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Theoretical Evolution of Metaphor

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Abstract
This article brings together and discusses long-persisting theoretical perspectives that differ in their approaches to the nature and functions of metaphor—starting from Aristotle and his traditional view on metaphor and continuing up to contemporary metaphor theorists, such as Lakoff and Johnson. The aim is to offer insight into how metaphor has evolved from a mere figure of speech residing in literary works alone to a pervasive conceptual phenomenon permeating a wide spectrum of discourse domains.

Key words: Metaphor theory; Figurative language; Traditional view; Contemporary theory

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INTRODUCTION
Of all figures of speech, metaphor has always been a fascinating subject of study for researchers in various fields, including linguistics, politics, psychology, and translation studies. One reason for that may be its capacity to take on different roles in different contexts. For example, Charteris-Black (2005) talks about how politicians commonly use metaphors to advance their political brands, legitimize their political actions, and undermine arguments made by their political rivals. In psychology, on the other hand, metaphors have been found to serve as a transformative tool for facilitating self-change and enhancing well-being (Leary, 1990; McMullen & Conway, 1996). Such are but some of the many functions that no figure of speech other than metaphor seems to have the potential to fulfill.

Its pervasiveness in everyday language and thought is another possible reason why metaphor is especially interesting for research across a wide range of disciplines. As Reijnierse *et al*. point out, "studies investigating metaphor in discourse invariably show that metaphor is indeed a ubiquitous phenomenon in language" (2019, p.302). The following is provided as an example to illustrate how metaphor use is pervasive in discourse:

> A relationship is like a garden. If it is to thrive it must be watered regularly. Special care must be given, taking into account the seasons as well as any unpredictable weather. New seeds must be sown and weeds must be pulled. Similarly, to keep the magic of love alive we must understand its seasons and nurture love's special needs. (Gray, 2003, p.129)

This excerpt contains several instances of metaphorical expressions that describe a husband-and-wife relationship as a garden needing lifelong care and efforts in order to ensure its survival. Given that, what follows is a descriptive overview of some of the key approaches that have long guided empirical research into metaphor. This involves highlighting the assumptions upon which they have been founded, and demonstrating how they have contributed to the study of metaphor as a whole.

Aristotle's Approach to Metaphor
It is a well-established fact that Aristotle initiated and provided the first extended discussion of metaphor. In his *Poetics*, he defined metaphor simply as "giving the thing a name that belongs to something else" (1902, p.21). By this definition, all metaphors involve some kind of transference of qualities from one semantic domain to another, such as the transference of the word *evening* from the domain of darkness to *old age* in Aristotle's exemplary statement '*Old age is the evening of life*'. Additionally,

Aristotle viewed metaphor as a powerful instrument that could be exploited by politicians to persuade and by poets to please. For him, making good metaphors requires a keen sense for resemblance, which is a pure gift only a few have.

As also found in his *Poetics*, Aristotle distinguished four categories of metaphor: (a) genus-to-species metaphor, (b) species-to-genus metaphor, (c) species-to-species metaphor, and (d) metaphor by analogy (1902, pp.19-21). While passing lightly over the first three categories, he considered the fourth category (the analogical metaphor) to be 'the most celebrated' of them all, for it most readily enables the perception and representation of likenesses. Hence, he devoted the remaining bulk of his book to describing it. As he argued, the analogical metaphor arises when there are four signifiers so related that the second is to the first as the fourth is to the third. The example given to clarify this notion was '*Evening is the old age of the day, and old age is the evening of life*'. In this metaphorical statement, there is a resemblance drawn between two different things, namely *old age* and *evening*, on the grounds that both are customarily thought of as constituting the final stage in a course of time.

