lakoff and Johnson and powerfully exemplified by Frame’s literary praxis, metaphor is far from ornamental, and deeply conceptual; what (re)surfaces in these narratives is “the overlap between metaphor and madness” (Huebener, 2010) as agents of re-conceptualisation. Metaphoric overflow should therefore come as no surprise in these asylum stories. Yet they offer not merely “a fairly pure example of the dominance of metaphor” (Delrez, 2002), but of water metaphors specifically.

This paper will argue that the “radical metaphoricity” (Felman, 2003) of madness finds in *The Lagoon and Faces in the Water*, the aesthetic and epistemological enactment of its border-crossing drive in waterphors – as sources of immersion and dissolution, and

ideal conveyors of Frame's "fluid vision" (Thieme, 2011) of identity, experience and knowledge. The focus will first be on the effects of Frame's immersive writing, from the reworking of conventional madness metaphors to the transition from landscape to mindscape; we will then dwell on the dissolving/dismantling process at work in waterphors, reflecting on the applications and implications of fluidity in these liminal tales of madness.

**Keywords:** metaphor, madness, water, border(s), fluidity

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### About the author

**Diane Gagneret** has completed a PhD in English literature at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon. She is a member of IHRIM (Institut d'Histoire des Représentations et des Idées dans les Modernités) and teaches medical and scientific English at University of Lyon 1 Claude Bernard. Her research, drawing mainly on novels, plays and short stories by Jenny Diski, Janet Frame, Sarah Kane, Ian McEwan, Anthony Neilson and Will Self, focuses on the links between madness and issues of genre and gender, emphasizing the fluidity of both as (re)conceptualised in contemporary borderline stories.

**16h-16h30** **“Water/works : images et passages de l’eau dans la poésie de Lotte Kramer”**

**Prof. Nathalie Vincent-Arnaud** (Centre for Anglophone Studies (CAS), Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès)

La poétesse britannique Lotte Kramer, d’origine juive-allemande, née à Mayence en 1923, est arrivée en Angleterre avec le *kindertransport*, système d’acheminement des enfants juifs destiné à leur éviter un sort funeste. Ayant adopté l’anglais comme unique langue d’écriture, Lotte Kramer est l’auteur de plusieurs recueils de poèmes parus régulièrement entre 1980 et 2009 et réunis, avec d’autres poèmes parus depuis, en un seul gros volume, *More New and Collected Poems* (Rockingham Press, 2015). Cette poésie, par laquelle Lotte Kramer se réapproprie figures, voix et scènes d’un passé jusque-là enfoui en les mêlant aux observations de sa vie quotidienne, possède un caractère mémorialiste et confessionnel marqué où les retrouvailles avec l’intime empruntent la plupart du temps la voie du détour et de l’allégorie.

Ayant vu le jour sur les bords du Rhin, Lotte Kramer fait du fleuve un motif central de sa poésie et de son évocation d’une enfance abruptement délaissée, tableau où alternent illuminations et désarrois. Si les références au Rhin, à la mer traversée avant son arrivée en Angleterre, aux rivières côtoyées durant les divers épisodes de sa vie, sont très nombreuses au fil des poèmes dont elles fournissent bien souvent la toile de fond, l’élément aquatique se fait avant tout élément métaphorique de premier plan, orchestrant l’imaginaire qui sous-tend l’écriture. Convoquée dès la préface du volume de poèmes pour décrire le mode de surgissement de l’activité poétique, l’eau fait résurgence dans les poèmes à travers l’établissement de métaphores dont la résonance se trouve parfois redoublée par des phénomènes visuels et sonores, affectant ainsi l’ensemble du matériau langagier.

Je me propose d’examiner les ressorts et les enjeux de cette saillance métaphorique de l’élément aquatique dans le mode d’appréhension de l’écriture et de ce qu’elle évoque, ainsi que les stratégies développées dans ma traduction française d’une soixantaine de ces poèmes. Ma réflexion s’appuiera notamment sur les travaux de Gaston Bachelard (*L’Eau et les rêves*), George Lakoff et Mark Turner (*More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*), ainsi que sur la notion de « géographie magique » développée par Jean-Pierre Richard (*Poésie et profondeur*).

