

WINE DISCOURSE IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The growth of the wine industry and the consideration of wine as a cultural sign explain the development of oenology and the emergence of wine schools and courses, publications, online forums and wine-tourist companies worldwide. All these factors have led to the development of a new genre, wine discourse. The language of wine has been the subject of linguistic research in recent years (Châtelain-Courtois 1984; Robinson 1999; Goded and Varela 2008). Some studies have given evidence of the heavy presence of metaphor in English and French wine discourse (Coutier 1994; Caballero and Suárez-Toste 2008). The aim of the present article is twofold: first, to explore the French vocabulary of wine; second, to provide a corpus-based analysis of the range of metaphors found in French specialized books and magazines which aim to describe various aspects of wine (colour, aroma, flavor, length). The study is undertaken from the perspective of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 2006).

Key words: *Conceptual domain, instantiation, metaphor, metaphoric expression, wine discourse, winespeak.*

1. Introduction

The development of wine discourse in French is the result of the economic, cultural and social role of wine. Firstly, wine makes a major contribution to the French economy. As Willerval (1994: 49) remarks, “*la vigne et le vin ont toujours tenu une place importante en France. Ils ont façonné le paysage de nombreuses régions où ils participent toujours au maintien d’une population rurale dense*”.

However, wine is not only a consumer good but also a cultural and social symbol. In this line, Coutier (1994: 662) points out: “Since the fifties the great interest in wine, a beverage with highly symbolic implications, has become a cultural phenomenon which is part of current social and dietary behaviours”.

The cultural dimension of wine shows in the French language, where there is an abundance of proverbs and sayings illustrating the (positive or negative) connotation of wine and its cultural relevance, as evidenced in the following expressions:

- (1) *Le bon vin réjouit le coeur de l’homme.*
- (2) *Un repas sans vin est une journée sans soleil.*
- (3) *La vérité est dans le vin.*
- (4) *Quand le vin entre, la raison sort.*

The social significance of wine is highlighted by Dominé (2005: 12): “*Indissociable du patrimoine gastronomique de bien des pays, il est l’expression d’un art de vivre*”.

The business and cultural sides of wine have given rise to a specific discourse type which has been the subject of considerable research (Peynaud 1983; Coutier 1994, 1997; Dard 1994; Willerval 1994; Logette 1995; Nau 2001; Dominé 2005). The French wine discourse is marked by a striking lexical wealth¹. Such wealth stems from (i) the variety of

¹ The specificity of the wine language accounts for the incorporation of a vocabulary section into specialised books (e.g. *Le goût du vin*, 1996; *Connaître le vin*, 1986; *Tout savoir sur le vin*, 1994) and the publication of wine dictionaries such as *Les mots du vin et de l’ivresse* (1984) and *Dictionnaire du vin* (1988).

terms used by experts to describe a range of features of wine, including its colour, aroma, flavour and length; (ii) the high proportion of synonyms, e.g. *bien construit/bien constitué, proportionné/harmonieux, franc/sincère, raide/droit, rude/grossier*; (iii) the variety and high occurrence of figurative expressions based on metaphor.

The design of the present paper goes as follows. In the first section we explain the lexis of wine along a number of dimensions and subdimensions. In the second section we identify and analyse the conceptual metaphors relating to wine description in French and we offer a selection of metaphorical patterns illustrated by examples. The theoretical background of our study is provided by conceptual metaphor theory as put forward by Lakoff (1987, 2006) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Finally, we present some concluding remarks.

2. Analysis of wine discourse in French

2.1. The vocabulary of wine

Wine description in specialized texts is detailed and richly elaborated. It is concerned with the impressions relating to the senses of sight, smell and taste. The essential components of the total wine tasting experience are the colour, the aroma and the mouthfeel².

The visual perception of a wine provides an account of the following aspects:

- Colour shades:
Red wines: *pivoine, framboise, cerise, rubis, pourpre, violet, grenat, tuilé*³.
White wines: *or vert, or pâle, or jaune, jaune paille, vieil or, doré, ambré*.
- Colour intensity: *léger, soutenu, foncé, profond, intense*.
- Brightness: *triste, terne, mat, chatoyant, brillant, éclatant, étincelant, vif, lumineux*.
- Transparency: *opaque, louche, voile, limpide, propre, transparent, cristallin*.

