

**REFRAMING THE EUROPEAN UNION
IN FRENCH NATIONALIST DISCOURSE BY MARINE LE PEN**Ioana COCUZ¹

Abstract

The present article aims to emphasize the conceptual means employed by Marine Le Pen, leader of the French party Front National, in discourse in the attempt to justify and instill a specific ideology, and to relate different types of nationalistic movements across Europe, a connection meant to serve the political goal of defining the identity of a party and of depicting an attractive ideological perspective. The article also details aspects of discourse analysis revealing underlying ideology. With this article, the endeavor is to raise awareness and educate towards a critical interpretation of political discourse.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, conceptual metaphor, framing, oppositions, ideology

1. Introduction

The idea of the present analysis came with the first audition of the interview² given by Marine Le Pen to a private television channel in Romania following a work meeting of nationalist MEPs in our country. The interview was so striking, that I needed to listen to it several times to understand what it was that made it leave such a strong impression. I soon discovered a very rich network of discourse structures and conceptual means that are particularly relevant for an efficient expression and persuasive communication of ideology. I was particularly struck by the connections the French politician makes between the values and experiences of two nations, represented from a nationalist point of view, in order to build a connection and be relevant to the Romanian public. I realized that the means so skillfully employed by the speaker are in no way obvious for the uneducated public and I made a connection with the context of EU skepticism that prompted me to unveil these means, to explain how ideology is hidden behind words and what that ideology is. I find it particularly important for linguistics to help educate people when it comes to

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² Original video available at:

<http://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/ue/exclusiv-marine-le-pen-doresc-sa-aplicam-si-noi-actuala-procedura-din-marea-britanie-francezii-au-dreptul-sa-si-spuna-parerea-despre-ue-prin-referendum-507882>

Video and transcription of the interview available at:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B2aUNwdfeflcHJiM181UGF3ZW8>

political discourse, as the voting decisions they take when listening to political discourse can have a potentially major influence on their lives.

2. Critical discourse analysis and metaphor

The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis, in the words of Van Dijk, is "change through critical understanding" (1993: 252), revealing hidden ideological goals inserted in discourse and the inequality they promote. Throughout the present analysis, discourse is understood in its narrow sense, that of written or spoken text. Ideology is analyzed both in its narrow sense, of "attitudes with respect to social relations of dominance" (Dirven, Polzenhagen, Wolf, 2007: 1223), and in its broad sense of "set of norms and values which provide patterns for acting and/or living in a social network" (idem) since, as the authors note, cognitive linguistics considers these to be tightly connected. This cognitive view is reflected in Lakoff's description of frames as mental structures that help us understand the world: "they structure our ideas and concepts, they shape the way we reason, and they even impact how we perceive and how we act." (Lakoff, 2006: 16) As we shall see in Marine Le Pen's discourse, both interpretations of ideology are reflected in shaping and justifying policies, and in her approach to nationality. Therefore, in this article, we will look carefully at the way discourse reflects existing frames, and creates new ones.

Conceptual metaphor acquires an ideological dimension in discourse. As it represents the target from the point of view of a different (source) domain, hiding certain aspects and highlighting others, metaphor allows us to see into the mode of thought of the speaker. Constant, repeated use of a metaphor may lead to the representation of a concept in a specific way, contributing to its framing, with two entailments: that concept is perceived exclusively as per its frame; and this may lead to specific decisions regarding the concept.

An important point to consider is ideology as deixis: the speaker relates to location in space and time, to participants, and to ideology, which "constitutes a cognitive domain that plays a role in the meaning-making process of deixis." (Dirven, Polzenhagen, Wolf, 2007: 1227), helping the speaker to situate their speech and decide on the conceptual means to employ for maximum efficiency in reaching out to the audience. We will see that ideology permeates through every aspect of Marine Le Pen's discourse, guiding the choice of discourse and conceptual means. Altogether, linguistic phenomena reflecting ideology are related to general conceptual principles and are to be analyzed in context.

2.1 Discourse structures

In an article on racism in the media, Teun A. Van Dijk points out that the problems generally attributed to minorities are either "represented 'mildly' as those created by their very presence and numbers" or "more negatively: minorities play a deviant role, they are disruptive" (Van Dijk, 1989: 219) in all circumstances for society, from housing and employment, to welfare and safety. Such accusations are not openly stated, "but special attention, focus and selection of crime stories establish such associations in a more subtle way." (Van Dijk, 1989: 219) This observation can be extrapolated to the discourse of politicians such as Marine Le Pen opposing immigration and an open job market. Let's look at some poignant examples for her ideology and program.