**Mots clés :** eau, poésie, métaphore, mémoire, surgissement.

### À propos de l’auteur

Nathalie Vincent-Arnaud est professeur à l’Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès, au Département des Études du Monde Anglophone. Ses domaines de spécialité sont la stylistique, la traduction ainsi que les relations entre musique, danse et littérature. Elle co-dirige l’un des trois axes de son équipe d’accueil, le CAS (Centre for Anglophone Studies), ainsi que le programme interdisciplinaire « Musique et Littérature : dialogues intersémiotiques ». Elle dirige la collection Amphi 7 aux Presses Universitaires du Midi et elle est membre du comité éditorial ou du comité scientifique de plusieurs revues (*Miranda, Caliban, Lexis, Leaves, La Main de Thôt, Études de Stylistique Anglaise*). Elle a dirigé

ou co-dirigé une vingtaine d'ouvrages et numéros de revues (parmi lesquelles *Anglophonia*, *Miranda*, *Captures*, *Textes et Contextes*, *Revue Musicorum*, *Champs du Signe*). Elle a publié une soixantaine d'articles et chapitres d'ouvrages scientifiques dans ses domaines de recherche ainsi que deux ouvrages sur la stylistique et la traduction. Elle a traduit en français de nombreux poèmes, plusieurs essais sur le style et le langage (notamment de Leo Spitzer), parus dans des ouvrages et des revues universitaires, ainsi que les trois ouvrages suivants : Kennaway, James, *Mauvaises vibrations, ou la musique comme source de maladie : histoire d'une idée*, (Lambert-Lucas, 2016) ; Joseph, John E., *Saussure* (Lambert-Lucas, 2021) ; *Poèmes choisis de Lotte Kramer*, à paraître en 2024 chez Interstices éditions.

**16h30-17h "Sea More Blue' : Des métaphores vivantes pour bleuir nos imaginaires à l'aune de la crise écologique"**

**Mascha Canaux** (Laboratoire 3LAM, Université d'Angers et du Mans)

La mer dispose d'une forte intensité symbolique, ce qui en fait la métaphore ultime de la fluidité (Strang, 2005). Or, des chercheurs en humanités bleues s'accordent à déclarer que la mer ne doit pas être une métaphore (Blum, 2010). Aujourd'hui, bien des imaginaires marins deviennent obsolètes : la surpêche par exemple révoque l'expression « there are plenty of fish in the sea » et la conception selon laquelle la mer est un espace pur, purifiant et infini n'y est pas pour rien dans son utilisation comme vide-ordures mondial. Un Arthur Rimbaud contemporain ne pourrait pas se baigner dans « le poème de la mer » (« Le Bateau Ivre », 1871) sans constater sa pollution plastique. La mer peut-elle donc continuer à assurer son rôle de « mère » de récits si sa matérialité est niée et ses écosystèmes en danger ? Alors que la nécessité du tournant vert coule désormais de source et que tout ce qui touche à l'environnement est estampillé « green », des champs académiques (Bates, Coupe, 2000) à la politique en passant par le commerce, le tournant bleu (« oceanic turn », Deloughrey, 2017) s'impose progressivement depuis dix ans. Bleuir (ou re-bleuir) les imaginaires implique d'adresser conjointement deux crises interconnectées, soit la crise écologique et la « crise esthétique » (Lacroix), aussi nommée « crise de l'imagination » (Buell), car l'humanité fait face à une saturation dans un océan de données sensorielles menant à un engourdissement perceptif. En outre, le torrent de références aquatiques, qui demeurent surtout le vaisseau d'émotions négatives dans nos discours (Crepin, 2021), pourrait représenter un symptôme de ce que Sydney Dobrin appelle « ocean-deficit » (2021).

Cette communication concerne les métaphores dans les imaginaires marins à la lumière des changements écologiques globaux. Elle sera introduite avec un point concis sur l'émergence des « Blue Humanities » (Mentz, 2009). Seront exposés ensuite certains résultats sélectionnés d'entretiens menés sur les littoraux du Golfe du Lion et de Bretagne. La seconde partie de l'analyse est consacrée à une étude de cas écopoétique, se positionnant tant que proposition de réponse aux conclusions des enquêtes. Comme nous l'avons précédemment évoqué, les représentations allégoriques troublent la réalité matérielle des environnements marins (Blum 2010 ; Yaeger 2010 ; DeLoughrey 2017). Pourtant, Serpil Opperman qui a mis au point le concept de « living metaphor » promeut le jaillissement de nouvelles histoires non anthropocentriques qui ne rejettent pas la force

métaphorique de la mer, des « Hydro-material stories ». Nous allons donc sonder les métaphores permettant de restaurer l'attention au vivant (Laura Sewall, 2000) dans l'ouvrage *Héliosphéra, fille des abysses* de Wilfried N'sondé.

**Mots-clés :** écopoétique, biodiversité, imaginaires de la mer, humanités bleues, métaphores vivantes

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### À propos de l'autrice

**Mascha Canaux** est une doctorante franco-allemande, sous la direction de Bénédicte Meillon (Laboratoire 3LAM à l'Université d'Angers), Philippe Lenfant, et Marion Jarraya (Centre de Formation et de Recherche sur les Environnements Méditerranéens associée au CNRS de l'Université de Perpignan Via Domitia. Sa thèse a obtenu un financement du PPR Océan et Climat piloté par le CNRS et l'Ifremer. Ses travaux sont fondamentalement transdisciplinaires, combinant la littérature comparée et la biologie marine. Sa thèse vise à sonder les imaginaires bleus sur des terrains d'étude en France et aux États-Unis.



