



CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR AND TRADITIONAL VIEWS

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ABSTRACT

Linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson started a new revolution in the field of cognitive linguistics which was their Cognitive Theory of Metaphor, henceforth (CTM), in their book “Metaphor We Live By” (1980). The basic tenet of this theory is that metaphor lies in thought not just in language as was understood for two millennia according to the traditional views of metaphor, which implies that metaphor is a figurative or literary device which is only used in poetic language aesthetically to ornament the speech.

They emphasized that metaphor is a matter of experience or everyday life rather than just a matter of words.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor

الاستعارة الادراكية والاراء التقليدية

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كلية الاداب / قسم الترجمة

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة التحول الذي بدأه العالم اللغوي جورج لاکوف والفيلسوف مارك جونسون في حقل علم اللغة الادراكي وهو النظرية الادراكية للاستعارة في كتابهما "الاستعارة التي نحيا بها" (1980). اذ كان العمود الأساسي لهذه النظرية ان الاستعارة جزء لا يتجزأ من فكرنا ولا تقتصر فقط على الاستعمال اللغوي كما كان مفهوما شائعا وفقا للاراء التقليدية عن الاستعارة ما يقارب الالف عام وان الاستعارة وسيلة أدبية او بلاغية يقتصر استعمالها على الشعر والادب لتجميل الكلام. فقد اكد العالم ان الاستعارة هي نمط فكري تلون حياتنا اليومية وتساعدنا على التعبير عن انفسنا والعالم بطريقة مفعمة بالحياة.
كلمات مفتاحية: الاستعارة ، الادراكية

Historical Background:

Metaphor in written language dates back to the earliest surviving writings. From the Epic of Gilgamesh we have:

My friend, the swift mule, fleet wild ass of the mountain, panther of the wilderness.

In this example, the friend is compared to a mule, a wild ass, and a panther to indicate that the speaker sees traits from these animals in his friend (www.1.2007:2).

Even before this example, it is arguable that the stylized cave paintings in the Chauvet-pont-d'arc caves in southern France are form of visual metaphor. Their highly stylized animal shapes evoke hierarchical relationships and human connections that are not part of the literal depiction (ibid.).

The first writers to discuss metaphor were the Greek philosophers. The word 'metaphor' originally comes from Greek *metapherein*. The Greek etymology is



from *meta*, implying “a change” and “*pherien*” meaning “to bear, or carry”. Amusingly, in modern Greek the word metaphor is used to refer to a cart or trolley; thus visitors to Greek airports will find themselves using metaphor to carry their luggage (ibid.).

Any serious study of metaphor is almost obliged to start with works of Aristotle whose discussion of the issues, principally in the *Poetics* and in the *Rhetoric*, have remained influential to this day. He believed metaphors to be implicit comparisons, based on the principles of analogy, a view that translates into what is generally called the comparison theory of metaphor. As to their use, he believed that it was primarily ornamental (Ortony, 1979: 3).

A more contemporary influence on the theoretical study of metaphor was that of I.A. Richards (1936b cited in Ortony, 1979: 3) in which he proposed a set of useful terms for talking about metaphor which consist of two terms (topic or tenor, the vehicle) and the relation between them (the ground). He also proposed the tensive view – a view that emphasized the conceptual incompatibility between the terms in a metaphor (the topic and the vehicle), calling it the tension (ibid.; Gibbs, 1994: 211).

More recently, Max Black touches on the development of the interaction theory of metaphor, a theory whose germs can be found in the work of Richards (1936a), but which was first articulated in detail by Black (1962b cited in Ortony, 1979: 4). He now seeks to specify the theory in terms that are not themselves metaphorical. He restricts his discussion to metaphors that he considers to be theoretically interesting, “vital” metaphors (Ortony, 1979: 4). Black’s conclusions that metaphors are recognized by users of the language in particular contexts, places metaphor in the domain, not of semantics – the study of meaning – but of pragmatics – the study of speech acts and the contexts in which they occur. Black believes that some metaphors can function as “cognitive instruments”. This notion is a more (less metaphorical) idea than his earlier claim that metaphors can create similarities that previously were not known to exist. He argues that some metaphors permit us to see aspects of reality that they themselves help to constitute (Ortony, 1979: 5; Gibbs, 1994: 233).

Up until the late 1970s and the 1980s, Conceptual Metaphor, henceforth (CM), was considered by most linguists and scholars to be an abnormal part of speech, a poetic flourish that was merely decorative language.

Indeed, metaphors were generally seen as novelties, which are used for specific rhetorical purposes. Metaphor, it was thought, got in the way of conventional language and the “literal” world, which could be comprehended fully without metaphor. Linguists such as John R. Searle felt that metaphors could only be understood by starting with the literal meaning, then comparing it to the figurative



meaning, creating a literal figurative split that later linguists would rebuke (Ortony, 1979: 64; Saffer, 2005: 4).

Definitions of Conceptual Metaphor:

As is known, the problem of clearly defining the concept of metaphor in the West dates back to the Greek school of rhetoric. Aristotle, for example, points out the substantial contradiction in considering metaphor as being, on the one hand a deviation from daily usage and, on the other, a typical facet of everyday speech (Shunnaq, 1998: 189). Aristotle defines metaphor in his book *Poetics* as follows:

“Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on the ground of analogy” (Gibbs, 1994: 210).