Aristotle offered no functional distinction between simile and metaphor, but rather considered simile as a sub-species of metaphor. He made this point very clear by stating that:

> The simile also is a metaphor; the difference is but slight. When the poet says of Achilles: He leapt on the foe as a lion, this is a simile; when he says of him 'the lion leapt', it is a metaphor – here, since both are courageous, he has transferred to Achilles the name of 'lion'. (Aristotle, 1902, p.3)

This excerpt shows that, while similes differ from metaphors only in form (i.e., similes contain explicit linguistic markers such as '*like*' or '*as*' to signal their figurative comparisons whereas metaphors do not), the two can be used interchangeably to express analogies.

Richards' Approach to Metaphor

The Aristotelian approach to metaphor remained relatively unchallenged until the publication in 1936 of I. A. Richards' book, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, which, according to Buzila, "revived the profound interest in the research of metaphor after almost two millennia" (2018, p.16). As a literary critic, Richards begins his argument with a critique of Aristotle's conception which has dominated the study of metaphor up until the 20th century, and which, Richards claims, has reduced metaphor to a mere shifting or displacement of words for rhetorical and stylistic purposes. For Richards, however, metaphor is fundamentally "a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts" (1936, p.94). He further posits that "thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom" (ibid., p.94).

Richards' contention that metaphor is not just a matter of language, but also a matter of thought presents a novel approach to understanding the concept of metaphor, one that recognizes the cognitive dimension underlying the process of metaphorization. At the heart of this approach is the notion that metaphors can create and construct resemblances rather than simply reflect already existing ones, which runs counter to the Aristotelian claim that metaphors rest on implied similarities between otherwise dissimilar kinds of things. Another aspect of Richards' approach is his consideration of metaphor as a pervasive phenomenon commonly observed in our ordinary uses of language. He writes:

> That metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language can be shown by mere observation. We cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it, as you will be noticing throughout this lecture. Even in the rigid language of the settled sciences we do not eliminate or prevent it without great difficulty. (Richards, 1936, p.92)

This statement serves to further distance Richards from the Aristotelian view that saw metaphor as "something special and exceptional in the use of language, a deviation from its normal mode of working" (ibid., p.92).

As pointed out above, Richards develops a new approach to metaphor that is distinctly different from the one assumed in the traditional account. In this approach, terms such as *tenor*, *vehicle* and *ground* are introduced to demonstrate how metaphoric meanings are constructed. These terms are explained by Richards (ibid., pp.96-117) as follows: the tenor refers to the subject being metaphorically described; the vehicle is the metaphorical lexis used for description; and the ground is the perceived likeness between the tenor and the vehicle. For instance, in the metaphor '*Relationship is a garden*,' which is featured in Gray's extract at the start of this article, relationship is the tenor whereas garden is the vehicle. The fact that both relationship and garden require constant care and effort to be productive constitutes the ground of the metaphor.

Richards' threefold division of metaphor into tenor, vehicle and ground has become widely discussed and often embraced by various scholars involved in the analysis of metaphor. The terminology has been adopted, for example, by Leech in his *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (1969) to refer to the essential constituents that make up the poetic metaphor. It has also been applied by Soskice (1985) in her exploration of metaphor in religious language use. Richards has not only been lauded for his terminological ingenuity in labeling the different constituents of metaphor, but also for his significant contribution in developing a unique approach to metaphor, one which extends beyond Aristotle's restrictive view of metaphor as nothing more than a dispensable ornament of language, not to be taken seriously.

Black's Approach to Metaphor

Max Black is recognized for making a number of remarkable contributions through his extensive writings on the philosophy of language in general and the philosophical theories of metaphor in particular. However, of all the works which he is known to have written, the most significant has perhaps been his seminal book, *Models and Metaphors* (1962). In this book, Black begins by identifying two views on metaphor, which he terms: the **substitution** and **comparison** views, and which he then debunks in favor of his own **interaction** view.

The substitution view

This view describes metaphor as involving a replacement of a literal expression with a metaphorical one, a replacement that is only useful in expressing a meaning for which there is no exact literal word or phrase available in the language to effectively replace the metaphor. "According to the substitution view of metaphor," Black writes, "the focus of metaphor, the word or expression having a distinctively metaphorical use within a literal frame, is used to communicate a meaning that might have been expressed literally" (1962, p.32). A very similar account of metaphor can be traced back to the 1840s, particularly in Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric*, in which metaphor is defined as "a word substituted for another on account of the resemblance or analogy between their significations" (1845, p.196). As a traditionalist, Whately holds that metaphors constitute a departure from the plain and normal language usage, which is a view consistent with that of Aristotle.