Friday 5 April 2024

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## Fluid metaphors across languages

9h30-10h **"Be water my friend: A Comparative Study of Water Metaphors in Chinese and Spanish"** (online)

**Zhongmei Xiong** (Typological and Experimental Linguistic Research (GILTE), University of Granada, Spain)

This paper undertakes a comparative analysis of lexical and phraseological units entrenched in the concept of water in both Chinese and Spanish languages.

**Theoretical framework:** Drawing upon the foundations of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and the figurative language theory proposed by Dobrovolskij & Piirainen (2021), our objective is to illuminate the metaphoric and symbolic motivations of water as a universal experience while simultaneously delving into its role as a *cultureme* (Pamies, 2007, 2017).

**Methodology:** To conduct our research, we have established a specialized corpus of lexical and phraseological units that incorporate the term water "水" (*shuǐ*) in Chinese and *agua* in Spanish. Simultaneously, we extend our focus to encompass linguistic elements conceptually associated with water, including terms pertaining to rain, rivers, oceans, etc.

**Corpus:** We employ resources such as the BCC corpus and diverse dictionaries to access suitable candidates. This analysis culminated in a comprehensive inventory of 216 phraseological units, with 115 originating in Chinese and 101 in Spanish. These units unveiled 28 distinct figurative values distributed across eight conceptual domains. On one hand, notwithstanding the linguistic and cultural diversity, the study revealed striking coincidences in shared target domains, such as "TIME IS WATER," "MONEY IS WATER," "LANGUAGE IS WATER," "PERSON IS WATER," "PROBLEMS ARE WATER," "SENTIMENTS ARE WATER," etc., underscoring the pervasive role of water metaphors across various facets of life.

On the other hand, the research also found specific nuances in the surface-level of certain metaphors, concretely, the Chinese language exhibited nine ethno-specific values (e.g., "WOMAN IS WATER," "SUPREME VIRTUE IS WATER," "EVALUATION IS WATER," "FRIENDSHIP IS WATER," etc.). Additionally, *rain* in the Chinese language carries a cultural reference related to SEX. Conversely, in the Spanish language, water metaphors are strongly associated with QUANTITY, incorporating elements such as "*cascada, torrente, oleada, océano, lluvia,*" etc.

Furthermore, the study revealed that particular water metaphors extend beyond universal experiences and are culturally inherited. In Chinese culture, the term *jiānghú* 江湖, literally "rivers and lakes," embodies an untranslatable *cultureme*, representing "specific cultural communities," "individuals", and "psychological society".

In summary, our findings underscore the prolific and multifaceted nature of water metaphors, reflecting their prevalence across both universal experiences and cultural dimensions. This comprehensive comparative analysis delves into the intricate interplay between language, culture, and metaphor, thereby providing valuable insights into how

the water metaphor profoundly shapes and reflects the collective consciousness of Chinese and Spanish-speaking communities.

**Keywords:** water metaphor, Chinese phraseology, Spanish phraseology, cultureme, figurative language

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### About the author

**Zhongmei Xiong** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Granada, Spain, working on phraseology, collocation, figurative language, and corpus linguistics. Her research focuses on cognitive and cultural studies, with a specialization in contrastive linguistics across Chinese, Spanish, and English. As a member of *Typological and Experimental Linguistic Research (GILTE)* of Granada, Xiong collaborates under the guidance of Professor Antonio Pamies Bertrán. Her work reflects a dedicated exploration of language nuances, highlighting her commitment to advancing linguistic understanding in cross-cultural contexts.

### 10h-10h30 **"Water metaphors in Austrian, Czech, Italian, UK political discourse"**

**Dr. Mario Bisiada** (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain), **Dr. Dario Del Fante** (Università degli Studi di Ferrara, Italy), **Irene Elmerot** (Stockholms Universitet, Sweden), **Prof. Charlotte Taylor** (University of Sussex, UK)

Plenty of research supports the view that metaphors from water domains are frequently and cross-linguistically used to talk about migration phenomena (Charteris-Black, 2006; Tkaczyk et al., 2015; Porto, 2022; Taylor, 2020; 2022). Much of this work has been conducted on countries that have sea access, so that talking about "waves of

immigrants” may be part of those countries’ cultural and embodied connection to seafaring. This has given rise to questions about the generalisability of these findings and so there is still work to do on landlocked countries. Such countries, in theory, do not have a marine cultural heritage (and embodied experience) to the same extent and thus might be expected to have a different discursive conceptualisation of water metaphors, at least when it comes to those related to the sea rather than rivers.

