

Introduction: Why Should Applied Linguists Care about Metaphor and Metonymy in Social Practices?

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Metaphor and metonymy are ubiquitous in language and thought (LAKOFF AND JOHNSON, 1980; 2003). These figurative schemes are present in our actions, our conversations in different settings, when we read a newspaper, watch a TV advertisement, or listen to a political debate. In this Special Issue on Metaphor and Metonymy in Social Practices, we present new scholarly studies that have examined why and how people employ metaphors and metonymies in different social contexts.

The study of metaphor and metonymy has a long history within linguistics, philosophy, and literature. Classic rhetoricians sought to define how different figures of speech, or tropes, convey specific types of meanings in discourse, mostly within poetic and literary language. Metaphor, for example, has been traditionally defined as a comparison between two dissimilar objects or ideas, as when Romeo comments that “Juliet is the sun” in Shakespeare’s famous play. In this manner, metaphor highlights the similarity which emerges when two different domains of experience are highlighted. Metonymy, on the other hand, focuses on the part-whole relationship within a single knowledge domain and is fundamentally based

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on contiguity. When the 19th-century English playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote “The pen is mightier than the sword” in his historical play “Cardinal Richelieu”, he mentioned “pen” to refer to the people who use pens, namely authors, while “sword” refers to the people most associated with the use of this weapon, namely soldiers. By giving specific, concrete references to the objects employed by particular people, Bulwer-Lytton gave a more vivid, dramatic expression of his thought than if he had simply stated “Authors are more important than soldiers.”

Metaphor and metonymy have always had a curious relationship within rhetoric, and scholars have continued to struggle how best to define each of these tropes, as well as argue which of the two is more important in literary expression. In the mid-20th-century, Kenneth Burke (1969) famously observed that metaphor is “the master trope,” which relegated metonymy to the position as a lesser cousin of the more powerful metaphor. However, more contemporary scholars now see metaphor and metonymy as both being widely employed in many facets of ordinary discourse, with both tropes having important communicative functions. Both metaphor and metonymy enable speakers and writers to refer to complex ideas and scenarios, using fewer words, which are more imaginable and memorable than if the same thoughts were expressed using literal language.

A major revolution in the study of tropes occurred in 1980 with the publication of the enormously influential book “Metaphors We Live By”, co-authored by the linguist George Lakoff and the philosopher Mark Johnson. Lakoff and Johnson overturned the widely-held belief that metaphor and metonymy were merely “linguistic devices”, or “parts of language”, and advanced the idea that these were fundamentally “figures of thought.” The reason people employ metaphor and metonymy as widely as they do in speech and writing is attributed to the fact that they typically think of many, highly abstract ideas and events in metaphorical and metonymic terms. When speakers utter a conventional metaphor, such as “We have come a long way in trying to solve this problem,” they do so not simply for rhetorical purposes, but because they actually conceive of the problem solving as a physical journey, in which early attempts represent the start of the journey, difficulties encountered in solving the problem are physical obstacles along the journey, and ultimate success in solving the problem is reaching the end-point of the physical journey. This “metaphor of thought” is now characterized as a “conceptual metaphor.” Similarly, the idea that a part

of some domain can be conceived as a salient reminder of the whole (e.g., OBJECT FOR USERS), is a “conceptual metonymy,” which motivates why people can speak of, and readily understand, expressions, such as “The pen is mightier than the sword.” People likely know many hundreds of different conceptual metaphors and metonymies that together make-up a considerable part of human conceptual systems. Once again, rather than being viewed as ornamental aspects of language use, metaphor and metonymy are now widely recognized as significant parts of human thinking processes.