The visual description is followed by the description of the wine *nez* ‘nose’, i.e. the olfactory sensations. The nose consists of the *arôme* ‘aroma’ (smell of the wine in the glass) and the *bouquet* (the aroma which develops with age). The wine aromas are judged by their intensity, their quality and their nature:

- Intensity (i.e. how smelly the wine is): *puissant, odorant, aromatique, bouqueté, parfumé, timide, morne, brouillé, austère, plat*.
- Quality: *très fin, racé, distingué, délicat, fin, ordinaire, déplaisant, hargneux, désagréable*.
- Nature: *fleuri, fruité, floral, végétal/herbacé, minéral, animal, boisé, épice, musqué, torréfié/brûlé, bouchonné*.

The last dimension to be considered is the wine flavour. The sensations of wine on palate, the mouthfeel, are referred to as its *bouche* ‘mouth’. Body (mainly determined by alcohol content), structure, balance and length play a role in the mouthfeel.

Below we present the terms to describe the various subdimensions of the mouthfeel:

² Peynaud (1980: 157) has termed *stéréodégustation* the understanding of the sensations associated with wine tasting in terms of shape, volume and texture.

³ The lexical items in this subsection are listed in descending order.

- Wine body: *bien construit, solide, robuste, plein de force, avoir du corps/du corsage/de la jambe/de la cuisse/de la fesse/du gilet, étoffé, maigre, faible, léger, dentelle, ficelle, informe, plat, lisse, sans relief.*
- Wine structure: *pulpeux, plantureux, enveloppé, fourré, fondant, jouflu, gaillard, moelleux, souple, onctueux, gras, charnu, avoir de la chair.*
- Wine balance: *équilibré/harmonieux, déséquilibré.*

Since ‘balance’ refers to the balance between sugar content, acidity, alcohol and tannins, these elements can be discussed separately:

- Sugar content: *lourd, mou, sirupeux, pommadé, mielleux, liquoreux, moelleux, souple/souplesse, onctueux, velouté, doux, demi-sec, sec, brut, rude, desséché.*
- Acid level: *coupant/griffu/tranchant/prenant/accrocheur/brusque/incisif, aigu, pointu, raide, acerbe, acide, dur, mordant, décharné, creux, maigre, vert, nerveux, acidulé, frais, vif, plat, mou, court, flache, amorti, poisseux.*
- Alcoholic strength: *viné, brûlant, capiteux, alcoolisé, spiritueux, généreux, puissant, chaud, lourd, vineux, léger, lavé, aqueux.*
- Tannin levels (especially for red wines): *rêche, rugueux, râpeux, âpre, rude, ferme, astringent, tannique, maigre, dur, charpenté, soutenu.*

A set of adjectives describe the gas content of the wine: *mousseux, pétillant, effervescent, émoussillant, perlant, tranquille.*

Finally, wines are regarded as *long/ persistant* or *court* depending on their length, i.e. the persistence of the tasting experience on nose and mouth after swallowing.

Although the French wine vocabulary draws from distinct domains, it constitutes a coherent set where many items stand in a semantic relationship of synonymy (e.g. *avoir du caractère/de la personnalité, raide/tendu*) or antonymy (e.g. *équilibré/déséquilibré, nerveux/tranquille, dur/mou*) with other words.

2.2. The metaphoric description of wine

As advanced above, winespeak is highly figurative. Metaphor shapes our understanding of wine. Our study of metaphor in the French wine discourse is undertaken from the perspective of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 2006; Lakoff and Turner 1989), which has highlighted the central role of metaphor in language and thought. Following the cognitive theory of metaphor, metaphor involves understanding a domain of experience (the target domain) in terms of a more concrete domain (the source domain). In this sense, metaphor is defined as a mapping, i.e. a fixed set of conceptual correspondences, between both domains.

In line with Richardt (2003: 243), we present the notion of schema as the basis for metaphorical transfer. Schematas represent basically stereotypical aspects of a source domain, thus reducing its complexity.