This talk presents a wider project that critically examines issues around water metaphors and the embodiment hypothesis: does living in a country with sea access influence the way water metaphors are employed? A wider question addressed by this research is that of whether there is such a thing as a “national discourse” or “public opinion” for an entire country, or to what extent discursive strategies are picked up and used like Foucault’s (1972) epistemes across speakers and languages, irrespective of their conceptual mappings. For this paper, we will focus on metaphors of water in political debates from four countries, two land-locked and two coastal: Austria, Czechia, Italy and the United Kingdom. To be able to analyze these four countries, we use the ParlaMint corpora (Erjavec et al. 2023) which have been designed to be comparable. The corpora contain transcriptions of parliamentary debates from different countries over the period 2015 to 2022. A period which in Europe involves two intense immigration phases, that thus may give rise to more debate in each respective parliament. Each transcription is divided by day, and the metadata are comparable between countries or regions. In addition, each parliamentary subcorpus includes information such as party affiliation of the speakers, their gender and whether or not they are ministers at the time of speaking. The analysis of the four corpora combines corpus linguistic and discourse analytic methodologies (e.g. Baker 2023).

In the first stage, we identify co-occurrences of names for people who move (e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, migrants and functional equivalents) and lexical items which might refer to water (e.g. flow, wave and equivalents). In the second stage, we analyze these collocational patterns and concordances in each of the four corpora to identify the targets of water metaphors, the evaluation offered through the water metaphors, and the discourses invoked through these water metaphors. In the third stage, we compare the findings across the four contexts, drawing out similarities and differences. In the last stage, we interpret these findings and ask whether the discursive and conceptual proximity of migration and water – people arriving by the sea – influence the metaphorical production.

**Keywords:** cross-linguistic discourse analysis; migration discourses; political discourse; corpus-assisted discourse studies.

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- Dario Del Fante** – Junior Assistant Professor of English Linguistics and Translation – Università degli Studi di Ferrara
- Irene Elmerot** – Ph.D. student at the Doctoral School Language and Power – Stockholms Universitet
- Charlotte Taylor** – Professor of Discourse and Persuasion – University of Sussex

The four authors bring together a range of expertise in migration discourses and metaphor theory and analysis.

### 11h-11h30 “De l’emploi pragmatique des métaphores aquatiques dans les discours numériques au sujet du conflit russo-ukrainien”

**Dr. Polina Ukhova** (PRAXILING, Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier 3)

Notre travail mené sur corpus porte sur **les échanges numériques natifs** (ENN) entre interactants russophones et francophones au sujet du conflit russo-ukrainien (CRU). Notre corpus bilingue se compose des commentaires *conversationnels discursifs* (Paveau, 2017) postés en réaction à plus de 100 publications partagées sur Facebook, Twitter et Instagram et évoquant (in)directement le CRU.

Les métaphores aquatiques sont omniprésentes dans nos échanges de tous les jours, y compris sur les réseaux. Certaines sont historiquement stabilisées et constituent même, nous semble-t-il, une matrice sémantique. En effet, la « tradition » d’associer les perturbations dans la vie sociale des humains aux phénomènes/changements météorologiques remonte au XVI siècle et se maintient au fil de l’histoire (nous trouvons plusieurs exemples, comme « *un océan de misères et de peines* » datant de 1688, sur le site du CNTRL).

Comme l’actualité des relations internationales est lourde, nous observons une véritable effervescence d’emploi de métaphores aquatiques dans les ENN provoquée par de nombreuses tensions sociopolitiques entre « le Sud Global » et « le reste du monde ».

Notre communication s’organisera en deux temps :

- I. Premièrement, tous les cas de figure repérés dans notre corpus seront isolés et catégorisés selon l’apertinence sémique (cette analyse permettra de montrer que le sème /liquide/ y est complètement annulé) :

a) Sèmes /puissance/, /immensité/ vs /petitesse/

(1) *Entendons-nous les paroles de cet ancien citoyen ukrainien russophone, dans **la déferlante médiatique** mainstream **qui inonde** nos écran ?(S.T\_FB)*

b) Sèmes /chute/, /apparition soudaine/

(2) [...] *Ce qui est assez peu au vu de **l'averse de missiles** qu'il y a la bas tous les jours vu que ça chiffre en milliers de tonnes [...]* (DR\_TW)

II. Deuxièmement, nous les remettrons dans leur environnement contextuel afin d'examiner comment les métaphores coexistent avec d'autres éléments dans l'écosystème numérique. Cette partie d'analyse permettra de : (1) relever de nombreuses métaphores filées inscrites dans une dynamique augmentée de l'écosystème étudié (appuyées par un grand nombre de verbes, comme *verser, arroser, noyer (le poisson), plonger, inonder, nager (entre deux eaux), imbiber*, etc.) servant à maintenir le transfert métaphorique tout au long des interactions à plusieurs tours de parole; (2) de constituer une typologie discursive de leurs emplois (en mettant en relief leurs visées ironique, euphémistique, hyperbolique) :

(3) *Macron **s'est noyé dans le thème de la jungle*** (MiAN-TW).