Intonation, even though a surface structure, plays a highly important role in portraying refugees. Marine Le Pen uses a marked tone of voice and rhythm to emphasize, as if by bullet-point list, characteristics of migrants that are meant to cast doubt on their status of war refugees. The staccato rhythm, with marked stops between attributes, and solemn low voice provide impact to the underlying message. This is intertwined with the *rhetorical* argument from authority: the politician places herself in the position of the expert witness; having traveled to see the camp in Lampedusa, she is in the position of the honest observer reporting from the field and therefore protecting the interest of Europeans, as opposed to, on the one hand, the policies of EU leaders, and on the other hand, media exploiting typical imagery of war refugees for the sole purpose of audience. Her stance is that the immigrants in question do not resemble in any way the typical image of a war refugee (image that she carefully reduces to women and children or families) and thus transmits her disbelief at their status of war refugees. The politician tailors a specific profile of the supposed majority of migrants who are men, young, in their 20s and 30s, in their prime, who come here to build a life, and normally, such a description would have no negative entailments. Without openly using the term "terrorist" for migrants, Marine Le Pen refers to Islamic fundamentalism causing "la terreur, le drame, la mort, les assassinats de masse"^{3,4} in Libya and Syria and allegedly developing in Europe, bound to cause chaos. In this context, the *lexicon* employed and the intonation hint to the possibility that migrants are terrorists – besides the fact that they are seen as potentially destabilizing society by actually being economic migrants in search of jobs. This strategy deemed by Van Dijk ideological control of discourse (1995: 26) has the function of destabilizing the position of immigrants and vilifying them by a very careful choice of words. And

³ "terror, tragedy, death, mass murders"

⁴ Throughout the article, translation from French, with all its imperfections, belongs to the author.

the metaphor of knowledge as sight (we don't have to cover our eyes; governing is foreseeing) is meant to convince the listeners to accept this evidence.

A study by Cécile Alduy and Stéphane Wahnich on language employed by Marine Le Pen in different instances⁵ – from television and radio interviews, to speeches, meetings with supporters and published articles – reveals interesting facts on the politician's choice of words. The words "freedom" and "sovereignty" are juxtaposed, as we shall see, to a France that is framed as the prisoner of the EU and its policies, and actually refer to "une liberté plus collective, qui concerne la nation, le pays tout entier et qui renvoie au protectionnisme et à la sécurité."⁶ (Alduy, Wahnich, 2015: 48) She speaks much more about immigration as an abstract concept than about migrants (Jean Marie Le Pen talked about "immigrants"), but there is an apparently striking duality in the modes of employment and contexts for the term: the politician is moderate and technocratic when addressing larger audiences through the media, focusing on economic issues related to immigration, but has a more controversial discourse reflecting a politics of emotion in meetings with supporters of the Front National. She adjusts her message to context – deixis: place, audience, ideology.

With respect to *local semantics*, the constant negative presentation of the opposing "them" points to a bias resulting from ideological framing (more on oppositions in the following chapter). Marine Le Pen is quick to use a disclaimer to control her image in context and avoid the impression that she militates for taking away people's right of working wherever they choose: favouring nationals for employment implies "absolument aucune hostilité à l'égard des Roumains ou de la Roumanie."⁷ This is closely connected to the topics chosen in the global semantics, where only information of interest is highlighted, and *pragmatic* means help in achieving this. When questioned about opposing the presence of foreign workers in France or judging people by origin with a view to deportation, she averts a complete and honest answer by violating the Gricean maxims of quantity and quality. *Syntax* is also used to uphold the opposition "us"-"them" by placing adverse entities in subject position and making them agents of what is framed as negative action.

3. Expressions of "us" and "them". Oppositions

The implicit and explicit oppositions in the speech of Marine Le Pen constitute an extremely rich resource for analyzing underlying meaning and ideology. In an interview of just a little under half an hour, we can point out an overwhelming

⁵ For more details: <https://decodingmarinelepen.stanford.edu/node>

⁶ "a more collective freedom, which concerns the nation, the country as a whole, and which refers to protectionism and security"

⁷ "absolutely no hostility towards Romanians or Romania"

number of clashing entities, proof that Marine Le Pen is a master of creating antagonizing categories for the purpose of framing the ideology behind her political party in such a way that it appeals to a wider public and that it justifies specific policies. These oppositions can be grouped by theme, for ease of understanding, as follows⁸ in the table:

us	them
EU-related	
Romania the people all the countries of the EU us [Marine Le Pen / Front National] I, we [negotiate terms of France's membership] territorial, monetary, legislative, economic freedom / sovereignty / aspect of my program a future (of prosperity, identity, security)	European Union
free and sovereign nations [project of Front National]	totalitarian view that drives today the European Union
[implicit: our economic program]	rules of the European Union
vision of cooperation that we share with Laurențiu Rebeaga	[implicit: EU policies, austerity measures, euro, Posting of Workers Directive]
[implicit: we, the Front National, as potential elected leaders]	our French leaders
EU as diplomatic actor	
I [Marine Le Pen]	international community
Ukraine	European Union leaders of the European Union
the peoples of the European Union we	all those leaders, most of whom [...] were not elected the European Commission
me and my movement	press defamation [supporting Putin on Crimea in exchange for a bank loan]
persecuting the Opposition	
we [Marine Le Pen and the Front National]	the system [implicit: French and EU government]
opposition party, the Front National and myself	persecutions by the state
I [Marine Le Pen]	authority the courts
court [Marine Le Pen]	interviewer Romanian court