In recent years cognitive metaphor theory has been applied in the analysis of metaphor in a number of text genres across specialized target domains, including economics (Boers 1999; Herrera and White 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006; Koller 2008) and politics (Musolff 2004). The role that metaphor plays in articulating wine discourse in English has been researched by Caballero and Suárez-Toste (2008). They have identified five metaphors in the language of wine tasting in the English language:

- WINES ARE LIVING BEINGS
This generic-level metaphor subsumes the specific-level metaphors WINES ARE PEOPLE, WINES ARE ANIMALS and WINES ARE PLANTS, which are instantiated by terms like *muscular, feminine, bold, expressive, shy, austere, intellectual, ambitious, feline* and *fragrant*.
- WINES ARE CLOTHES
Wines may be described as *silky, velvety smooth* or have a *glove* or *mantle*.
- WINES ARE THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS
Wines can be regarded as *square, angular* or *round*.
- WINES ARE BUILDINGS, as suggested by their being *fortified*.
- WINES ARE SHAPEABLE WOOD OR METAL BUILDING MATERIAL and are thus represented as *rough* or *molten*.

The analysis of our corpus has revealed the ubiquity of metaphor in the French wine discourse. The widespread use of metaphor can be explained on the following grounds:

- (i) The taste vocabulary is rather poor.⁴
- (ii) Gustatory perception is often highly subjective, in a way that the vocabulary of wine tasting is characterized by metaphor (Coutier 1994: 662)⁵.

This leads us to claim, in line with other scholars (Coutier 1994) that the metaphorical expressions are not figures of speech but terms with a referential function that conform a specialized language.

The analysis is based on a corpus of linguistic metaphors retrieved from three specialized magazines targeted at an audience of professionals (oenologists and tasters) and amateur wine lovers and drinkers. My data sources were the wine reviews (or tasting notes) published in the magazines *La Revue du Vin de France, Terre de Vin* and *Vins et Gastronomie* in November-December 2010. The data, which were extracted manually, contain reference to 800 metaphorical expressions pertaining to the domains of the human being, objects, clothes, construction and music⁶. The bulk of them are adjectives, followed by nouns and a few verbal collocations. From this small sample it is apparent that metaphor pervades wine discourse in the French language.

Our corpus-based research gives evidence of five conceptual metaphors (i.e. WINES ARE PEOPLE, WINES ARE CLOTHES, WINES ARE BUILDINGS, WINES ARE OBJECTS and WINES ARE FOOD) and a set of synaesthetic metaphors drawing from the perceptual mode of hearing. Thus, the French wine discourse has exclusive characterizations of wine in terms of food and music imagery.

Each metaphor is discussed below.

- WINES ARE PEOPLE

The centrality of the WINES ARE PEOPLE metaphor is illustrated by its range of instantiations, as shown below:

⁴ The limited range of taste terms has been mentioned by Faurion (1992) and Coutier (1994).

⁵ Coutier (1994: 673) also mentions the difficulty in finding the appropriate terms and the hedonistic nature of wine tasting as factors influencing the use of metaphor in French winespeak.

⁶ Coutier (1994:667) postulates ten domains (*champs sémantiques*) as sources of wine metaphors, including the human being, time and space.

- (5) *Ce vin a tout d'un coureur de fond. (RVF: 87)*⁷.
 (6) *Il révèle un corps d'une jeunesse et d'une splendeur qui feront le respect. (RVF: 42).*
 (7) *Un vin dans la force de l'âge. (RVF : 91).*

The metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE activates a complex metaphoric scenario that foregrounds diverse aspects of wine, one of which is its quality, as evidenced in *distingué, raffiné, stylé, avoir de la classe, séducteur, séduisant, flatteur* or *charmeur: La cuvée se montre séductrice*.

The anthropomorphic metaphor consists of four schematas (i.e. the body, physical features, personality features and lifecycle) that foreground aspects of the olfactory and gustatory perception of wine:

Metaphorical schema	Wine element	Linguistic metaphor
Body	Structure	<i>bouche, nez, avoir de la chair, charnu, maigre, élancé, svelte, typé</i>
	Body + balance	<i>corps, avoir du corps, corpulent, musclé</i>
Physical features	Intensity of aromas	<i>faible</i>
	Structure	<i>joufflu</i>
	Alcohol level	<i>corpulent, large d'épaules</i>
	Alcohol+tannins	<i>vigoureux, vigueur, avoir du tonus</i>
	Sugar content	<i>souple</i>
Personality features	Intensity of aromas	<i>austère, timide, tranquille, triste</i>
	Acidity	<i>strict, nerveux</i>
	Sugar content	<i>nerveux, tranquille</i>
	Balance	<i>délicat, avoir de la grâce, équilibré, proportionné</i>
	Balance+alcohol	<i>généreux</i>
Human lifecycle	Wine lifecycle	<i>précoce, jeune/jeunesse/juvenile,mûr/maturité,vieux/vieillessement, sénile, longévité, s'épanouir</i>

Table 1: The conceptual metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE in French winespeak.