**Mots-clés :** *linguistique contrastive, métaphore aquatique, corpus multimodal bilingue, discours numériques natifs, technodiscours, relations internationales*

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### 11h30-12h **“Métaphores aquatiques et moyens d'action humains dans le discours de presse en français et en allemand”**

**Dr. Anne-Laure Daux-Combaudon, (Sorbonne Nouvelle)**

Si les métaphores relatives à l'eau peuvent dire l'impuissance humaine (cf. Daux-Combaudon 2023 sur la métaphore de la vague et du tsunami dans le contexte de la pandémie de Covid-19), il est des emplois qui permettent au contraire de mettre en avant les moyens d'action humains. C'est le cas notamment lorsqu'il s'agit d'« endiguer » des mouvements migratoires ou de « fermer le robinet » des dépenses.

La communication se propose d'analyser les éléments qui, dans les métaphores de l'eau, disent le pouvoir de l'action humaine dans la société, notamment au niveau politique. Le cadre théorique est celui de la théorie cognitive de la métaphore (sur la métaphore conceptuelle voire Lakoff / Johnson (1980)) enrichie de la sémantique des cadres (Pohl 2002 : 134). Celle-ci voit dans les cadres (*frames*) des savoirs prototypiques. Le cadre est constitué de *slots* qui sont des potentiels de prédication. Pour un cadre

« action » sont ainsi attendus des éléments comme les motivations pour l'action, les acteurs, le contexte, les phases, les stratégies mises en œuvre, les erreurs commises, les conséquences, etc. (Konerding 1993 : 341-348).

Le corpus est constitué d'articles de presse de langue française (médias français, canadiens, sénégalais, etc.) et de langue allemande (médias allemands, autrichiens, suisses). Il a été élaboré à l'aide de la base de données Factiva à partir de mots clés tirés de la méthodologie de la sémantique des cadres appliqué aux moyens d'action sur l'eau. Les mots clés sont ainsi, entre autres, « barrage » / « *Talsperre* », « canal » / « *Kanal* », « digue » / « *Deich* », « robinet » / « *Hahn* », « réguler » / « *regulieren* » ou « endiguer » / « *eindämmen* ». La sélection des articles a eu lieu manuellement après identification des articles pertinents. La période couverte est la période actuelle sans bornage particulier lié à un éventuel discours donné. Les thématiques abordées s'en trouvent être diverses : crise des migrants, crise financière, crise sanitaire lié au Covid-19 ou crise numérique, etc. Les analyses linguistiques porteront – à chaque fois sur le français et sur l'allemand, puis dans une approche comparative – sur :

- les objets destinataires de l'action humaine. Ainsi, il convient d'endiguer « les soucis », « le fléau du harcèlement scolaire », « l'explosion des coûts », « la fièvre inflationniste », « la spirale baissière », « les pertes », « la pénurie extrême d'appartements locatifs », « la surpopulation carcérale », « les flux migratoires », « la violence », « la crise des médias », « une pandémie mondiale », « le réchauffement climatique », « le problème du chômage », « le travail illicite des enfants », etc.
- les moyens d'action concurrents non métaphoriques (on trouve à côté d'« endiguer » aussi « finir » ou « éliminer »)
- les outils du moyen d'action que sont « les lois », « l'adoption d'une politique », « les mesures (d'urgence) », « un accord », « des dispositions », « une opération de construction », « la création d'un fonds d'urgence », « le développement du nucléaire », etc.

L'objectif sera de mettre en évidence ce que disent ces métaphores des moyens d'action politiques dans la société et des discours sur ces moyens.

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## Troubled Waters: Cognition & Emotion

**14h-14h30** *"Climate change, Covid-19 and other stories... the Titanic Metaphor as a parable to depict modern shipwrecks"*

**Dr. Caroline Crépin & Prof. Denis Jamet** (Centre d'Études Linguistiques – Corpus, Discours et Sociétés (CEL), Université Jean Moulin, Lyon 3)

**Keywords:** shipwreck; Titanic; parable; myth; multimodal metaphor; fascination

With his 1997 all-time eponymous blockbuster, James Cameron pulled the wreck of Titanic out of oblivion. By elevating ancient news into a modern **myth** (Barthes, *Mythologies*, 1957), he made it truly unsinkable. Few may ignore the name of the infamous ship, be it for its tragic fate or the sappy romance Cameron attached to it. Even those who have somehow not seen the movie are familiar with the names of Rose and Jack, performed by actors who have since become equally iconic.