The most important consequence of the “cognitive revolution” in metaphor and metonymy studies is the empirical study of language regarding what it reveals about human thought, as well as cultural and ideological influences on the ways people reason and imagine. A more recent development, one that coincides with the rise of “embodied cognition” theories in cognitive science (GIBBS, 2006), is the recognition that many conceptual metaphors and metonymies are grounded on recurring aspects of bodily experience. When a speaker says “We have come a long way in trying to solve this problem,” the grounding of the metaphor rests with something we physically experience, namely the taking of journeys in life. It is not surprisingly that we often think of abstract ideas in terms of concrete, bodily experience, given that our constant impulse to make sense of the unfamiliar in terms of what we know best in life. The contemporary appreciation of the embodied roots of both metaphor and metonymy also offer new insights into how people think about a wide variety of abstract ideas, including those related to social practices, in embodied ways.

This brief overview of new developments in the world of metaphor and metonymy scholarship provides some sense of the importance of these tropes in understanding the ways people ordinarily think, speak, and write in everyday life. However, work is just now beginning to explore the diverse languages and contexts in which metaphor and metonymy may be observed. Linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, and literary scholars are now studying the extent to which metaphor and metonymy infiltrate human thought and expression about many domains of experience. This special issue of the “Brazilian Journal of Applied Linguistics” provides some compelling examples of this new wave in figurative language and thought scholarship. The studies presented here draw on data from a variety of text genres in many languages, such as English, including its different varieties as spoken in India, Australia and the Netherlands, as well as Brazilian

and European Portuguese, German, Russian, and Japanese. The articles presented in this Special Issue reflect an important trend in contemporary metaphor studies, which seek to gather crosslinguistic empirical data using different research methods. Some of the empirical studies presented here apply corpus linguistic methodologies, such as the Metaphor Identification Procedure (PRAGLEJAZ, 2007), methods for multimodal, film-analytical, and gesture analysis (FORCEVILLE, 2008; MÜLLER, 2008), analysis of metaphorical patterns, focus-group methodology, and metaphor-led discourse analysis (CAMERON et al, 2009). The theoretical frameworks employed encompass several specific proposals, most notably Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Conceptual Integration, Cognitive Semiotics, audio-visual metaphor studies, discursive metaphors, and systematic metaphor and metonymy viewed from a Dynamic Complex Systems perspective. In many cases, we find that the choice of the empirical method depends critically on the particular kind of linguistic data being examined, a development that is clearly in line with many types of data analysis in Applied Linguistics. As pointed out by Cameron (1999, p.3):

“As applied linguists, we are concerned with language use in real-life situations, particularly problematic ones. In general terms, the applied linguistic researcher is aiming to reveal and understand underlying processes of language learning or use, and perhaps to evaluate intervention in them”.

It is not by chance that the first metaphor conference in Brazil in 2002 was hosted by an Applied Linguistics Program, and its results were published in an important Brazilian Applied Linguistics journal (See DELTA's metaphor special issue, published in 2006²). The research presented here begins with the identification of metaphor as a linguistic product in text or different types of discourse and then moves forward to investigate the role metaphor plays in language in use.

Metaphors and metonymies are not only everywhere, but they are performed in different ways: gesture, static, and moving visuals, and other modes of expression. The first chapter, by Müller and Schmitt, claims that metaphors in audio-visual media undergo processes of meaning

² There are two DELTA special issues on metaphor, one published in 2006 and another published in 2010. You can access these issues at <<http://www.scielo.br/pdf/delta/v26nspe/v26nspe02.pdf>>.

making, which are dynamic embodied conceptualizations. Drawing on an interdisciplinary (linguistic and film-analytical) method, the analysis reveals how verbal metaphors, together with specific sensory motor metaphors, interact in the construction of metaphoricity in a TV report broadcasted on a German TV channel about the winners and losers of the financial crisis. The article offers an important contribution to research on audio-visual metaphors (KAPPELHOFF & BAKELS, 2011; CIENKI et al., 2014).