The body schema underlies the key metaphorical terms in French winespeak, i.e. *corps* (the wine structure), *nez* ('nose') and *bouche* ('mouth')⁸. *Nez* and *bouche* refer to the wine mouthfeel and overall smell respectively, and can be described by an abundance of adjectives, including the following: *nez intense, complexe, fin, léger, plaisant, aérien, raffiné, flatteur, expressif; bouche franche, tendre, vive, généreuse, puissante, linéaire, ample, moderne*.

The schematas appearance and personality lie at the heart of a considerable number of linguistic metaphors describing many wine ingredients touching upon the smell (e.g. *faible, austère, timide, tranquille, triste*) and the flavour, the latter being defined in terms of alcohol level (e.g. *corpulent, vigoureux*), sugar content (e.g. *souple, nerveux*), acidity (e.g. *nerveux, strict*) and balance (e.g. *élégant, robuste, délicat, généreux*).

Wine balance is metaphorically linked to physical force (e.g. *robuste*), on the one hand, and to grace and elegance (e.g. *délicat, élégant*), on the other.

If we now turn to the connection between the schematas and the elements of wine, we note that alcohol content is associated with physical force, as suggested by *corpulent*. The alcohol and tannin levels are specified through metaphorical expressions which share the features of force and tonicity (e.g. *vigoureux, avoir du tonus*) or the lack of both (e.g. *faible*).

The linguistic metaphors focusing on the wine body and balance fall under two categories: (i) expressions referring to a person's build (e.g. *avoir du corps*) and gender

⁷ The following abbreviations have been used: *RVF* (*La Revue du Vin de France*), *V & G* (*Vin et Gastronomie*) and *TV* (*Terre de Vins*).

⁸ The body metaphor is also profiled in the terms *jambe* 'legs' or *larmes* 'tears' are the streams left on the inside of a wine glass after the wine has been swirled.

metaphors that denote the alcohol and tannins levels. These metaphors assign a sexual role to wines, whether male (*masculin/viril*) or female (*féminin*), as evidenced in the following examples:

- (8) *Bouche acide, masculine, avec du grain et de la persistance (RVF: 107).*
- (9) *De la matière et du style, dans un genre plus viril que le Deutz Classic. (RVF: 102).*
- (10) *Reconnu dès la première gorgée pour [...] une certaine féminité, le vin blanc de Gascogne court le monde à la conquête des palais curieux. (TV: 76).*

It is worth noting that we have encountered instantiations of the submetaphor WINES ARE CHILDREN. Thus, wines are *élevés* ‘brought up’ in barrels and *expriment* ‘express’ aromas rather than feelings. Wines of the same cuvee (*lignée*) are the children of a family (*aîné, dernier-né*), as illustrated below:

- (11) *Le vin, c’est mon deuxième enfant. Je le porte, l’élève, et un jour, il est prêt à partir sur le marché. Comme un grand. (TV: 18).*
- (12) *Les 2000 souffrent de la comparaison avec leurs aînés d’un an. (RVF: 76).*

Below we present a few instantiations of the metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE:

- (13) *Ce vin majestueux se montre encore peu bavard. (RVF : 112).*
- (14) *La vivacité est sa colonne vertébrale. (RVF : 112).*
- (15) *Bonne ossature assise sur une structure généreuse, en contrepoint d’une nervosité rafraîchissante. (TV: 53).*
- (16) *Le nez est sanguin, stylisé. La bouche affiche des tanins fermes, mais élancés, et associe densité et fraîcheur. (RVF : 114).*
- (17) *Un prince crémeux et fruité à table. (RVF: 122).*