This presentation will first establish the fact that the Titanic narrative has become *shared knowledge*: it has been made *history*, as a fluctuant combination of true and invented events. This hybrid texture makes it an elastic outline that can be reapplied metaphorically in a variety of contexts, or, to borrow Turner's terminology, a working **parable** (*The Literary Mind*, 1996) to provide understanding for unprecedented situations. In fact, Cameron had greater ambition for his film than being just a successful (sentimental) historical drama. In an interview for *National Geographic* dated 2012 Cameron argues:

*Part of the Titanic parable is of arrogance, of hubris, of the sense that we're too big to fail. Well, where have we heard that one before? (...) You've got the starving millions who are going to be the ones most affected by **the next iceberg that we hit, which is going to be climate change**. We can see that iceberg ahead of us right now, but we can't turn.<sup>2</sup>*

In other words, his adaptation was always meant to be allegorical in essence. And this might be the reason for its unabating resonance ever since. As the modern world is daunted by the prospect of collective shipwreck- ecological, economic, pandemic, nuclear, or all of the above- the Titanic metaphor resurfaces as a **multimodal, polysemous** vehicle to depict humanity's vulnerability in the face of icebergs ahead.

Since 2020, analogies between disorganised societies and sinking ships have become commonplace. Online corpora such as the COCA and the Coronavirus Corpus are replete with references to metaphorical shipwrecks, and most specifically to the Titanic disaster: *"I feel like the Titanic, and we have hit the iceberg, and we're trying to make decisions*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/business-spectator/news-story/a-titanic-climate-change-challenge/19cdb122715415b0bed756f82f8cb4db>

*of what time we should have the band play"; "For all practical purposes, the world's economy is a ship called Titanic and its iceberg bears the name Corona".*

Cartoons found in the media are equally eloquent, some of them with icebergs shaped like the Coronavirus, while others emphasise the parallel between Trump's mismanagement of the crisis and the shortage of lifeboats.

In fact, the Titanic metaphor has been used for over a decade to depict political hubris in the context of Brexit or the Trump presidency, and has served as an SOS campaign to warn against climate change. This paper will present and examine several instances of the Titanic metaphor printed in anglophone media between 2012 and 2024, with a focus on the metaphorical entailments that are being hidden or highlighted in each case (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Based on a selection of occurrences retrieved from reference corpora of English, and as part of a wider reflection on **water metaphors**, we will argue that the Titanic as a shipwreck metaphor exhibits canonical target domains attached to WATER (Crépin, 2021, 2023) such as FEAR and DANGER, as well as specific features such as CLASS, HUBRIS or MORAL DILEMMA. The study of Titanic metaphors will also serve as a case in point to investigate the element of **fascination** that is at the heart- not only of the ocean- but of the metaphorical process more broadly, as we as individuals are more likely to retell the stories we are drawn to, and which are apt to teach us something about ourselves.

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**Caroline Crépin** has been specialising in the study of water metaphors since 2016. The present paper stems out of the last chapter of her PhD thesis devoted to cluster (water) metaphors. After spending two years in Oxford University (New College, Pembroke



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**Denis Jamet** is Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Lyon, Jean Moulin and Professor of French Linguistics and translation at the University of Arizona (USA). He is the director of the Linguistics Research Center – Corpora, Discourses & Societies at the University of Lyon, and has worked extensively on metaphor, taboo and euphemism, as well as persuasion and manipulation in discourse in English and French. He is Head of publication of *Lexis, Journal in English Lexicology*.

### 14h30-15h “Exploring water metaphors through positive emotions and sustainable well-being”

**Dr. Alena Soloshenko** (*Transferts Critiques Anglophones (TransCrit), Université Paris VIII Vincennes - Saint-Denis*)

Water can evoke a myriad of emotions in humans. The habitual patterns of thinking and feeling about water and well-being are almost inherently positive. White noise streams or cold-water immersion are recognized as emotionally positive and health-boosting. Usually, less attention is paid to the investigation of positive emotions, as they are less differentiated (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988) and do not demand quick action tendencies, such as fight-or-flight response to fear. At the same time, positive emotions are arguably more impactful on cognitive processes (e.g., attention) and offer broader action repertoire in the long run (Fredrickson, 1998).

What pertinent is that positive emotions are often key to harmonious human-nature relationships, sustainable thinking and behaviour (Tapia-Fonlemm et al., 2017). When language influences ecosystems – in this case, an aquatic ecosystem – it becomes the focus of ecolinguistics (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). Here, recent studies explored harmonious discourses (Huang & Zhao, 2021) to identify what ‘stories’ (Stibbe, 2015) people tell about the world. Language and cognition contribute to the creation of ecological reality where emotions are often omnipresent (e.g., climate anxiety).

Drawing on these considerations, a mixed-method research design was adopted to explore cognitive, linguistic, and psychological levels of water experience by assessing the following:

- How do emotional states influence creation of water metaphors in a sustainable well-being context?
- What types of water metaphors can be considered as a source for sustainable thinking?

To this end, a corpus of web articles about water, emotions, well-being and sustainability has been compiled using a tool BootCaT, followed by a qualitative analysis with MAXQDA:

- (a) Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) is used to explore metaphorical patterns of water conceptualization. Here, The Dynamic Discourse Approach (Cameron, 2010) is taken into account to analyse the role of discourse and context (Kövecses, 2015, 2020) in metaphor creation;
- (b) A psychological perspective is considered when exploring emotional states associated with water. First, based on Plutchik classification of emotions (1980), I

identify the levels of emotional intensity (strong/weak) and complexity (basic/compound). Second, approaching emotional states as cognitively appraised conscious experiences (Scherer, 2009), further study of states associated with water (e.g., calm) is pursued.