⁸ underlying meaning and necessary complements are added between square brackets by the author

[results of the Front National in regional elections] democratic rules	democracy alliance of two political parties against the Front National
proportional representation	current voting mechanism [two-round system, except for MEPs where the proportional system is used]
the people	its elites

immigration

we [meaning people] one's own fellow countrymen the French	migration flow [implicit: other nationalities, foreigners] the Romanians
those attached to their country can understand	[implicit: those who do not understand are not attached to their country]
We defend the French no matter what their race / religion / origin each people is a master of their country	judging people by origin and deporting them [implicit: not a master of someone else's country]
women and children are an insignificant minority [reality]	large majority of migrants are men televised images, politics of emotion
The Front National, [we] fight against Islamic fundamentalism	we bear the responsibility of the war

extreme right

patriot [Marine Le Pen]	of the extreme right an insult to our face
patriotic leaders who will defend them [the French]	[a European Union and country leaders that do not defend the people, and are therefore unpatriotic]
[not Marine Le Pen] democrats all political sensibilities [...] represented founded on democracy	extreme right against democracy does not accept political diversity founded on force

On the one hand, there is the opposition us-them (as discussed in detail by Van Dick, see below) stemming from the rejection of migrants. The central point of this opposition is immigration, with war refugees and migrant workers being the two sides of the same coin. Contrasts abound: the migration flux stands as an adversary to us (read as the peoples of the EU) for a variety of reasons, whether it's the migration of workers within the EU creating what Marine Le Pen terms "concurrency terrible entre travailleurs"⁹ or migration from outside the EU which adds to the pressures of an undersized employment offer and contributes to a cultural clash. She discards televised images of women and children in refugee camps as a politics of emotion, and claims that the majority of so-called war refugees are in fact men in search of better living conditions, while migrants (no

⁹ "terrible competition between workers"

matter what their provenance) are vilified for looking for employment and imposing their values and views on the locals.

On the other hand, there is the multifaceted opposition us-them, where "us" can refer to Marine Le Pen, the Front National, EU member states, the peoples of the EU, freedom, Ukraine etc. and "them" can refer to the EU, EU regulations, current political leaders, the international community, the system, the state etc., all in an intricate network of antagonistic relationships. The EU, for example, is depicted throughout the interview, with respect to many of its roles (union of countries, guardian of people's interests, human rights guardian, diplomatic actor), as an adversary in relationship to member states, to the people, to basic rights and values, to countries in conflict. And the Front National is metaphorically depicted as the stone in the shoe, the element that bothers the system, the party that allegedly reveals the uncomfortable truth.

Several paradoxical oppositions in Marine Le Pen's discourse are worth mentioning. While with regard to the EU and its regulations and measures, all member states are listed as being on the same side as "us", and the vision of cooperation of the Front National is shared with Romanian MEP Laurențiu Rebegea, leading the listener to conclude that there is a convergence of goals and policies between all nations of the EU including France and Romania, on the question of immigration the French and the Romanians find themselves in a complicated relationship in Marine Le Pen's discourse: when faced with migration from outside the EU, they are supposed to oppose and hinder it in a coordinated effort, being on the same side of the barrier as "us"; but when migration is referred to as relocation of workforce from Romania to France, they find themselves at odds, with the French being "us" and the Romanians being the rival "them". Democracy itself ends up being portrayed as an adversary of the Front National in regional elections due to what Marine Le Pen considers an unfair voting system. And external to policy and ideology, the interviewer herself is antagonized for a number of uncomfortable questions on an investigation into previous campaign funding, classified as "Romanian court" by the politician, implying that the interviewer has no legitimate right to inquire about evidence in the case.