The human lifecycle can be mapped onto the wine lifecycle. Thus, a wine is *précoce* ‘precocious’, *jeune* ‘young’, *assoiffé de jeunesse* ‘thirsty for youth’, *mûr* ‘mature’, *vieux* ‘old’, *vieilli* ‘aged’ or *sénile* ‘very old’. The main stages in the life of a wine are *maturité* ‘maturity’ and *vieillesse* ‘aging’. By way of illustration, consider the following examples:

- (18) *Parvenu à parfaite maturité, le riesling s’exprime ici sans amertume. (RVF: 87).*
- (19) *Il paraît plus vieux que son âge! (RVF: 124).*

- **WINES ARE CLOTHES**

Unlike the other metaphors, which focus on gustatory sensations produced by wine, the metaphor WINES ARE CLOTHES conveys features of wine pertaining to the visual, olfactory and taste perception, as pictured in table 2:

Metaphorical Schema	Wine element	Linguistic metaphor
Clothes	Visual features	<i>robe, trame</i>
	Balance	<i>étouffe/ étouffé</i>
Way of dressing	Quality of aromas	<i>tenue, habillement, chic</i>
Material	Body	<i>dentelle</i>
	Structure	<i>soyeux</i>
	Sugar content	<i>velouté</i>

Table 2: The conceptual metaphor WINES ARE CLOTHES in French winespeak.

The metaphor WINES ARE CLOTHES subsumes three schematas: the clothes schema, the way of dressing schema and the material schema. The *robe*, which is the most relevant instantiation, points to the visual analysis of a wine, whereas lexical units such as *tenue*, *habillage* and *chic*, which denote someone's way of dressing, refer to the wine smell, and the nouns and adjectives denoting textile materials (e.g. *velouté* 'velvety', *soyeux* 'silky', *étouffe*, *dentelle* 'lace', *satins/satiné*, *soie* 'silk', *taffetas*) describe aspects of the wine mouthfeel.

The following extracts show that the lexis of clothing is employed metaphorically in wine descriptions:

- (20) *L'attaque vive laisse place à une bouche soyeuse.* (V & G: 71).
- (21) *La bouche, attrayante, présente souplesse et velouté.* (V & G : 71).
- (22) *Entre fruit et vinosité, cette cuvée possède de la tenue.* (RVF : 105).
- (23) *Champagne avec de fines notes d'évolution qui l'habillent de manière homogène.* (RVF : 107).

- WINES ARE OBJECTS

Another central metaphor in the corpus is WINES ARE OBJECTS. Thus, wines are viewed as shaped objects having volume and firmness. Table 3 gives evidence of the metaphorical system activated by this metaphor:

Metaphorical schema	Wine element	Linguistic metaphor
Shape	Length	<i>long/longueur, longiligne, court</i>
	Body	<i>plat, lisse, sans relief</i>
	Acidity	<i>anguleux, creux</i>
	Alcohol level	<i>carré</i>
	Balance	<i>sphérique, rond, arrondi, s'arrondir</i>
	Balance + Body	<i>droit, tendu, rectiligne</i>
Volume	Balance	<i>plein, opulent, ample/ampleur</i> <i>volumineux, volume</i>
	Colour intensity	<i>Profound</i>
Consistency	Alcohol	<i>solide, massif, mou</i>
Texture	Tannins	<i>rugueux/rugosité, épais/épaisseur</i>

Table 3: The conceptual metaphor WINES ARE OBJECTS in French winespeak.

The schema of shape is very productive, since it applies to the description of the wine body (e.g. *plat, lisse, sans relief*), wine body and structure (e.g. *longiligne*), balance (e.g. *arrondi, plat*), the combination of wine body and balance (e.g. *droit, tendu, carré, rectiligne*), alcohol level (e.g. *carré*) and acidity (e.g. *anguleux*). Interestingly enough, the greatest balance is linked to the round shape, the most balanced wines being *rond* or *sphérique*. In much the same way, wine balance is described by adjectives denoting the size (e.g. *ample*) or volume (e.g. *plein, opulent*) of an object.

It is hardly surprising that the persistence of wine aromas in the mouth is linked to the length of an object, as illustrated by *long, court, longiligne*.

Finally, a wine with high alcohol content is seen as a firm object (e.g. *solide, massif*).

The following examples illustrate the metaphoric representation of wines as objects:

- (24) *Le vin est droit, d'ampleur moyenne en bouche. Un margaux de belle longueur.* (RVF: 90).
- (25) *Il affiche une matière profonde et riche. Plus massif que fin, mais solide.* (RVF: 115).
- (26) *2007 offre déjà une matière droite, pleine et ferme.* (RVF: 87).