The example Black uses to explain how metaphors are formulated according to the substitution view is '*The chairman plowed through the discussion*'. In this exemplary statement, the metaphorical element *'plowed'* (the metaphor's focus) is thought to serve as a substitute for a literal element with an equivalent meaning, and in order for one to recognize and comprehend the intent underlying its use, they have to replace the focus of the metaphor by a literal counterpart compatible with the remainder of the sentence. The verb '*to plow*' is typically used to describe the digging up of soil or land for the purpose of planting seeds. However, in the example mentioned above, the verb is used with a meaning other than its plain and basic meaning to explain something about the chairman and his behavior during a meeting. Black argues that for the substitutionist this statement is taken to mean "the chairman dealt summarily with objections" (1962, p.30). Dilworth, on the other hand, offers a somewhat literal paraphrase of the metaphor in question as follows, "the chairman's interactions with his committee during the discussion were capable of being seen as representing his plowing through some inert material which offered little resistance" (1979, p.467). A third possible explanation might be that the meeting was challenging (or even dull). Black considers that using metaphor in this way "imposes a meaning richer than usual upon the subject of the sentence" that, if expressed literally, would involve a more extended explanation or, according to the substitution view, deprive the sentence of a decorative ornament lent to it by the metaphor (1962, p.27).

The comparison view

The second classical view that Black discusses draws heavily on Aristotle's conception of metaphor as an implicit comparison based on principles of analogy. To define this view, Black writes, "If a writer holds that a metaphor consists in the presentation of the underlying analogy or similarity, he will be taking what I shall call a comparison view of metaphor" (1962, p.35). This implies that metaphor comprehension relies for the most part on knowledge about the shared attributes that exist between the two elements linked by metaphor. More clearly, a similarity-based metaphor such as '*Richard is a lion*' gains its currency from the knowledge that there is something in common between the two items that are involved in this metaphoric comparison, *Richard* and *lion*.

Black notes that the comparison view has been endorsed and advocated by several 19th-century philosophers, including Alexander Bain—who, in his *English Composition and Rhetoric*, defines metaphor as "a comparison implied in the language" (1867, p.30). Bain lists three purposes that metaphors can serve: (a) to aid the understanding, (b) to deepen the impression on the feelings, and (c) to give an agreeable surprise (ibid., pp.30-31). Like most advocates of the comparison view, Bain sees no difference between similes and metaphors; both are used to express figurative comparisons. The only essential difference lies in the fact that similes contain an explicit semantic marker such as '*like*' or '*as*' to explicitly signal a comparison while metaphors do not. Thus, the metaphorical statement '*Richard is a lion*' is, according to the comparison view, considered to be equivalent in meaning to the statement '*Richard is like a lion*'. This view of metaphor as a condensed simile with the word 'like' or 'as' removed is regarded, from Black's perspective, as a special case of the substitution view in its assumption that metaphorical statements can be replaced by synonymous literal equivalents. For Black, such a view is problematic due to its vagueness in delineating exactly how we are supposed to recognize the relevant similarities in each metaphorical instance.

Having examined both views of metaphor, Black believes that neither the view that metaphor is a mere substitution for a literal expression, nor the comparison view that metaphor is an elliptical simile resting on an implied resemblance between otherwise different kinds of things presents a sufficiently detailed account of the intricate mechanisms and processes underlying metaphor use. He introduces instead what he calls 'an interaction view of metaphor' as an alternative approach to describe

how metaphors actually operate. As will soon become clear, several of Black's ideas have been influenced by the work of Richards.