An interesting case is the parallelism France-Ukraine made by the interviewer to challenge Marine Le Pen's view of the EU as an adversary of the freedom and sovereignty of member states, as opposed to Marine Le Pen's known support of the annexation of Crimea by Russia. Attempted explanations by Marine Le Pen are quite confuse, at first denying the revolution by calling it a putsch, then accepting that there was indeed a revolution, but confusingly stating that "cette révolution n'avait pas encore été élue"¹⁰ at the time of the referendum, which indeed makes no sense at all. She then goes on to state that nobody contested the referendum and its

¹⁰ "this revolution had not yet been elected"

organization, and when corrected by the interviewer pointing to the international community, Marine Le Pen states that it may be so, but she does recognize it – which is very revealing as to the underlying meaning: that the international community is not a legitimate actor that she takes seriously or whose view she accepts. In fact, what the wording emphasizes is that she puts herself and her political interests above all other institutions and that the points of view of others are of no importance. When pointing to the EU as responsible for the Ukrainian crisis, the interviewer prompts Marine Le Pen to define the EU after her statement that "nous sommes responsables, en tout cas que les dirigeants de l'Union Européenne sont responsables"¹¹: unelected officials (though the German chancellor is also listed), leading a Union that does not protect the interests of the citizens and has too many rights – the implied meaning being that only elected officials are legitimate and would lead in the interest of the citizens, based on principles similar to the ones promoted by the Front National.

Marine Le Pen argues against belonging to the extreme right by characterizing herself as a patriot, and the Front National as having the exact opposite attributes to the extreme right, accommodating everything from democratic principles to political diversity. Given this ideal portrait of the Front National, she states that the French are ready to elect a patriot to protect them, unlike implicitly the various administrations in the EU that do not defend the people and are thereby unpatriotic. This is an important fragment in her discourse that, together with a few other aspects we will discuss further on, helps situate this political figure in the nationalist populist trend.

4. "Chez eux" – the questionable definition of home and the ideology behind it

Marine Le Pen uses home-related themes to justify nationalist goals and views. She puts forth basic values and needs (employment, culture), and presents them as endangered by migrants in order to gain more than the assent of the target public – to gain votes to support the policies of the Front National. This is a typical strategy of reaching out through emotional arguments meant to give more weight to the message, to make it meaningful for a larger target group than the regular voter pool of the Front National, and to reach to this target group that shares the values that are, at least allegedly, endangered, and thus garner more support: "Le nationalisme devient ainsi d'autant plus puissant, et différentialiste, qu'il est lesté d'une thématique sociale, surchargé de problèmes sociaux non traités, ou de l'égoïsme et des peurs des moins démunis." ¹² (Wieviorka, 1993: 60) Funny enough, as we have

¹¹ "we are responsible, in any case the leaders of the European Union are responsible"

¹² "Nationalism thus becomes all the more powerful, and differentiating, when charged with a social theme, weighed down by unaddressed social issues, or by the selfishness and fears of the powerless."

already seen in the discussion on oppositions, she warns against the very same politics of emotion used by the media to depict war refugees (women and children) in televised images.

Marine Le Pen admits to considering nationality of great importance ("être français en France ça veut dire quelque chose, [...] être roumain en Roumanie ça veut dire quelque chose"¹³), and although she does not openly state what that meaning is, we can undoubtedly perceive the inseparable nature of nationality from the physical presence in the country of nationality. She attaches a symbolic value to the notion of "home", of "one's place" by the repetition of the concept "chez eux" (repeated in several forms in a short paragraph, of no more than eight lines: "chez eux" – two occurrences; "chez vous" – four occurrences; "chez lui" – one occurrence): "la Roumanie est la maison des Roumains, c'est leur chez eux. La France est la maison des Français, c'est leur chez eux."¹⁴ This repetition is meant to define nationality as belonging to a country and at the same time residing in that country. By extrapolation, the statement excludes the possibility of being, for example, Romanian in France, as it would not allow a Romanian to be "at his place", and combined with the previous statement on the meaning of nationality, it would make no sense to be [insert any nationality] in a country other than that of nationality. This piece of discourse reveals the underlying ideology in the program of the Front National. It serves to reinforce the plea for countries to give preference to their nationals when it comes to employment and to hinder migration.

In this particular case, home-related speech is characterized by two different aspects: jobs and cultural habits. Let's look at these separately.

4.1 Employment

Marine Le Pen resorts to the emotional to enforce the policies supported by the Front National – favouring French nationals, rejecting foreign employees. Their arguments in support of this policy are the percentages of unemployment in France, with a particular emphasis on young French nationals, which has the purpose of making an emotional appeal to listeners. The presentation of the current EU law and regulations on the job market as tyrannical, as involving unnatural competition and inducing a feeling of unsafety and distrust between nations stands out and implies that these specific regulations need to be removed. The expressed desideratum is that each country should provide for its own workforce first, to cater to its need for work places and thus allow people to feel as belonging to their nation.

¹³ "to be French in France has a certain meaning, [...] to be Romanian in Romania has a certain meaning"

¹⁴ "Romania is the home of the Romanians, it's their place. France is the home of the French, it's their place."