- WINES ARE BUILDINGS

The lexical set from the domain of architecture is presented in table 4:

Metaphorical schema	Wine element	Linguistic metaphor
Action of building	Body + Structure	<i>bien construit/bâti, assemblage</i>
Architectural elements	Tannin level	<i>charpenté, structuré, structure</i>
Properties of the building	Quality	<i>somptueux/somptuosité, luxueux/luxe</i>

Table 4: The conceptual metaphor WINES ARE BUILDINGS in French winespeak.

The action schema accounts for metaphorical expressions referring to the wine body and structure (e.g. *bien construit, solidement bâti*). The connection is evident since the linguistic metaphors evoke the way a wine is made.

The schema architectural elements underlies the metaphorical representation of wines as *charpentés* and *structurés*. These adjectives make reference to the tannin levels. The link between tannins and the structure or framework of a building is provided by the feature “central element” shared by both; tannins are a basic component of a wine, while the framework is the main part of a building.

We present some examples of the characterisation of wines as buildings:

- (27) *D'un style puissant et construit, la race du vin revient en fin de bouche. (TV:54).*
- (28) *Un rouge charpenté autour d'un méticuleux assemblage des cépages du domaine. (TV: 69).*
- (29) *Calme et luxe semblent parfaitement caractériser le corton-charlemagne de ce domaine. (RVF: 110).*
- (30) *L'ensemble est bien charpenté. (V&G: 84).*

- WINES ARE FOODS

The metaphor WINES ARE FOODS profiles wine structure. Thus, a wine can be *gras, onctueux, croquant, moelleux, crémeux* or *pulpeux*, as shown in (31)-(33):

- (31) *La bouche est croquante, tout en finesse. (RVF: 86).*
- (32) *Une texture crémeuse sur une expression simple de fruits blancs. (RVF: 102).*
- (33) *Onctueuse, cette cuvée va superbement évoluer. (TV: 50).*

- TASTE IS HEARING

Synaesthetic food metaphors structure the perceptual mode of tasting in terms of other modes of perception, thus enriching wine description. The heavy presence of synaesthetic metaphors in French winespeak demonstrates that wine discourse does not only convey a culinary message but a cultural view of food according to which wine tasting is a unique experience involving all senses. Following a cognitive linguistic approach (Lakoff 1987, 2006; Lakoff and Johnson 1980), which views metaphor as a cross-domain mapping, synaesthetic metaphor is a cross-sensory mapping.

Our study shows that WINE tasting is elaborated upon by synaesthetic metaphors. In this sense, hearing plays a role in the configuration of taste. Wine tasting is metaphorically represented as listening to a music composition, as evidenced by the metaphorical expressions *notes, registre, harmonie* and *finale*, among others. This is a specific feature of the French discourse with regard to English winespeak.

Below we provide corpus evidence for this type of metaphor:

- (34) *Sur des notes affirmées de cerise, le nez est puissant, tout come la bouche, avec une finale en queue de paon. (V & G : 72).*
- (35) *Un champagne masculin qui manque un peu d'harmonie sur la finale de bouche. (RVF: 102).*
- (36) *La bouche joue dans un registre aérien. (RVF: 106).*
- (37) *Moulin-Caresse est l'un des ténors de l'appelation. (TV: 51).*

There is a recurrent metaphorical schema that refers to the sections of a music composition. This point is illustrated by means of the following examples:

- (38) *Puissante, l'attaque s'assagit en une bouche plutôt équilibrée avec une belle finale. (V&G: 71).*
- (39) *L'attaque souple en bouche se poursuit sur un développement fruité avec une finale légèrement briochée et boisée. (V&G: 81).*

The nouns *attaque*, *développement* and *finale*, which reflect the successive sensations that wine produces on the palate, evoke the parts of a music composition.

Our corpus contains numerous multiple metaphors where there is overlap between various source domains. The high occurrence of multiple metaphors in the French wine discourse reveals the wine experts' aim to provide a full-grained description capturing all the dimensions of wine.