The interaction view

Black begins his exposition of the interaction view by citing Richards' remark that "in the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor, we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (1936, p.93). Black uses this compelling argument about metaphor as a product of an interaction between two individual thoughts as a point of departure in the formulation of his own version of the interaction view which, he claims, is "free from the main defects of substitution and comparison views" (1962, p.38).

Like Richards, Black breaks down a metaphor into two parts. However, he does not echo Richards' terminology of tenor and vehicle. Instead, he proposes two new terms—namely *principal subject* and *subsidiary subject*—which he describes as more appropriate to denote the two different elements involved in metaphor. Black employs the former to refer to 'what the statement is "really" about' whereas the latter (the subsidiary subject) to what the statement 'would be about if read literally' (ibid., p.47). The example he gives to illustrate this terminology is '*Man is a wolf*,' in which '*man*' is identified as the principal subject and '*wolf*' as the subsidiary.

Central to Black's interaction view is the idea that metaphor functions by transferring to the principal subject 'a system of associated implications,' which typically belongs to the subsidiary subject (ibid., p.44). Such implications, Black argues, are usually comprised of 'commonplaces about the subsidiary subject' (ibid., p.44). Hence, the two subjects in the aforementioned example (*Man is a wolf*) are regarded as representing two distinct systems of associations (i.e., the man-system and the wolf-system), whose interaction with one another is said to reveal new and unexpected analogies and correlations between them. This leads us to infer that just as there are no limits set either on the number of implications that can possibly be drawn or on the multiplicity of correspondences that can plausibly be established between the two systems in question, so there are no boundaries placed on the range of admissible interpretations that a given metaphor can elicit. It can also be observed that Black's interaction view, as it stands, positions the reader as an active participant, whose role is essential, not only in discerning analogies and similarities between two semantically different concepts in a metaphorical statement, but also in making them. This goes against the traditional account, which often asserts that metaphors reflect antecedently available similarities rather than give rise to them. Black's emphasis on the role of the reader in actively creating rather than simply retrieving of already existing affinities is expressed in the following excerpt:

> Now the metaphorical sentence [Man is a wolf] will not convey its intended meaning to a reader sufficiently ignorant about wolves. What is needed so much that the reader shall know the standard dictionary meaning of "wolf"- or be able to use what word in literal sense- as that he shall know what I will call the system of associated commonplaces. (Black, 1962, pp.39-40)

This excerpt shows that the meaning of the metaphor depends on lexical knowledge of the two systems of concepts involved in it. This also includes knowledge of meaning extensions or shifts occurring to either of these conceptual systems.

Reddy's Approach to Metaphor

Another key figure worth considering here is Michael Reddy, whose contribution to the field of metaphor theory has had a lasting impact on today's metaphor research, as acknowledged by contemporary theorists of metaphor (see Lakoff, 1993, p.204). In his most celebrated work, *The Conduit Metaphor* (1979), Reddy develops his own approach to understanding metaphor, in which he argues that language, either spoken or written, acts as a transparent mediational instrument conveying thoughts, feelings, meanings, and ideas from one person to another. What is particularly interesting about the so-called conduit metaphor is the claim that much of what people ordinarily say or write about language is metaphorically structured. To back up this claim, Reddy offers numerous examples of commonly used expressions involving conduit metaphors such as the following: '*getting an idea across*,' '*putting a thought into*,' '*forcing a meaning into*,' '*giving a talk to*,' '*delivering a speech to*,' '*transmitting information over*,' and '*communicating feelings through*'. These linguistic expressions are not meant literally. Obviously, 'ideas,' 'thoughts,' 'information,' and 'feelings' are immaterial things that have no physical presence outside people's minds. In other words, people, when speaking or writing, do not literally '*get ideas across*' or '*put thoughts into*,' nor do they '*transmit information over*' or '*communicate feelings through*'. It is in light of such examples that Reddy demonstrates how language can be thought of as a metaphorical conduit along which ideas, thoughts, feelings, and information flow.