The framing of the country, from this point of view, is that illustrated by Lakoff when discussing American politics (among others, in "Thinking Points", 2006). The country is seen as a family, where the administration (the people in charge, elected) is the parent and the people are the children: "the nation-as-family metaphor structures entire worldviews, organizing whole systems of frames in our brains" (Lakoff, 2006: 30). The Front National seems to bring together in its policies both guiding metaphors identified by Lakoff as structuring the American take on politics (nurturant parent and strict father) in a bi-conceptual perspective of the world, exhibiting a caring attitude that is limited to French nationals, and a strict attitude towards the means of achieving its goals. The strict, point-by-point approach to potential negotiations with the EU on the conditions of the membership of France points to a dominating strict father-like guiding metaphor.

4.2 Culture

The *other* does not receive much credit in Marine Le Pen's discourse. Being in a foreign country is described by Marine Le Pen more or less as tourism, based on official grounds (administrative approval) and subject to a strict code of behavior, that of observing the principles and criteria of the host. She frames this using the cultural scenario of paying a visit to someone's home. The frame comes with a script and roles (host, guest; host invites guest, guest arrives at specified hour, may or may not be late, visit has a limited duration, certain actions are initiated by the host – serving drinks, having food, and so on), that cannot be changed and which help enforce her view. Any change in the roles or script (where the visitor becomes the agent taking the initiative to drop by without an invitation, decide on food, on the colour of the walls) is presented as a negative interaction which puts pressure on the local culture. The implication is that migrants have a negative role in altering French culture by imposing certain habits through an alleged demand that the locals adapt to the cultural background of the outsiders.

This brings us to the well-known "us versus them" opposition, discussed in detail by Van Dijk in a number of his articles concerning critical discourse analysis (1989, 1993, 1995). This opposition is based on the contrast between "our" (in-group) positive aspects and "their" (out-group) negative aspects and may or may not be fully expressed in discourse in the following way: a) in-group positive characteristics may be presented in opposition to out-group negative characteristics; b) in-group positive characteristics may be presented, the implication being that the out-group has the exact opposite characteristics; c) in-group positive characteristics may be emphasized by a counter-factual, presenting the situation of an in-group member with out-group characteristics; d) out-group negative characteristics may be listed in some context, the implication being that there is a mismatch with the positive characteristics of the in-group; e) out-group

negative characteristics may be simply listed as a strong-impact bullet-point-like enumeration. Some of these can be identified in the table of oppositions above.

5. Conceptual metaphor and (re)framing

Conceptual metaphor theory helps reveal underlying meaning in discourse. As we will see, Marine Le Pen's speech is replete with metaphors (some conventional, but some less conventional) that endorse the perspective she wants to put forth. This stands as proof that she is a skilled speaker and constructs her arguments carefully, using all necessary tools to back the political ideology of her party. As Andreas Musolf states in an overview of new cognitive approaches supported by Relevance Theory within critical discourse analysis (CDA):

What is relevant in this analysis from a CDA viewpoint is the argumentative advantage that the metaphor gives its users when they want to (dis-)qualify political developments, social groups or even individuals as threatening the identity or continued existence of a nation state. (Musolf, 2012: 303)

The metaphors used can be grouped by theme, some partially reflecting the oppositions expressed or implied by Marine Le Pen. The alleged failure of the European Union is illustrated through the metaphors of war and confrontation. From the domain of war comes the image of the EU as adversary (of peoples, of rights and liberties etc.), of nations as weapons or soldiers ("utiliser [...] les différents peuples pour les jeter les uns contre les autres"¹⁵) and of patriotic leaders elected to defend the people; with regard to workforce migration Marine Le Pen openly states that this is not a Europe of peace, but of conflict, and the implication is that the opposite of a belligerent action would be to have the liberty to favour one's own nationals. In the context of the metaphor of the country as home, it makes sense that when danger is perceived, one would fight to protect it ("Je me bats pour mon pays [...] avec mes amis" – creating the connection to other European nationalist movements). From the domain of confrontation emerges the EU as tyrant which imposes decisions on the French leaders as subjects. Tyranny is an external force prompting a specific type of action (totalitarian view that drives today the European Union) – part of the basic entailments of the event structure metaphor: "forces affecting action are forces affecting motion". And fundamental rights affected by tyranny are lost items ("retrouver, récupérer notre liberté"¹⁶). Economic regulations are a devastating force – also part of the event structure metaphor through a conceptual blend of its instances: external events are large, moving objects; causes are forces (EU regulations are forces); and forces affecting action are forces affecting motion (for an interesting discussion on personification and destruction, see Lakoff, 1993: 231-233). Last but not least, competition also

¹⁵ "use [...] the different nations to throw them against each other"

¹⁶ "to find, to recover our liberties"

structures the framing of the EU, whose rules are tension-inducing ("de la tension, de la concurrence").

