

Place-Name Target Multi-Source Metaphor and Metonymy

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The European Conference on Language Learning 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The paper considers metaphors and metonymies with a place-name-target correlating with two or more source domains at the same time. They are represented by the structure 'A is B, C...', in which both the target and the sources are explicit.

It is argued that the target and the sources in a multi-source metaphor or metonymy are united by means of some common element, which provides their wholeness. The common element that unites a multi-source metaphor into a single entity is to be abstract, this element reflects some generalized quality inherent to all the sources attached to the same target, and this common feature mostly consists in evaluation. Such metaphors are conspicuous and bright. In a multi-source metonymy the uniting element can consist either in evaluating or in individual perception.

Keywords: metaphor, target domain, source domain, multi-source metaphor, multi-source metonymy, evaluation

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Introduction

The process of acquiring and accumulating knowledge is based on the information already known. From the psychological point of view a metaphor originates from the memory of past feelings (Arnold 2005), so that metaphor helps to understand new concepts through the old ones.

Metaphor is a complex phenomenon. Metaphorical studies have a long history originating in the works of ancient philosophers (Aristotle, Cicerone, Quintilian and others), and many approaches to metaphor have been worked out since that time (cf. Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics, et al.). From the second half of the 20th century with the introduction of cognitive approach to language studies they started considering metaphor not as a purely linguistic phenomenon but as a phenomenon of thought which reflects in language, and it has been argued that ‘metaphor plays a central role in thought, and it is indispensable to both thought and language’ (Deignan 2005). Metaphor is viewed as ‘a phenomenon of cognition encoding worldviews’ (Crystal 2006).

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory which originates in the work of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson ‘Metaphors We Live By’ (1980) remains popular. The fact that metaphor helps to understand new concepts through their analogy with the old ones is presented in this theory through the idea of conceptualization: the new phenomena or things (‘the target domain’) are conceptualized through other phenomena or things, which are more familiar and thus more understandable (‘the source domain’). A correspondence of a certain target domain with a certain source domain can be represented by the formula ‘A is B’. Systematic correspondences between the source domain and the target domain are called metaphorical mappings (Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 246). Metaphorical mappings are the subject to scholarly research. It has often been argued that, as a rule, abstract notions are conceptualized through concrete ones. Though metaphorical mapping is not a one-way process, and a thing can be conceptualized through an abstract notion, as well one thing can be conceptualized through another thing, and one abstract notion – through another abstract notion. The process of metaphorical mapping is considered from many sides. Metaphorical mapping is being studied from the point of view of either the source domain, or the target domain, or the both (Lakoff, Johnson 1980; Deignan 1995; Sommer, Weiss 2001; Kövesces 2005; Goatly 2007), researchers are creating metaphor databases of different languages (such as the Metalude, the Master List of Metaphors at Berkeley, and others).

Statement of the Problem

The law of asymmetric dualism is applicable to metaphorical mapping. It is evident that there is no strict correlation of a certain target domain with a certain source domain. One source domain is applicable to different target domains and the one and the same target domain can correlate with different source domains. ‘This is typical of target domains. We use not just one but a number of source concepts to comprehend them’ (Kövesces 2010: 96), we need several source domains to understand a target fully ‘because each source can only structure certain aspects of a target; no sources domain can structure, and thus provide full understanding for all aspects of a target’ (Ibid.: 103).

This paper considers the cases of metaphor when one target domain correlates with two or more source domains at a time: ‘A is B, C...’ and it attempts to answer how and why this could be possible to ascribe different qualities to the same object and what element unites all the sources into a whole complete image. It is argued that the uniting element should be inherent both to the target and to all the sources, thus this element should be abstract. Apart from multi-source metaphors multi-source metonymies with a similar structure are considered.

Material

The material contains 2000 examples of metaphors and metonymies with a place-name representing the target domain. It is a self-collected database the core of which includes metaphors and metonymies from English and American literature of 17-20th centuries. From this database I have picked out 28 metaphors and 8 metonymies in which one target correlates with two or more sources at a time, within the same microcontext (the context of a sentence or a supra-phrasal unit). They account for just 1.8% of the research material (36 examples).

Methods

The method of metaphorical mapping is used. Within each multi-source metaphor separate source-target correspondences are distinguished and considered. The meanings of the nouns constituting the multi-source, as well as the meanings of adjectives-epithets, are considered. When possible the data acquired is compared with of the data of scholar research on basic English metaphors available.