The notion Reddy conceived of conduit metaphor seems to have been founded on four fundamental premises, all of which seek to reveal how language is, to a large extent, represented in terms of metaphors. The first is Reddy's figurative assertion that ideas, thoughts, meanings, and feelings are seen as objects. He found that ordinary language is full of expressions indicating that people normally tend to think of mental phenomena in terms of concrete entities, as can be seen in the following cases: '*inserting thoughts into essays*,' '*putting concepts down on paper*,' '*capturing feelings in writing*,' '*filling paragraphs with meanings*,' '*putting ideas into phrases*,' '*inserting themes into texts*,' '*loading arguments with emotions*,' '*packing ideas in articles*,' '*pouring out*

emotions in writing,' '*grasping meaning from words*,' '*moulding thoughts into words*,' '*finding ideas in stories*,' *and* '*forcing meanings into texts*'. As these instances suggest, there is a tendency in English to characterize ideas, thoughts, feelings, and meanings as objects capable of being formed and then transferred by means of language.

The second premise of Reddy's conduit metaphor involves the representation of words and expressions as containers into which speakers and writers alike insert their mental contents. As Reddy remarks, there exist a large number of conduit metaphor expressions in everyday language to indicate that "words, or word-groupings like phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and so on" are customarily perceived as containers for ideas, thoughts, feelings, and the like (1979, p.287). The following are some of them: '*putting thoughts into words*,' '*placing ideas into phrases*,' '*infusing meanings into terms*,' '*inserting sentences into paragraphs*,' '*finding themes in passages*,' '*cramming words into sentences*,' '*loading paragraphs with statements*,' '*extracting emotions from words*,' '*putting feelings into sentences*,' '*getting information out of articles*,' and '*capturing feelings in words*'. What these expressions show is that "English does view words as containing or failing to contain thoughts, depending on the success or failure of the speaker's "insertion" process" (Reddy 1979, p.288).

Underlying the third premise of the conduit metaphor is Reddy's view that perceives communication as transferring. In this sense, communication functions as the means by which one's mental contents (e.g., thoughts, ideas, feelings, and meanings) are actualized, and thus made available for processing and interpretation by the intended recipient. The following exemplify the kind of evidence associated with this premise: '*transferring thoughts to others*,' '*carrying messages to recipients*,' *'transporting emotions to readers*,' '*delivering speeches to the public*,' '*conveying feelings to people*,' '*transmitting information to viewers*,' '*communicating meanings to listeners*,' '*passing information along to audiences*,' and '*getting messages through to people*'.

The last premise upon which the conduit metaphor is founded looks at listening and reading as extracting meaning from spoken or written symbols. Such a premise is taken from Reddy's argument that the fundamental task of the listener or reader is locating and extracting the intended meaning from the words. Here are some examples to illustrate this premise: '*extracting ideas from texts*,' '*finding thoughts in sentences*,' '*obtaining knowledge from data*,' '*drawing out conclusions from written statements*,' '*taking information from messages*,' '*absorbing meanings behind words*,' '*picking out themes from books*,' '*consuming information from sources*,' '*drawing details from stories*,' and '*getting meanings out of texts*'. These metaphorical uses of language are evidence enough to substantiate Reddy's claim that there is a tendency in English to regard the act of listening or reading as one of absorbing or extracting what has been transferred.

Considered together, the four premises outlined above seem to capture and explain Reddy's major argument about how metaphor shapes the way people feel, think, and talk about language itself. The multitude of examples which accompany each of these aforementioned premises can also be recognized as showing an indisputable amount of evidence to illustrate that conduit metaphor expressions are both prevalent and unavoidable in our everyday language.

As they represent the essence of Reddy's theoretical approach, a simplified version of these four premises has been offered by cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980, pp.10-12). They comment that the conduit metaphor treats communication as a metaphorical process, wherein communicators (speakers or writers) place their ideas or feelings (objects) into words or expressions (containers), which are then transferred (along a conduit) to recipients (listeners or readers) who unpack them to extract the intended ideas or feelings. As such, communication is conceived of as taking place in only one-way transfer from an initiator to a receiver, rather than as a reciprocal (circular) interaction, in which two or more participants influence each other through exchanging their roles as senders and receivers. The remaining part of this paper is devoted to examining and discussing Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work on conceptual metaphor, which has been the most recent significant contribution to the area of metaphor theory.

