

## COGNITIVE THEORIES OF METAPHOR

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Metaphor is currently thought of as a cognitive mechanism, a style of thinking and cognition, rather than just a stylistic element. This paradigm was first put forth by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson in their ground-breaking book "Metaphors We Live By" and it has since been expanded upon and refined in several other studies. This theory's central thesis is that metaphor functions at the level of thought because "our conceptual system is largely metaphorical and our ordinary conceptual systems, in terms of which we both think and act, are fundamentally metaphorical in nature"<sup>1</sup>.

The following are some features of derived from Lakoff's classical theory:

1. All common conventional language is literal; it is not metaphorical. Ordinary language is conventional. Thus, CT is predicated on the literal metaphorical differentiation.
2. Metaphor is characterized as a creative or poetic expression that is employed beyond its typical context to convey a related idea.
3. True or false contingent statements can only be expressed literally.
4. Definitions provided in lexicons are all literal, not figurative.

When two distinct phenomena (objects, events, ideas, or acts) are brought up at the same time by the imposition of some or all of one object's natural characteristics on another, which by nature is devoid of these properties, a metaphor transforms into a stylistic device. Such an imposition typically occurs when the metaphor's author discovers in the two corresponding items certain characteristics that, in his opinion, have some similarity. According to some linguists, it is incorrect to assume that a metaphor is founded on the likeness or affinity of two matching objects or conceptions. The fact that a similarity is highlighted and pointed out between the two objects does not change their identities. The idea of similarity can be taken excessively; for instance, both humans and animals move, breathe, and eat. However, if one of these characteristics, such as movement or breathing, is mentioned in both human beings and animals at the same time, the idea of affinity between the two subjects is not necessarily implied.

Metaphor is defined as "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system" and as "a cognitive mechanism by which one experiential domain is partially "mapped" i.e. projected onto another experiential domain, so that the second domain is partially understood in terms of the first one". An organized set of correspondences between the constituent parts of the "source-domain" and the "target-domain" is known as a cross-domain mapping<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Lakoff. G, Johnson M. Metaphors We Live By. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. - 242 p.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbs.R.W. The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought. – Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2008. – 566p.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson recognized several different categories of conceptual metaphors in their book “Metaphors We Live By”<sup>3</sup>:

The word “structural metaphor” describes how one concept, which is frequently abstract, is metaphorically and structurally organized in terms of another, which is frequently a more visible concept. In this instance, the source domains serve as the target domains' frameworks (e.g. “*Time is Money*”, “*Argument is War*”).

The orientational metaphor is concerned with spatial orientations and “organizes a whole system of concepts with respect one to another”: *Deep-shallow, up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off*.

The ontological metaphor refers to "ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as objects and substances". For example, “*Inflation is an Entity; the Mind is an Entity*” is a form of metaphor where something concrete is projected onto something abstract.

The conduit metaphor is used to describe how communication happens when the addresser inserts his mental concepts (e.g., feelings, thoughts, etc.) into words, phrases, sentences, or other linguistic constructions and the addressee then extracts those ideas. Language is therefore seen as a “conduit” for humans to communicate mental information.

Many researchers also highlight a different category of conceptual metaphors, referred to as container metaphors. The idea of "container" seems to be crucial to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory because it represents physical experience, interpersonal interactions, spatial orientation, etc. According to how the container metaphor works, one conceptual domain is meant to be "in" another conceptual domain. In addition to linguistics, philosophy, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, psychology, sociology, and education have all incorporated metaphor into their research and are now putting it in the spotlight. The fact that Kant elaborated on conceptual metaphor from the perspective of cognition and noted how our language is replete with conceptualized statements that indirectly derive from metaphorization shows how much attention philosophers have paid to metaphor.

Metaphor was considered to be a property of language, not of cognition, in traditional conceptions of language. It was believed that metaphorical expressions and the domain of common everyday language were mutually exclusive: common language lacked metaphors, and metaphors employed mechanisms that were not part of common everyday language. Over the ages, the classical idea has been taken for granted so much that many people were unaware that it was only a theory. The theory was accepted as definitional rather than just being true. According to one definition, a metaphor is a creative or lyrical way of expressing a topic through the use of one or more words that would otherwise have a different meaning.<sup>4</sup>

Novel metaphors make use of the vast system of thousands of cross-domain mappings that characterize everyday metaphors. In modern metaphor research, the term metaphor is being employed differently as a result of these scientific findings. In the conceptual system, a cross-domain mapping is now referred

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<sup>3</sup> Lakoff.G, and M.Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. - 242 p.