Research

In metaphors of the type ‘A is B, C, ...’ there should be a certain element which provides the wholeness multi-source metaphors. This common feature should be an abstract one. This idea can be illustrated by the bright examples from the research material. There is an example of a multi-source metaphor, ‘the elaborate panegyric of England’ (Dawson, Yachnin 2011: 26):

*This royal **throne** of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty, this **seat** of Mars,
This **other Eden, demi-paradise,**
This **fortress** built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this **little world,**
This **precious stone** set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a **house**
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This **blessèd plot, this earth, this realm, this England,**
This **nurse, this teeming womb** of royal kings,
Feared by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renownèd for their deeds as far from home
For Christian service and true chivalry*

*As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
 Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;
 This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
 Dear for her reputation through the world,
 Is now leased out—I die pronouncing it—
 Like to a tenement or pelting farm*
 (W. Shakespeare, Richard II, Act II, Scene I).

In this description of England (E) one can distinguish the following metaphors: E – THRONE ('*throne of kings*', '*seat of Mars*'), E – PARADISE ('*other Eden*', '*demi-Paradise*'), E – BUILDING ('*fortress*', '*house*'), E – WORLD ('*little world*'), E – JEWELRY ('*precious stone*'), E – HUMAN BEING ('*nurse*'), E – BODY PART ('*teeming womb*'). All the above mentioned metaphors together with a set of ameliorative epithets ('*royal*', '*blessed*', '*dear*', the epithet '*dear*' is repeated four times within the context, three of them it is attributes directly to the description of the land) make a laudable description of England. The many times repeated demonstrative pronoun 'this' underlines the idea of uniqueness.

Each separate metaphor adds some positive quality to the general metaphorical image, which could be considered in more detail:

1. The two metaphorical sources 'royal throne of kings' and 'seat of Mars' of the metaphor E is THRONE imply such qualities as 'royal' and 'celestial', which both represent 'an important status', 'power'. There are metaphors IMPORTANT STATUS is HIGH (Goatly 2007: 35, 85, 343, 375) and POWER = GOOD (Ibid.: 340, 343, 375); and the metaphor IMPROVE STATUS is RAISE (Ibid.: 343) complies with the metaphor GOOD is HIGH (Goatly 2007: 375), and with the orientational metaphor GOOD is UP (Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 17, 19).
2. The two synonymic metaphorical sources '*this other Eden*', '*demi-Paradise*' represent the metaphor E – PARADISE. Paradise is defined a perfect place (Hornby 2000: 918), 'perfect' means 'excellent', 'very good' (Ibid.: 939), which implies positive evaluation.
3. Then comes the metaphor E – WORLD ('*little world*'), implying the qualities 'particular', 'special', 'independent', which are also traditionally considered positive.
4. The ameliorative metaphor E – PRECIOUS STONE conceptualizes England as a stone used in jewelry – rare, valuable, valued (cf. Hornby 2000: 992), which are positive qualities.
5. There are two building-metaphors: E – FORTRESS and E – HOUSE, both implying safety which is also a good feature.
6. England is personified: E – HUMAN BEING, in particular E – NURSE, the metaphor implying the positive qualities 'support' and 'care' which implies 'doing good'.
7. Metaphor of a body part E – WOMB ('*this teeming womb*') implies the qualities 'fertile' and 'abundant' which means MORE, and MORE = GOOD (cf. Goatly 2007: 165).

Thus there is a whole set of source domains ascribing different qualities to the target domain, and all these qualities are united by the idea of positive evaluating.

Within the same context one comes across two metaphors: E – TENEMENT and E – FARM. The source domain TENEMENT implies such negative features as ‘another’s’, ‘alien’, while the source domain FARM, together with the pejorative epithet ‘pelting’, implies such negative qualities as ‘trashy’, ‘worthless’, as the archaic adjective is probably derived from the dialectal word ‘pelt’, which means ‘trash’ (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/pelting>), ‘mean, misery, paltry’ (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/pelting>), ‘Shakespeare may mean a farm subject to the rot of sheep, so call’d, because of skins, or pelts, were the greatest part of the owner’s profit’ (Grey 1754: 59).

Thus the above mentioned Shakespearean metaphor contains 10 conceptualizations of England: one target [England] correlates with 13 sources (one conceptualization can be represented by two sources (such as ‘*other Eden*’, ‘*demi-paradise*’). It appears that by means of the multi-source metaphor of England Shakespeare underlines a contrast between what is the essence of the place, which is good, and what is the current state of affairs, which is bad.

On the whole it is evident that the set of qualities attributed to the same geographical object through making one target [England] correlate with a whole set of sources is united by the idea of evaluation. This metaphor is made very expressive through the diversity of good, positive qualities ascribed to the object. The uniting element of the whole complex metaphor is an abstract quality, namely, positive evaluation.

