

Linguo-Cultural Interpretation of Metaphor in Comparative Linguistics

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Abstract: This special issue examines metaphor in various languages, cultures, and discourses, featuring contributions that demonstrate the breadth and extent of this research topic. The goal is to promote conversation and share views about the function of metaphor in conceptualization, persuasion, and meaning production. This introductory article discusses two key themes: (1) the universality of metaphor and its cultural differences, and (2) the communicative function of metaphor in conversation. We present case studies on universal and cross-cultural variations in metaphor usage, discursive and communicative features of metaphor, and multimodal metaphor. This article summarizes recent research on metaphor from several angles and initiates a methodological conversation in metaphor studies. Finally, we summarize the key findings and suggest a brief avenue for future research.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, analysis, culture, discourse, semantics, notion, communicative aspect.



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INTRODUCTION

Conceptual metaphors have a significant impact on language, culture, and discourse. They form cognitive frameworks that shape our understanding and conceptualization of reality. According to Dolić (2021: 52), conceptual metaphor is the ability to see connections between different phenomena and have a deeper understanding of their relationship. Having discernment allows us to control our linguistic patterns and impact how others perceive our meaning. This collection of papers provides a comprehensive exploration of how metaphor shapes our world, covering historical analysis, computational metaphor power, corpus analysis, political symbolism, cognitive models of emotions, and metaphor functions in different types of discourse. To understand metaphor, it's important to create a theoretical framework that considers both its universal and culturally contingent aspects. This article examines theories and methodologies used in the literature to assess metaphor's role in various discourses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gibbs et al. (2004) suggest that metaphors' universality stems from shared human experiences and bodily feelings. Shared metaphorical extensions can demonstrate how users of various languages use comparable cognitive processes to comprehend and generate meaning (Bartsch 2009).

According to Kövecses (2005), metaphor encompasses multiple dimensions, including linguistic, mental, neurological, physical, and social. Metaphor arises from neurological processes, sensory-motor contacts, and the physical restrictions of the human body, and socio-cultural imagination (Kövecses 2005; Lakoff 1993)

Embodiment theory suggests that our physical experiences and relationships impact our cognitive processes, such as abstract cognition and language (Gibbs 2006, Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Littlemore 2019, Kövecses 2000, Trim 2015).

Embodiment research (Alazameh & Zibin 2022, Bilá & Ivanova 2020, Gibbs 2006, Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Sharifian 2017, Yu 2017) suggests a connection between culture and personal experience. According to Cienki and Müller (2008), the embodiment of a source domain in a conceptual metaphor involves repeating patterns and mappings between form and meaning, rather than a random motion.

METHODS AND RESULTS

Metaphors can vary depending on language, culture, and discourse, emphasizing different components. Metaphoric interpretations may alter based on experience emphasis. Individuals from different geographical and social backgrounds may have heightened awareness of their bodily experiences. According to Musolff (2015), conceptual systems and their metaphorical mappings are culturally acquired, transferred, and mediated, with bodily experiences serving as the universal base.

Cultural backgrounds continue to shape metaphorical language and conversation patterns among humans. Notable examples of cultural variance in metaphor include the origin of sentiments. Most languages identify feelings and emotions with the heart (e.g., English, Russian, Arabic); yet, in certain languages, the liver is thought to be the source of feelings and emotions. Metaphors have cultural, societal, and situational meanings, which are influenced by unique discourse traditions and situational factors. The mental metaphors employed, for example, to describe migration vary depending on sociological, historical, and cultural aspects.

Taylor (2021) found that the appraisal of this metaphor has changed significantly throughout three time periods in the UK. Surprisingly, the earliest time period had the highest number of favorable ratings, but the most recent time period had a decrease in favorable assessments. A historical perspective may be necessary to explain discrepancies in metaphor interpretation and societal attitudes.

These distinctions can explain how people from different socio-cultural backgrounds and historical times use metaphors to convey ideas.

DISCUSSION

A metaphor communicates an alternative perspective on the issue it discusses. This function differs from the metaphor's framing function, which is inherent in all mental structures generated by metaphor (Steen 2017). The function of changing views redirects the reader's attention. The speaker may intentionally use a metaphor, whether traditional or novel, to change the reader's perspective on a topic. The special issue examines metaphor as a subject of study. This collection of nine papers by scholars from diverse theoretical and methodological backgrounds examines universal and cross-cultural variations in metaphor usage, including discursive and communicative aspects, embodied cognition, and more. The issue highlights researchers' efforts to

design, test, and debate strategies for the discipline, including extending existing methods and introducing fresh alternatives.

Two publications are heavily focused on a unique characteristic of metaphor in a given language. The author uses cognitive semantics to analyze the source domain of HIGH BODY TEMPERATURE using Old English literature. Diaz-Vera emphasizes that the usage of metaphorical phrases results in a variety of contrasts. The author adds to the literature on metaphor as an emotional expression by identifying positively loaded target-source pairings, explaining their origin, and emphasizing the impact of socio-cultural factors on Old English writers' lexical and conceptual choices.

Another example of how different cultures and unrelated languages utilize a presumably universal metaphoric concepts is offered by Aseel Zibin, Lama Khalifah and Abdel Rahman Mitib Altakhaineh. Drawing on the theory of Dynamic Conceptual Semantics, the paper provides essential anchoring points for reconstructing the structure of the conceptual domain MADNESS in Jordanian Arabic and American English. The authors propose that the nature of the conceptual domain behind the language patterns, involved in mapping new metaphorical senses of the polysemous complexes, can be pitched at experiential and theoretical levels of concept formation. Their analysis reveals a densely packed network of interconnected metaphors in the two languages.

This is an important finding because it directly concerns the issue of universality of metaphorical conceptualization across different cultures. Four contributions in the special issue focus on the role of metaphor in several discourse types. These articles discuss the versatile functions that metaphor can perform in discourse, which can be scrutinized from different positions. Richard Trim opens this section with a reflection on the role of symbolism in political debate and its interaction with conceptual metaphor in the context of the 2022 French presidency of the European Union and the national presidential election campaign. The author proposes that the core of political argumentation is based on national symbols and the conceptual mappings they embody. Trim's model of figurative language interpretation, with special attention to personal background, political context, cultural history, reference, conceptual metaphor and linguistic metaphor, allows for analyzing the ways the context shapes symbols, metaphors, and their understanding within the framework of identity construction. The most important take-away point here is that extra-linguistic factors play a crucial role in decoding political symbols and metaphors used to frame them since both hide divergent pathways for their adequate interpretations.

CONCLUSION

Metaphor studies is a burgeoning study group with significant success across various subfields. Despite over 40 years of Conceptual Metaphor Theory study (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), new tactics that enhance old methods continue to emerge, as evidenced by the contributions in this special issue. Our writers provide new strategies to supplement established approaches in metaphor research, allowing scholars to address theoretical and empirical challenges from many perspectives. The papers demonstrate the value of working among scholars with diverse methodological capabilities to address hard topics in metaphor studies. This collection aims to expand our understanding of metaphorical mechanisms and contribute to the discussion of their significance across cultures and discourses.

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