A set of mixed metaphorical frames stands out. These frames yield negative and/or positive implications, when applied to entities or situations belonging either to "us" or to "them. The metaphor of the EU as bounded territory is blended with the above-mentioned war metaphor, to render the image of the EU as battle ground where nations are thrown against each other ("utiliser au sein de l'Union Européenne les différents peuples pour les jeter les uns contre les autres"); but it is also a bounded territory (container metaphor) that should be freely entered or exited depending on one's will ("nous voulons bien rester/resterons dans"; "sortir de"), but which does not allow the future (progress, development) to pass through it. The EU is represented as a ship, through a metaphor from the domain of the sea and sailing ("l'Union a échoué"), part of the event structure metaphor, with its entailments: external events are large moving objects; long term, purposeful activities are journeys; and difficulties are impediments to motion. Blockage comes in the form of a shipwreck of an entity (the EU) which is a large moving object on a journey with a specific purpose, be it perceived as good or bad by the speaker, a boat which, due to its imbalance in meeting the rights and expectations of the people, fails by shipwrecking. The same source domain of the sea is applied to another target domain, migration, which is represented as a flux – natural phenomenon out of the human scope of control (entailment: external events are large moving objects), therefore acquiring a negative connotation. While, within the same metaphor domain, a strong patriotic current (positive connotation) drives patriotic movements such as the Front National, and can be found in Romania as well as in all EU countries. The future (and implicitly the life) of a person or nation is a building in construction (to build oneself a future – positive connotation, except when migrants want to do it in Europe) or a desired object found by chance (finding a future, finding the means to build oneself a future); but when the source domain of construction is applied to the EU, it is an illegal construction, something that is being built without approval and against people's will ("se construit sans leur volonté et même contre leur volonté"); and speaking about the economy, its collapse ("l'effondrement économique") is something worth fighting against.

Elections are depicted in terms of competition, of a game with rules: there are two rounds, political parties are teams in competition, power (which stands for governance) is winning the competition, obstacles on the way to the finish line represent difficulties before victory, and if the game ends at a tie there will be another competition to decide the winner. Paradoxically though, the rules of the game (the democratic rules) can be circumvented by a team in order to advance and block the Front National team.

As for foreign affairs and the relationship between France and Romania, diplomatic relations are distances in space (the very close connections between the two

countries), while diplomatic actions are theatrical representations (the role played by Romania in Central Europe in promoting France).

In connection to the metaphorical framing of foreign affairs (in the case of the United States), Chilton and Lakoff (1995) emphasize that the only way to define either foreign affairs or the state is by resorting to metaphor. The metaphorical framing of these and other concepts present in our lives has specific entailments that cannot be changed easily. This is because frames are mental structures by which we grasp the world (Lakoff, 2006: 74), which means that any attempted reframing of a concept for the purpose of expressing a message needs to be reiterated, with its internal logic, scripts and so on, in order to make it more salient. Marine Le Pen does that over and over, to increase the chances of her political ideology reaching more people. In the words of Lakoff, "Political framing is really applied cognitive science." (Lakoff, 2006: 16) and the French politician handles that very well. In her discourse, the European Union is no longer a uniting entity, but a dividing one, from as many points of view as one could imagine – nations, people in search of employment, basic rights and liberties, interests of the people, migration policies, workforce posting, international conflict mediation and so on. But this perspective is perfectly justified – from the point of view of a nationalist populist politician, who envisages a completely different political structuring. The acceptable nationalist populist identity of the EU is framed as the recovery of lost or stolen goods: Marine Le Pen describes it briefly as a union assenting to the states recovering their territorial freedom, which implies reinstating borders and blocking immigration, their monetary freedom, which means going back to a multitude of currencies, the legislative freedom, where national legislation prevails over European directives, and the economic freedom, for a deregulated relationship between banks and companies ("Nous ne voulons pas que l'Union Européenne puisse nous imposer telle ou telle manière de faire dans les relations entre les banques et nos entreprises"¹⁷). So the reason behind the continuous vilification of the EU is to make the audience naturally reach the conclusion intended by nationalists. More on nationalist and populist goals below.

