

'Royal' Clusters and Deliberate Metaphor: A comparative study of metaphor in Danish and Norwegian New Year's Eve speeches

Introduction

This paper presents a comparative analysis of metaphor in the New Year's Eve speeches (NYEs) of the Danish queen and the Norwegian king. NYEs constitute an annual tradition in both countries, broadcast early in the evening of December 31 of each year, where these monarchs summarize the highlights of the past year and look ahead to hopes and aspirations for the year to come. Our primary data consists of two sets of five speeches per monarch, every other year from the past decade (2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017), roughly 4500 words per set. The monarchs are therefore discussing many of the same events, in speeches that have identical purposes.

Methods

We apply a modified version of the Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (Reijnierse et al. 2017) to all texts – modified by virtue of being applied to Scandinavian languages with the newly-developed Scandinavian version of the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (see Authors (forthcoming)). We complement this analysis by visualizing metaphorical density in each speech in separate time series analyses (see Cameron and Stelma 2004; Littlemore et al. 2014; Author1 (submitted)), to identify all metaphorical clusters in each speech (that is, groupings with a frequency of >20% metaphor over a 20-word span).

Findings

Despite similarities in country and language background, topic, and genre, we reject the null hypothesis that there will be no significant differences (in terms of quantity and function) in the role metaphor plays in these monarchs' speeches.

Conclusion

Our analytical approach involving deliberate metaphors and metaphor clustering in the context of Scandinavian NYEs facilitates determination of the function metaphor plays, as well as how similar messages may be conveyed, both with and without use of metaphors.