Lakoff and Johnson's Approach to Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson's approach to metaphor has been the center of wide attention among researchers in the field of metaphor studies since its appearance in the 1980s, not only because of its unconventionality and uniqueness, but also because of its plausibility and robustness. In their (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson set out to undermine the deeply rooted view that describes metaphor as a deviation from the language people ordinarily use or as a sort of artificial decoration restricted to the confines of literary works. Instead, they think of metaphor as fundamentally a pervasive cognitive phenomenon, which can be observed not only in the way people speak, but also in the way they think and act. "The essence of metaphor," in Lakoff and Johnson's view, "is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (ibid., p.6). This view goes further to explain that metaphor can be seen as involving a systematic mapping between two distinct conceptual domains, whereby people can think and talk about one conceptual domain by means of another. These domains are referred to respectively as 'target domain' and 'source domain'. The target domain can therefore be defined as the conceptual domain which is viewed metaphorically in terms of another, conceptually different source domain.

For instance, time and money are generally regarded as representing two separate conceptual domains, i.e., the former typically signifies a period of duration, while the latter an amount of currency. However, despite their semantic differences, Lakoff and Johnson (ibid., p.8) reveal that there is a consistent tendency among English language users to conceive of time (target domain) through aspects of money (source domain), which is evident in the conventional metaphor TIME IS MONEY. This figurative conception of time as money is believed to provide the basis for an extraordinarily wide range of metaphorical expressions such as the following: '*wasting plenty of time*,' '*spending enough time*,' '*costing an hour*,' '*investing a lot of time*,' '*running out of time*,' and '*putting aside some time*,' to mention just a few. The same can be said about argument and war in Lakoff and Johnson's proposed metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. Here, the abstract experience of having an argument is represented in terms of the concrete experience of engaging in war. The following are some common examples of using war-related terminology to speak about arguments: '*winning an argument*,' '*gaining ground*,' '*defending a position*,' '*attacking a weak point*,' '*shooting down a claim*,' '*losing an argument*,' and '*losing ground*' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p.5). It can be seen from the above discussion that conceptual metaphors in Lakoff and Johnson's work are written in capitals. This has become the standard practice in the literature and therefore will be adhered to when presenting conceptual metaphors in what follows.

Lakoff and Johnson have also expounded and exemplified three different kinds of conceptual metaphors: orientational, ontological, and structural, as shown in Figure 1 below.

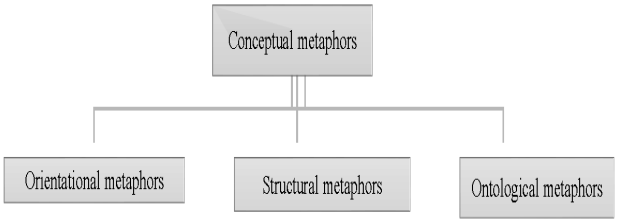

Figure 1
Kinds of conceptual metaphors according to Lakoff and Johnson

Orientational metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson define 'orientational metaphors' as those that give concepts spatial orientations like up-down, deep-shallow, front-back, etc. "These spatial orientations," they further indicate, "arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment" (ibid., p.15). The example provided to illustrate this sort of conceptual metaphors is 'HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN,' in which the concept of happiness is associated with an upward orientation, whereas sadness with a downward one (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.15). Here is a list of common metaphorical expressions that can serve as evidence of the ubiquity of orientational metaphors in language use:

HAPPY IS UP

- Their spirits were *boosted* by the report.
- She always tells him things to *uplift* his spirits.
- The letter has *raised* her morale.
- Doing this always gives me a *lift*.
- He *cheered up* when she came back.