Lakoff analyses framing of "illegal immigration" (and other issues) in the context of US politics and explains that framing influences the potential solutions and that only the party that controls the framing can argue successfully: "Possible "solutions" flow from that framing: rounding up immigrants and deporting them; granting citizenship to those here longest and deporting those here less than two years; instituting a "temporary worker" program" (Lakoff, 2006: 21). The issue is that framing, while being a conceptual means that helps us understand the world, hides certain aspects: "Frames not only define issues, problems, causes, and solutions; they also hide relevant issues and causes." (Lakoff, 2006: 21) On the

¹⁷ "We do not want the European Union to be able to impose on us a particular procedure in the relationship between banks and our companies"

question of immigration, Lakoff suggests starting to refer to "illegal employers" instead, in order to reframe the issue, so that overall, when politicians debate on policies and take measures, these would not be directed at immigrants, but diverted towards employers who use illegal workforce. Consequently, there would be a move from a frame that negatively impacts immigrants to a frame that points to real causes of illegal immigration. What Marine Le Pen does is the reverse, she moves from a positive-meaning frame to a negative-meaning frame: she takes the frame of cooperation that defines the European Union from its conception and turns it around to talk about a dividing totalitarian union, which perfectly serves the ideology of her nationalist party and the principles they support.

6. Nationalism and populism

Nationalism is the politics of closure, of rejecting modernity as a result of changes perceived as disappointing, of maintaining or reviving national culture, of relying on a nation's capacity to provide for itself. The desideratum explicitly stated by Marine Le Pen is that the French people rely exclusively on themselves in all aspects. Michel Wieviorka provides the following theoretical description¹⁸:

*[C]e nationalisme [...] mérite le qualificatif de différentialiste, qu'il s'agisse pour lui de plaider pour l'homogénéité de la nation, de se refermer sur elle-même sur un mode exemplaire, en entendant alors faire en sorte qu'elle subviennne seule à ses besoins, ou de s'engager dans des conduites de violence et de rupture.*¹⁹ (Wieviorka, 1993: 34)

The discourse of Marine Le Pen emphasizes precisely that, through her stance in everything EU-related – workforce, regulations, and migration. She deems the state responsible for providing jobs to its own citizens and youth before anyone else. Involvement from an exterior entity is intrusive to the culture and identity of a nation, as expressed through the metaphor of the country as the home of a nation: "j'entends que chaque peuple soit maître chez lui, [...], mais selon ses conditions, selon ses critères, selon ses principes"²⁰. This does not leave much space for action on the part of the EU, whose only option is to concede to nationalist demands if

¹⁸ An important observation he makes is that there are situations where nationalism is limited to the political strategy of parties striving to (re)present a nationalistic current that is not reflected at the level of society. This is not the case for France, where the discourse of the Front National has a certain appeal, proven by results in elections, available here: <http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections>

¹⁹ "This nationalism [...] deserves to be termed differentiating, whether it's about pleading for the homogeneity of the nation, closing in on itself in an exemplary manner, granted it would proceed, in that case, in such a way so as to provide for its own needs, or about engaging in violent isolating behavior."

²⁰ "I believe each nation should be the master of their home, [...], but on their terms, their criteria, their principles"

France is to continue as member state. The politician's blatant and repeated demand for territorial, monetary, legislative, economic freedom, for sovereignty, places the Front National in the framework of an extreme ideology: "pour évoquer des cas extrêmes, que certain nationalismes semblent obsédés par le projet d'un État indépendant, avec tous ses attributs – armée, diplomatie, monnaie etc."²¹ (Wieviorka, 1993: 31). This attitude comes from the alleged threat posed by migration – and it is the job of patriotic leaders to defend the people – and the already detailed opposition EU-nations. Marine Le Pen alludes to an underlying cause, "la conscience nationale en crise, menacée" (Wieviorka, 1993: 54), which is expressed through the metaphor of the European Union as an illegal construction built against the will of the people, something she characterizes as unbearable.

Xenophobic manifestations that may be associated to nationalism are toned down in Marine Le Pen's discourse. Traces from the frame of racism can be discerned: a mitigated, apparently supportive attitude towards naturalized foreigners (only hinting to the racism of minimization, that awards the lowest and least visible social position to the targeted group – here, barely mentioned), and an overt rejection of war refugees (the racism of differentiation considers the targeted group to be a threat and completely excludes it – in this case, a threat with respect to employment and culture). The expressed conviction that people should be able to build a future in their countries, where their identity is respected, points more to a populist mentality, within which "les tendances au racisme [...] s'opposent à – et sont neutralisées par – sa soif de justice sociale, son désir de participation populaire à la conduite de changement, son idée qu'il représente la masse des <<petits>> contre les <<gros>>"²² (Wieviorka, 1993: 81).