The second article, by Miranda and Mendes, analyzes the role of gestures in the construction of multimodal metaphors in the “political-electoral debate” genre. The authors approached and illustrated the importance of spatial orientation in the emergence of the metaphors in the political discourse. The corpus of the study was a TV broadcasted debate among the two Brazilian presidential candidates in the 2010 elections. This is one of the first studies analyzing metaphorical gestures stemming from Brazilian data. Both studies deal with the analysis of metaphorical and metonymical images and gestures situated in different cultural realities, whose interpretation is context-driven.

Hidalgo and Kraljević’s study of ongoing global and local changing practices explores the interaction between multimodal metaphor and narrative in advertising discourse, making use of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory to compare how social changes are represented and re-contextualized in advertising discourse across time, genres, and cultures. Changes in time and across genres are addressed through the analysis of printed ads from 2000-2002 and internet ads from 2001-2009. The authors also compared the interaction between TRANSFORMATION and MAGIC metaphors and storytelling frames in both genres and periods, paying attention to the variation of a campaign of a global brand (*Coca-Cola*) in three different cultures – India, the Netherlands, and Australia – revealing competing changes in global and local social practices.

Almeida and Souza’s article focuses on a topic of current interest, namely the sports media coverage related to the 2014 FIFA World Cup. These authors analyze monomodal and multimodal metaphors in the Portuguese sports newspaper *A Bola*, specifically those depicting Cristiano Ronaldo on its covers. By applying the theoretical framework of Cognitive Semiotics, more precisely, the Mental Space Network (Brandt, 2004; Brandt/Brandt, 2005), in their analysis, the authors compare conceptual similarities and differences between monomodal and multimodal metaphors in their use

of the source domains of WAR and RELIGION. The results indicate that the source domains of multimodal metaphors appear to be more restrictive in comparison to the possibilities revealed by source domains in monomodal metaphors.

In the next article, Seskauskiene and Valentjeva investigate the metaphoricality inherent within the literary criticism of poetry. This study adopted the Conceptual Metaphor Theory framework to uncover metaphors structuring the discourse of literary criticism in both English and Russian scholarly texts. More specifically, though, the authors employed two different metaphor identification schemes, Metaphor Identification Procedure (STEEN et al., 2010) and metaphorical patterns (STEFANOWITSCH, 2006), to generally show that the main source domain for conceptualizing poetry in literary criticism in both languages is A PERSON. However, this domain is much more prominent in English, whereas the domains of SOUND AND MUSIC, PAINTING, and JOURNEY are more productive in Russian.

Paula and Coelho's article on the motivations for the grammaticalization process of the verb *DANAR*, which is polysemous in Brazilian Portuguese, especially in some regions, claims that a new usage of *DANAR* as a marker of the inceptive aspect with an extension of action is a consequence of a metaphorical cognitive process that involves image schemas of motion and force (LAKOFF, 1987). These schemas have already existed within the concrete meaning of *DANAR*, what justifies that this verb, although not the archetypal aspect marker, could have updated this grammatical category. The database *Corpus do Português*, dated from the 13th Century to the 20th, served as a diachronic *corpus* for this cognitive sociolinguistic analysis. The hypothesis that the verb *DANAR* has become more grammatical in the 21st Century was verified in the social network *Twitter*, as it was aimed at identifying written records with traces of informal orality.

Finally, resulting from the assumption that mainly negative events are expressed by THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT-type metonymy, the next paper reveals the motivations of THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT-type metonymies that express negative events. Metonymies are widely investigated along with the views of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and their oppositional semantic aspects are pointed out by Voßhagen (1999). However, according to the author, no prior study has focused on the nature of THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT-type metonymies from the perspective of negative evaluation, euphemism, and politeness.

Overall, this special issue displays the broad spectrum of crosslinguistic data and methods currently available in the field of metaphor and metonymy studies. More importantly, these articles highlight how cognitive linguistics and applied linguistics converge in the study of contemporary society.

We invite the readers of RBLA to embark on this challenging and hopefully enjoyable journey!

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