The examples below illustrate the point that the conceptual metaphors explained above cluster to produce a set of linguistic metaphors:

- (40) *Robe très violacée, presque noire. Nez très élégant et racé, d'une vinosité fine. Des notes florales complétées par un registre fruité (mûre, olive) et une fraîcheur anisée et mentholée. En bouche, superbe structure, droite et soyeuse. Belle définition aux contours nets, bien dessinés. Splendide fraîcheur en finale. Très grande harmonie d'ensemble. Élégance de texture, de grain et de minéralité.*

The metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE (*nez élégant et racé, bouche*), WINES ARE CLOTHES (*robe, soyeuse*), WINES ARE BUILDINGS (*structure*) and WINES ARE OBJECTS (*droite*) intermingle with the synaesthetic metaphors drawing from the sensory modality of hearing (*notes, registre, finale, harmonieux*) to give a full description of the wine colour, smell, mouthfeel and quality.

- (41) *Rond, plein, généreux, aux notes de rancio, il offre une maturité enrobée en finesse. Très bon vin qui reste harmonieux. (RVF: 109).*

The metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE (*généreux, maturité*) is combined with the metaphors WINES ARE OBJECTS (*rond, plein*) and synaesthetic metaphor TASTE IS HEARING (*notes, harmonieux*).

- (42) *Magnifique robe, très profonde. La bouche est splendide de tenue, de moelleux de tannins et de longueur. Séduisant et concentré. (RVF: 114).*

Four metaphors occur together in (42): WINES ARE CLOTHES (*robe*), WINES ARE PEOPLE (*bouche, séduisant*), WINES ARE OBJECTS (*profonde, longueur*) and WINES ARE FOODS (*moelleux*).

If we now turn to the distribution patterns of the metaphors, we notice some differences. Table 4 presents the quantitative findings of this study:

Metaphor	Number of occurrences
WINES ARE PEOPLE	476
WINES ARE CLOTHES	45
WINES ARE BUILDINGS	28
WINES ARE OBJECTS	31
WINES ARE FOOD	70
SYNAESTHETIC METAPHORS	147

Table 4. Distribution patterns of the metaphors in the French wine discourse.

The metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE stands at the centre of this system of conceptualisations of wine. The centrality of this metaphor is accountable for on the basis of the view of wine as an essential component of the French cuisine that is suggestive of refinement. The most relevant instantiations are *équilibré/équilibre* (88 tokens), *élégant* (74 tokens) and *généreux* (46 tokens), which describe the wine balance and alcohol level.

Likewise, the metaphor WINES ARE OBJECTS occurs in substantial numbers in the corpus, the most frequent metaphoric expressions being *droit* (85 tokens), *ample* (68 tokens) and *profond* (46 tokens), which describe the wine balance and colour intensity.

The other conceptual metaphors, WINES ARE CLOTHES, WINES ARE BUILDINGS and WINES ARE FOOD are more limited in range and frequency. The most recurrent instantiations of the textile metaphor are *robe* and *tenue*, since these lexical units refer to the visual component of wine description. *Robe* occurs in many collocations (e.g. *robe somber/profonde/ limpide/brillante/scintillante*).

The metaphorical view of wines as buildings focuses on the tannin level of a wine, as shown in the number of occurrences (27) of the noun *structure* and the adjective *structuré*.

In much the same way, the food metaphor brings to play the sugar content of wine, as suggested by a set of adjectives (e.g. *croquant, crémeux, moelleux, onctueux*). The most outstanding instantiations are *moelleux* and *crémeux*.

As mentioned earlier, the music terms found in French wine reviews reflect the synaesthetic metaphor TASTE IS HEARING and they all describe the sensations produced by wine on the palate.

3. Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to provide an insight into the lexis of wine and the role of metaphor in articulating wine discourse in the French language. The analysis gives evidence of the striking lexical wealth of winespeak in French and corroborates the idea that metaphor is firmly entrenched in the French wine discourse. The metaphoric configuration of wines in French reviews shows them as people, clothes, objects, buildings, foods and music compositions. We noticed differences concerning the frequency of these metaphors. Corpus data suggest that the metaphor WINES ARE PEOPLE is the most conspicuous inasmuch as it reflects a variety of wine dimensions, including body, balance and age.

We believe that this small scale research contributes to the literature by providing a refined and systematic corpus-based analysis of the range and occurrence of the metaphors employed in French wine discourse.

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