Populism emerges from the sense of disconnection between the people and those in power, supports tradition, and is simultaneously modern, looking for progress, and anti-modern, protecting tradition: "le populisme entend concilier le passé et l'avenir, l'identité et le changement, ce qui constitue un enjeu vite contradictoire: comment rester ce que l'on est, et en même temps se transformer [...]"²³ (Wieviorka, 1993: 78). It is precisely this disconnection that is highlighted several times by Marine Le Pen, in relation to either French administration ("il y a une très grande fracture entre le peuple et ses élites" – metaphor of disconnection as fracture; "tout le monde doit pouvoir se sentir représenté au sein de l'Assemblée

²¹ "to evoke extreme cases, that certain nationalisms seem obsessed with the project of an independent state, with all its attributes – army, diplomacy, currency etc."

²² "racist tendencies [...] are opposed – and neutralized by – its thirst for social justice, its desire for popular involvement in the implementation of change, its idea of representing the mass of the <<small>> against the <<great>>"

²³ "populism attempts to reconcile past and future, identity and change, which represents a stake soon proving contradictory: how to stay what one is and at the same time to transform [...]"

Nationale"²⁴ – both observations regard the two-round voting system that does not allow the people or political sensibilities to feel properly represented), or the EU ("seuls les peuples doivent pouvoir décider de leur avenir", "il y a une aspiration à ce que l'Union Européenne respecte leur volonté"²⁵, unelected EU leaders, the metaphor of EU as illegal construction). To this lack of connection, Marine Le Pen opposes the ideal of a Europe of cooperation between free and sovereign nations, a concept with no framing attached for clear comprehension, but which makes the vilifying framing of Europe stand out.

7. Conclusion: The French connection – relating values and experiences to justify policy

So how do we piece everything together? What are we supposed to understand from this discourse? What is the connection with Romania? What is the message Marine Le Pen is transmitting and to whom is it directed? And why is it of any interest to discuss it?

Inquired as to the reasons of holding a meeting of EU nationalist MPs in Romania, Marine Le Pen creates a comfortable connection between the history of Romania, with its past and present aspiration to freedom, and the alleged denial of that aspiration by the EU. From this point on, the EU is illustrated as the adversary of democratic values with respect to all member states, and it suffices for the politician to argue the case of her country from the perspective and ideology of the Front National for the listeners (presumably Romanian, since this interview was broadcast on a Romanian private TV channel) to generalize this information to their own context.

Regarding Romania, Marine Le Pen talks about the diplomatic relationships in which Romania actively promotes French culture, strongly denies any hostility in her program towards Romanian nationals by stressing the legitimate responsibility of a country to favour employment of its countrymen, defines nationality as a home, and draws a parallel between the difficulties encountered by nationals of both France and Romania to create the necessary connection for the audience to relate to the frames in her discourse. Even Islamic fundamentalism is brought to the attention of the public, both as a common threat, to instill fear in the audience, and as uniting "us" in a common effort against it.

She relates the ideology behind the Front National to the different nationalist movements across Europe by representing herself as a combatant in service of her

²⁴ "there is an important fracture between the people and its elites", "everyone should be able to feel represented in the National Assembly"

²⁵ "only the people can decide on their future", "there is an aspiration that the European Union respect their will"

country against the negative connotations attributed to the EU, together with other fellow combatants (Austrian, Italian, Flemish, and Romanian) engaged in the same fight for common values (prosperity, identity, security). This serves her political goal of defining the identity of her party, and depicting its propositions as ideologically attractive, especially since they are validated by the support of European politicians of the same orientation.

Marine Le Pen builds on the emotions of the people, she accesses a reservoir of fear that, when present in the targeted public, is taken advantage of and enhanced, and if inexistent, all necessary means are employed to convince or at least to make people doubt. Eventually, this is a politics built on fear: nationalism "est dominé par des appels à la fermeture de la nation sur elle-même, la xénophobie, la haine, la peur et souvent la tentation de la violence."²⁶ (Wieviorka, 1993: 23)

A potential prevalence of nationalism in France, or indeed any other country of the EU, would affect all member states and be reflected in every sector of the functioning of the Union – whether it's transport, trade, freedom of movement, legislation and so on. A telltale example is the UK vote on exiting the EU, where the framing used by populist parties reached and convinced a sufficient number of voters. With still uncertain consequences, this referendum should be enough of an argument to convince language experts to step in, look closely at discourse of populist and nationalist political figures, point out every single hidden meaning and make it accessible to the uneducated public, and potentially help in reframing concepts fundamental for the ease of understanding of the benefits and functioning of the European Union, so that populists and nationalists can no longer simply appeal to the fears of the uninformed to garner support. Exposing conceptual frames and discursive means should be regarded as a long-term mission of educating for the critical understanding of political discourse. With French presidential and parliamentary elections due next year, in May 2017, we are bound to see more political debates and interviews revealing more on policies and ideological backgrounds.

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²⁶ "is dominated by calls for the nation to close in on itself, to xenophobia, to hatred, to fear and often to the temptation of violence"

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