One more example of a multi-source metaphor:

*... A dismal swamp, on which the half-built houses rot away: cleared here and there for the space of a few yards; and teeming, then, with rank unwholesome vegetation, in whose baleful shade the wretched wanderers who are tempted hither, droop, and die, and lay their bones; the hateful Mississippi circling and eddying before it, and turning off upon its southern course a slimy **monster** hideous to behold; a **hotbed of disease**, **an ugly sepulchre**, **a grave uncheered by any gleam of promise**: a place without one single quality, in earth or air or water, to commend it: such is this dismal Cairo (Dickens, Ch. American Notes).*

Within the metaphor the target Cairo (the town situated in Illinois, the USA) correlates with four sources which represent three conceptualizations: C – MONSTER (‘*slimy monster hideous to behold*’), C – HOTBED (‘*hotbed of disease*’), C – GRAVE (‘*ugly sepulchre*’; ‘*a grave uncheered by any gleam of promise*’). The conceptualizations comply with a whole set of pejorative epithets. Each noun within the context is derived by a derogatory epithet: *dismal* (1. *swamp*; 2. *Cairo*), *unwholesome* (*vegetation*), *baleful* (*shade*), *wretched* (*wanderer*), *hateful* (*Mississippi*), including the elements of the metaphor in question: MONSTER (*slimy*, *hideous*), HOTBED (*of disease*), SEPULCHRE (*ugly*), GRAVE (*uncheered*). The epithets seem to make a kind of a gradation, crowned with the description ‘*without one single quality, in earth, or air or water*’, and the gradation goes well with the framing formed by the epithet ‘*dismal*’.

Each metaphor adds its hues to the gloomy picture of the place painted by Dickens:

1. The metaphor C – MONSTER implies the qualities ‘large’ and ‘ugly’ (cf. Hornby, 824), the negative effect is strengthened with the epithet ‘*hideous*’.

2. The metaphor C – HOTBED is also a pejorative one, as the noun ‘hotbed’ has a negative connotation (cf. Hornby, 629) which is intensified by the definition ‘of disease’.
3. Two metaphors with the source GRAVE (*sepulchre; grave*) implying the idea of death add to the negative effect.

Thus it is evident that negative qualities are attributed to the same object through making one target [Cairo] correlate with the sources united by the idea of negative evaluation.

The two bright examples considered above illustrate the evaluative nature of multi-source metaphor. The abstract element uniting, linking the target and all the sources into a single whole consists in evaluation which can be either positive, or negative, or even contrastive. As is stated above such metaphors are not common, they account for 1.4% of the research material (28 cases), still they are very bright, expressive. They can consist of conventional conceptual metaphors still on the whole each multi-source metaphor is novel and original, as it represents a whole set of qualities at the same time.

Multi-source metonymies are very scarce, they account for 0.4% (8 cases) of the research material. The examples considered have shown that the amount of evaluation can be presented not only in a multi-source metaphor, but also in a multi-source metonymy:

*What’s **Broadway** today? **Pimps, whores, drug-pushers, muggers.** I don’t blame you for running away from it all (Shaw, I. Evening in Byzantium).*

The target domain is represented by the place-name ‘Broadway’ and the source domain – by the nouns naming doubtful occupations of people who are common there according to the narrator. All the named occupations are connected with unlawful activities, and so have a negative connotation (*‘pimps, whores, drug-pushers, muggers’*), thus these names adhere negative evaluation to the place-name-target. In this case the elements of metonymy are united by the idea of negative evaluation.

Still even a small amount of research material has shown that a multi-source metonymy is not always evaluative:

*The cars streamed past him, or stood parked in rows. **America** was **all cars and newspapers** (Galsworthy, J. A Modern Comedy. The White Monkey).*

Here the impression of a personage, an Englishman, of visiting America is shown. For him America seems saturated with cars and newspapers. Thus the double-source of the metonymy is presented by names of objects which seem to be excessive, though there is no direct evaluation as there are no evaluative words. This double-source metonymy is united into a single whole not by the idea of evaluation but by the idea of an individual’s impression.

Conclusion

Thus the research has shown the following: 1) multi-source metaphors and metonymies give a complex characteristics of the target, 2) multi-source metaphors, as well as multi-source metonymies, are rare; 2) multi-source metaphors and metonymies are very expressive, they intensify of a certain quality or idea; 3) there should be a uniting element in a multi-source metaphor or metonymy which would 'gather' the target and all the sources into a single whole; 4) in a multi-source metaphor the uniting element is abstract, it consists in evaluating; 5) in a multi-source metonymy the uniting element does not necessarily consist in evaluating, it can also consist in expressing individual perception.

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