<sup>4</sup> Stockwell.P. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2002. - 272 p.

to as a metaphor. A linguistic expression that represents the surface reality of such a cross-domain mapping is referred to as a metaphorical expression.<sup>5</sup>

Consider the following description of a romantic relationship: Our relationship has reached a dead-end. Here, love is viewed as a journey, suggesting that the lovers must turn around or end the relationship completely because it has halted or that they are unable to continue in the same manner. This is not a singular instance. Many common English idioms are founded on the idea that love is a journey, and they are employed not just to discuss love but also to make arguments about it. Some can be interpreted in this way: See how far we've come, while others are inevitably about love. The journey has been arduous and bumpy. We are unable to go back now. We are at a turning point. It could be necessary for us to part ways. There is no escape from the relationship. We're circling around. Our relationship isn't working out. The marriage is failing. We might need to end this relationship. These are common, daily idioms in English. They are not necessarily employed for a particular rhetorical purpose, nor are they poetic<sup>6</sup>.

Johnson and Lakoff developed a method for naming such mappings by use mnemonics that refer to the mapping in order to make it simpler to recall which mappings are present in the conceptual system. Target domain is source domain or target domain as source domain are two common mnemonic names. The mapping in this instance is called LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

#### THE MAPPING OF LOVE AS JOURNEY

- Travelers represent the lovers.
- The automobile and the romantic relationship match.
- The lovers' common goals match their shared travel destinations.
- Difficulties in the relationship match travel obstacles.<sup>7</sup>

**Common Source Domains.** After researching the most popular source domains, it is discovered that the Cobuild Metaphor Dictionary offers the most methodical, thorough analysis. A few more sources are added from the analysis of metaphor research to the list provided by this metaphor dictionary.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Human Body.

- *the heart of the issue*

<sup>5</sup>Croft.W, Alan.D.C. Cognitive Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. - 376 p.

<sup>6</sup> R.Fowler. Linguistic Criticism. London: Oxford University Press, 1996. - 256 pages.

<sup>7</sup> George Lakoff. The contemporary theory of metaphor. England: Cambridge University press, 1992. -46p.

<sup>8</sup> A.Clark. Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997. - 320 pages.

- *the head of the organization*

#### **Health and Illness.**

- *healthy community*
- *you hurt my feelings*

#### **Plants.**

- *The fruit of our love.*

#### **Structures and Building.**

- *She constructed an argument.*

We can also take other concepts as source domains like machines and tools, games and sport, money, cooking and food, heat and cold, light and darkness, forces, movement and direction, and other ones.

**Common target domains.** In the same way as the source domains apply to numerous targets, the targets also have several sources. Target domains are vague, amorphous, and lack clear definition; as a result, they “cry out” for metaphorical conceptualization. Here the most popular target domains and the key sources for them are given.

**Emotion.** “*She was deeply moved*”.

**Desire.** She is *hungry for* knowledge.

**Morality.** I’ll *pay you back for* this.

**Thought.** He *searched for* the memory.

**Society / Nation.** *neighboring* countries

**Politics.** They *forced* the opposition out of the House.<sup>9</sup>

**Personal relationships.** Relationships between people include aspects like marriage, love, and friendship. As examples demonstrate, these and related ideas are figuratively seen as structures, machinery, and plants:

Their friendship is *in full flower*.

**Time.** Time *flies*.

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<sup>9</sup> Chilton.P. Analyzing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice. London: Routledge, 2004. - 240 p.

Other key sources such as *life and death*, religion, events and actions, economy and etc. should be considered too.

In summary, the cognitive theory of metaphor redefines metaphor as a fundamental part of human thought rather than a mere linguistic device. As Lakoff and Johnson explain, metaphors structure our conceptual system through mappings between source and target domains, allowing us to understand abstract ideas via concrete experiences. Everyday expressions such as “Love is a journey” or “Time is money” reveal how metaphor shapes reasoning and communication in daily life.

By classifying metaphors into structural, orientational, ontological, and other types, cognitive theorists highlight the diverse ways humans conceptualize the world. This approach bridges linguistics with fields like psychology, philosophy, and cognitive science, emphasizing that metaphor is central to how we think, act, and perceive reality. Studying metaphor, therefore, is ultimately a study of the human mind and cognition.

### Resources:

1. A.Clark. *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997. - 320 pages.
2. Chilton.P. *Analyzing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, 2004. - 240 p.
3. Croft.W, Alan.D.C. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. - 376 p.
4. Gibbs.R.W. *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2008. – 566p.
5. George Lakoff. *The contemporary theory of metaphor*. England: Cambridge University press, 1992. -46p.
6. Lakoff. G, Johnson M. *Metaphors We Live By*. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. - 242 p.
7. R.Fowler. *Linguistic Criticism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1996. - 256 pages.
8. Stockwell.P. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2002. - 272 p.