The preliminary analysis output revealed two contextual themes in the corpus: (1) mental health benefits and (2) influence of a relaxing property of water. The prominent source domains for the target domain of WATER are MEDICINE (“sea water prescribed”), FORCE (“water turned you into high-functioning Zen ninja”), and UNIFIER (“switch gears from ‘I’ orientation to ‘We’”). The latter was identified in discourses about cleaning the ocean from plastic and similar initiatives. WATER IS MEDICINE evoked basic emotions of joy and “bliss out”, whereas the states of being mindful and, interestingly, creative and innovative, were linked with the metaphor WATER IS A UNIFIER. The degree of emotional intensity was slightly heightened (“more compassionate”, “soft fascination”). Two exceptions with high intensity have been found with happiness (“the happiest by the sea”).

**Keywords:** water, metaphor, emotion, cognitive semantics, ecolinguistics

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## About the author

**Alena Soloshenko** is a researcher in Cognitive Linguistics and Ecolinguistics, a teacher of English for Specific Purposes and a translator. Ms Soloshenko holds a doctorate degree in English Linguistics from the University of Strasbourg. She is currently an associate member of a research unit Transferts Critiques Anglophones (TransCrit) at the University Paris VIII Vincennes - Saint-Denis. Her research focuses on the interconnections between language, cognition, and emotion in ecological discourse, emotional intelligence, and everyday aesthetics.

### 15h-15h30 **"The relevance of Bauman's concept of fluidity as reflected in current discourse narratives"**

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**Dr. Izabela Dixon** (*Faculty of Humanities, Koszalin University of Technology, Poland*)

The water or fluid metaphor is vividly expressed through the imagery of liquid flowing in/out of a container, capturing, for example, the dynamic nature of emotions (EMOTIONS ARE FLUIDS, Kövecses, Lakoff). This is a well evidenced metaphorical concept that is found in many languages. Also, transformative or transgressive fluidity of other conceptual domains such as LIFE (pure sailing), TIME (flow of time), MOTION (crowd surges), ELECTRICITY (current), and many others have also been recognised. Similarly, water metaphors are used in the domains of HUMAN ACTIVITY (brewing, boiling), FINANCE (rainy day, resources), as well as such domains as SAFETY or SECURITY. The consistent use of water metaphors is found in the works of the distinguished Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, who left an indelible mark on the realms of sociology and philosophy through his profound interest in the exploration of modernity. Central to his works is the metaphor of "liquid modernity," a term introduced in his 2000 book of the same name. Within this fluid framework, Bauman articulates the constant state of flux characterizing contemporary society, where established structures and institutions undergo a transformative liquefaction, engendering a pervasive sense of uncertainty.

This theme echoes through subsequent works such as "Liquid Love" (2003) and "Liquid Life" (2005), where Bauman delves into the transitory nature of intimate relationships and the broader facets of life, including identity and work. In "Liquid Fear" (2006), he explores the omnipresence of fear in the modern world, dissecting how global shifts and societal changes contribute to an unsettling atmosphere of insecurity. Bauman's concern for the human condition persists in "Liquid Times" (2006), as he examines the acceleration of change and its impact on stability. His later works, like "Culture in a Liquid Modern World" (2011) and "Liquid Evil" (2016), extend this discourse to the realms of culture and morality, respectively. The concept of fluidity, as articulated by Zygmunt Bauman, serves as a powerful metaphorical lens through which to understand the dynamic nature of contemporary society.

This paper explores the pervasive use of water metaphors across various domains, drawing on Bauman's seminal works. With a particular focus on the context of safety and

security, the study analyses online discourse narratives alongside Bauman's writings to demonstrate the relevance and applicability of his 'liquid' concepts in understanding the challenges posed by the uncertain nature of modern societies. The corpus for the study has two prime sources: the works of Bauman, and the discourse narratives found in on-line articles.

**Keywords:** Fluidity, Zygmund, Bauman, Conceptual Metaphors, Security, Discourse Narratives

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## About the author

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Approaches to Fears and Anxieties. Collaborating with Professor Harald Ulland from Norway, Izabela Dixon has been actively involved in paremiological projects that integrate traditional linguistic research methods with cognitive elements and corpus studies. Beyond her academic and editorial responsibilities, Izabela Dixon has co-organized a number of international academic conferences, focused on Medieval studies and literature, as well as colloquia addressing the critical themes of safety and security.