SAD IS DOWN

- Their spirits *sank* when they read the report.
- The boy was *plunged into* despair following the death of his parents.
- He *fell into* a depression soon after quitting his job.
- Loneliness left her feeling miserable and *let down*.
- She is in a *low* mood.

'HEALTH IS UP, SICKNESS IS DOWN' is also offered as a further example of an orientational metaphor drawn from the spatial domains of UP and DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.16). This metaphor is reflected in numerous expressions such as the ones below:

HEALTH IS UP

- She is at the *peak* of her health.
- Her health is on the way *up*.
- He was back *on* his *feet*.
- He remains at the *top* of his health.
- I was in *tip-top* shape.

SICKNESS IS DOWN

- Her health has been *declining*.
- Her health is *going downhill*.
- She was *struck down* by a rare disease.
- He had *come down* with influenza.
- He *fell sick* and could not work.

Based on these examples, it can be noted that orientational metaphors are established in terms of the physical space in which our bodies are situated, and through which our bodies move in a particular direction. That is to say, the association of positive emotions and desirable conditions (e.g., happiness and health) with the spatial dimension of UP and the association of negative emotions and undesirable conditions (e.g., sadness and sickness) with the spatial dimension of DOWN are not arbitrary but rather "articulated in terms of our body's position in, and movement through, space" (Wilson & Foglia, 2011, p.3).

Structural metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson use the term 'structural metaphors' to refer to the kind of conceptual metaphors in which a highly abstract and complex concept is structured and expressed in terms of another clearly identifiable and familiar concept. 'THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS,' 'IDEAS ARE FOOD,' and 'LOVE IS A JOURNEY' are all listed as examples of such metaphors, where the very abstract concepts of theories, ideas, and love are metaphorically structured in terms of the familiar and concrete concepts (i.e., buildings, food, and journey

respectively) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp.45-47). Lakoff and Johnson find that there is substantial evidence in the language for each of these metaphors. As regards the first one, THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS, it is encountered in various everyday constructions such as the following:

THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS

• They *constructed* a new theory.

• They have *supported* their theory with solid arguments.

• This theory is *built* on a solid foundation.

• She used several examples to *buttress* her theory.

• There is ample evidence to *shore up* the theory.

The same phenomenon is observed with respect to the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphor through which a wide variety of metaphorical expressions arise, as the examples below show:

IDEAS ARE FOOD

• The idea is difficult to *digest*.

• Many people found his ideas hard to *swallow*.

• He spent time *chewing* this idea over before making a decision.

• These ideas kept *simmering* in her mind.

Some of their ideas are *half-baked*.

As with the case of LOVE IS A JOURNEY, it is manifested in a large number of expressions, as shown below:

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

• The couple *embarked* on a love relationship.

• Their love affair has finally *come to an end*.

• This love relationship is *going nowhere*.

• After a bout of love, they decided to *go their separate ways*.

• The love relationship has *reached a dead end*.

Ontological metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson define ontological metaphors as conceptual metaphors that give non-physical entities concrete forms. That is to say, such metaphors make it possible for language users to conceptualize abstract notions and intangible entities using material objects and physical entities. Lakoff and Johnson describe ontological metaphors as "among the most basic devices we have for comprehending our experience" (ibid., p.219). They also point to three different sub-types of ontological metaphors: container, entity, and personification, as shown in Figure 2.

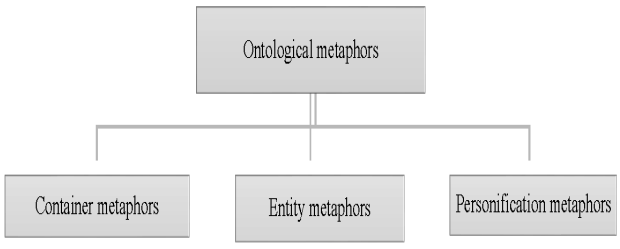

Figure 2
Sub-types of ontological metaphors according to Lakoff and Johnson

a) Container metaphor

In a container metaphor, an abstract concept is represented as having an 'inside' and an 'outside,' thereby capable of holding something else (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The conceptual representation of states as containers is mentioned as one example of how container metaphors are formed, which is instantiated in linguistic expressions like the ones listed below:

STATES ARE CONTAINERS

• They *fell in* love with each other.