## (Un)conventional water metaphors

**16h-16h30** “Entre convention et créativité : métaphores liquides dans les discours scientifiques”

**Prof. Micaela Rossi** (*Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca sulle Metafore, (CIRM) Università di Genova, Italy*)

Parmi les métaphores exploitées dans les discours des sciences et sur la science, la métaphore X EST UN LIQUIDE est sans doute l'une des plus fréquentes : elle traverse les disciplines (de la physique à la médecine, de l'astronomie à l'économie...), les genres textuels et discursifs (des textes fortement spécialisés aux textes de vulgarisation), apparemment sans solution de continuité, ce qui la rend un excellent cas d'exemplification de l'interface entre conceptualisation métaphorique et expressions linguistiques métaphoriques dans les textes et discours, rassemblant sous un même chapeau des manifestations diverses telles que la *théorie des ondes* chez Maxwell, les *vagues* des épidémies, la *pompe* cardiaque ou les *vaisseaux* sanguins.

Ce rassemblement néanmoins, quoique tentant, risque d'aplatir la complexité du fonctionnement métaphorique : dans cette analyse une distinction devrait à notre avis être plus clairement tracée entre métaphores *conventionnelles* et métaphores *créatives* (Prandi, Rossi, 2022, Ureña Gómez-Moreno, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, 2022) : si la métaphore conceptuelle est constante, les réalisations linguistiques découlant (une métaphore...) de la métaphore conceptuelle X EST UN LIQUIDE n'ont pas toutes le même statut sémiotique ou la même fonction discursive, et une réflexion intéressante peut être conduite sur la base du degré de conventionnalité ou créativité de ces expressions métaphoriques, compte tenu du fait que les deux catégories ne sont pas étanches, mais qu'elles constituent plutôt des pôles d'un continuum dont les équilibres peuvent constamment varier en perspective diachronique, une métaphore créative pouvant s'enraciner dans l'usage et devenir une métaphore conventionnelle dans un domaine scientifique précis (Rossi, 2015).

Que peut-on extraire d'une analyse plus fine de la métaphore liquide à l'œuvre dans un domaine scientifique donné, mais dans des textes de genres différents, et dans des moments historiques différents ? peut-on encore reconduire toutes les manifestations linguistiques de la même métaphore conceptuelle dans le même conteneur conceptuel ? s'agit-il toujours du même et d'un seul mécanisme sémiotique ? Nous nous proposons d'approfondir cette réflexion par une analyse de corpus concernant la métaphore liquide dans le domaine de la physique des particules ; ce corpus, constitué en français et en anglais, sera composé de textes de divers degrés de spécialisation, dans

des moments historiques différents, et exploité à l'aide des outils offerts par la plateforme Sketch Engine.

**Mots-clés :** métaphores terminologiques, discours experts, modélisation métaphorique, métaphore conventionnelle, métaphore créative

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### À propos de l'autrice

**Micaela Rossi** enseigne la langue et la traduction françaises à l'Université de Gênes. Ses intérêts de recherche portent sur la formation de nouvelles terminologies à base métaphorique, ainsi que sur les dynamiques discursives dans les communautés socio-professionnelles. Publications et profil disponibles à l'adresse [Micaela Rossi | Rubrica UniGe](#).

## 16h30-17h “Plongée aux origines littéraires des métaphores liquides : Analyse des textes du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle”

**Dr. Samuel Molin** (Lycée Berthollet d'Annecy)

Si, d'après les travaux d'Ayako Omori (2008), les métaphores actuelles se caractérisent par une prédominance du signifiant liquide sur ceux des autres éléments, il n'en a pas été toujours ainsi en français, bien au contraire : pendant le Moyen Âge notamment, aube de notre langue française, la métaphore de l'eau est fort peu répandue. Si près de deux métaphores sur trois écrites au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle servent à décrire une émotion – amour, joie ou colère –, les métaphores du feu, imitées des poètes latins dont Ovide, dominent : les personnages des récits médiévaux *brûlent* à l'envi d'un amour *inextinguible* et leur cœur *s'embrase* facilement. Les métaphores de l'eau sont rares, représentant environ dix pour cent de ces signifiants que l'on pourrait qualifier de naturels.

La présente proposition s'attacherait à présenter une typologie des premières métaphores liquides utilisées dans la langue française, en se fondant sur les textes littéraires du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle : une différence fondamentale émerge dès lors entre les textes à thématique religieuse, dans lesquels l'eau est avant tout richesse (Guiot de Provins, par exemple, développe une analogie autour de la *fontaine de sapience*), et les textes profanes, où l'eau est pensée comme l'antithèse du feu dans l'expression des passions (le poète Blondel de Nesle écrit ainsi *Ma dame est douce iaue et fus* [feu] / *Pour moi esprendre et estaindre*)

Il s'agit de plus d'envisager, d'un point de vue stylistique et herméneutique, la relation entre métaphore et comparaison – les comparaisons liquides sont beaucoup plus fréquentes que les métaphores du même élément, car la métaphore paraît, à l'époque, plus « hardie » que la comparaison équivalente.

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