• He found himself *engulfed in* despair.

• He could not *get out of* trouble.

• The couple soon *fell into* depression.

• The manager needed advice to *emerge from* this crisis.

Many of the expressions mentioned above are so embedded in everyday language that they are often not regarded as metaphors. Yu argues that the reason that most language users do not recognize them as metaphors is "because the mapping of CONTAINER experience has become one of their inner unconscious mechanisms of thinking" (2013, p.1468). Along similar lines, Chorost says that "the container metaphor is so ubiquitous that it wasn't even recognized as a metaphor until Lakoff and Johnson pointed it out" (2014, p.2). In addition to the states as containers metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson state that there is a pervasive disposition in contemporary English to conceive of activities in terms of containers within which actions are performed, or out of which sensations are accomplished. This is evident in expressions such as the following:

ACTIVITIES ARE CONTAINERS

• I *get* immense pleasure *out of* completing homework assignments.

• Students should *expend* a lot of effort *in* studying for an exam.

• He *gets* a thrill *out of* running in the sand.

• She has no interest in *getting into* teaching.

• They *put* so much energy *into* learning how to speak English.

b) Entity metaphor

In an entity metaphor, an abstract concept is depicted as a tangible, physical entity (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This is different from the container metaphor described earlier, where the dichotomy of *in* and *out* is of primary significance. Lakoff and Johnson cite as an example of this sub-type of ontological metaphors the metaphorical depiction of the mind as a multi-purpose machine, "having an on-off state, a level of efficiency, a productive capacity, an internal mechanism, a source of energy, and an operating condition" (ibid., p.29). This conceptualization is found to underlie a great number of linguistic expressions such as those mentioned below:

THE MIND IS A MACHINE

The man's mind was not *operating*.

It was a shock that caused his mind to *break down*.

This might help their minds *function* better.

I am waiting for my mind to *cool off* so I can think more clearly.

After feeling bored with the news, I *turned off* my mind.

Ontological metaphors like these, say Lakoff and Johnson, "are so natural and so pervasive in our thought that they are usually taken as self-evident, direct descriptions of mental phenomena" (ibid., p.29).

c) Personification metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson regard personifications as perhaps the most obvious sub-type of ontological metaphors, in which a non-human thing or quality is represented in human form. According to them, they are popular, not only in literature, but in everyday discourse as well. This is simply because they enable language users "to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with non-human entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.34). In fact, English is replete with instances of personifications; the following are but a few of them:

• Rising inflation is *eating up* a lot of funds.

• These facts *explain* why women are against wars.

• The annual crime statistics *reveal* some worrying trends.

• The recent demonstrations have *intimidated* political leaders.

• Like other religions, Islam *prohibits* adultery and *punishes* adulterers.

Thus, as it can be seen from the sentences above, the non-human entities (i.e., inflation, facts, statistics, etc.) are personified as humans, capable of eating, explaining, revealing, and so forth. Using personifications in this manner permits us, according to Lakoff and Johnson, "to make sense of phenomena in the world in human terms—terms that we can understand on the basis of our own motivations, goals, actions, and characteristics" (ibid., p.35).

CONCLUSION

This article provided a historical account of the development of the subject of metaphor, highlighting some of the key figures and their approaches as to what constitutes a metaphor. It showed the contrast between the traditionalist perspective, which treated metaphor as a mere linguistic trope used in literary texts to bring about a desired effect, yet devoid of any cognitive content, and the modernist perspective, which saw metaphor as a fundamental aspect of reality that is intrinsic to human thought as well as human language, thus not confined to a specific form of discourse. This shift in perception, which characterizes later theoretical approaches, has led to broadening the context within which metaphor is investigated, as much of the earlier research on metaphor was informed by the traditional view which restricted the use of metaphor to literary modes of discourse.

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