For Richards, metaphor is more than a figure of speech that is used for stylistic effect in a speech or an essay; he sees metaphor as the use of one reference to a group of things that are related in a particular way in order to discover a similar relation in another group. Our thought process, then, is metaphoric. When we attribute meaning, we are simply seeing in a context an aspect similar to that encountered in an earlier context (Foss et al., 1985: 33).

For Newmark (1982: 84; 1988: 104), metaphor means a comprehension or similarity of some or more of the features of two unlike lexical items that have at least a partial resemblance. He also sees it as referring incidentally to resemblance, a common semantic area between two, more or less similar things the image and the object.

The first scholarly definition to the CM was by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5) in which they stress the element of experiential nature: “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”.

Lakoff (1987: 417) extends his definition of conceptual metaphor referring to the knowledge structured in such a skeletal schema as idealized cognitive models (ICMs). For him: “Metaphor is an experientially based mapping from an ICM in one domain of experience onto an ICM in another domain of experience”.

Lakoff and Turner (1989: 1) define metaphor as “a tool so ordinary that we use it unconsciously and automatically with so little effort that we hardly notice it. It is omnipresent: metaphor suffuses our thoughts, no matter what we are thinking about. It is accessible to everyone: as children, we automatically, as a matter of course, acquire a mastery of everyday metaphor. It is conventional: metaphor is an integral part of our ordinary everyday thought and language. And it is irreplaceable: metaphor allows us to understand ourselves and our world in ways that no other modes of thought can”.

Lakoff (1993: 4) focuses on the conceptual nature of metaphor and its hierarchical structure. He argues that metaphor as a phenomenon involves both conceptual



mapping and individual linguistic expression (see the distinction between conceptual metaphor and linguistic expression in 3.7). It is important to keep them distinct, since it is the mappings that are primary.

Emphasizing the dimension of (embodiment) of linguistic meaning and hence of metaphor, Johnson (1998: 211 cited in Salih, 2006: 24) defines metaphor as “conceptual metaphors are mappings of structure from one domain of experience (the source) onto another domain of a different kind (the target). Source domains are typically grounded in our bodily experience and are used to structure our more abstract concepts”.

Other definitions are taken from the website:

Metaphor is to be understood as any mapping between normally separate conceptual domains. The purpose of this mapping is to structure an abstract, unfamiliar, or unstructured domain (the target) in terms of one that is more concrete, familiar, or structured (the source) (Travers, N.D.: 1).

Metaphor is also defined as a linking of two conceptual domains, the ‘source’ domain (henceforth SD) and the ‘target’ domain (henceforth TD). The source domain consists of a set of literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships, linked semantically and apparently stored together in the mind. The ‘target’ domain tends to be abstract, and takes its structure from the source domain, through the metaphorical link, or ‘conceptual metaphor’. Target domains are therefore believed to have relationships between entities, attributes and processes which mirror those found in the source domain. At the level of language, entities, attributes and processes in the target domain are lexicalized using words and expressions that are sometimes called ‘linguistic metaphor’ or ‘metaphorical expressions’ to distinguish them from conceptual metaphors (Deignan, 2005: 1).

Kuhn (1993: 539 cited in Travers, N.D.: 1) has referred to metaphor as all those processes in which the juxtaposition either of terms or of concrete examples calls forth a network of similarities which help to determine the way in which language attaches to the world.

Types of Conceptual Metaphor:

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 139) draw a distinction between two major types of metaphor according to their cognitive function:

1. **Conventional Metaphor:** metaphors that structure the ordinary conceptual system of our culture, which is reflected in our everyday language. This type includes three subtypes:

a. Structural Metaphor: It is one concept that is metaphorically structured in terms of another (ibid: 14) as in:

I lost a lot of time when I got sick.

He’s living on borrowed time.

You don’t use your time profitably. (ibid: 8)



a. **Orientational Metaphor:** This kind of metaphor does not structure one concept in terms of another but instead organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another. It is called so since most of the metaphors have to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral as in:

HAPPY IS UP, which leads to English expressions like

"I'm feeling up today".

Such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary. They have a basis in our physical and our cultural experience. Though the polar oppositions up-down, in-out, etc. are physical in nature, the orientational metaphors based on them vary from culture to culture. For example, in some cultures, the future is in front of us, whereas in others it is in back (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 14).

These metaphorical orientations have physical bases:

HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP, SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN.

He's at the peak of health.

He's in top shape.

He dropped dead.

c. **Ontological Metaphor:** Ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances. They are provided by our experiences with physical objects (especially our bodies) (ibid: 25). They serve various purposes, for example:

i. Referring:

We are working towards peace.

ii. Quantifying:

It will take a lot of patience to finish this book.

iii. Identifying Aspects:

I can't keep up with the pace of modern life.

2. **Imaginative Metaphors:** They are outside our conventional conceptual system, metaphors that are imaginative and creative. Such metaphors are capable of giving us a new understanding of our experience. Thus, they can give new meaning to our past, to our daily activity and to what we know and believe (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 139).

Lakoff and Turner (1989: 80, 83) argue that conventional metaphors can differ in level: metaphors at the specific level have fixed ontological mappings, while metaphors, at the generic level guide but do not precisely specify the ontological mappings. In a metaphor like LIFE IS A JOURNEY there is a designated ontological mapping: a certain list of slots in the JOURNEY schema maps exactly one way onto a correspondence list of slots in the LIFE schema (e.g. DESTINATIONS correspond to LIFE GOALS).



We shall refer to this metaphors as “specific level metaphors”, but metaphor as EVENTS ARE ACTIONS is referred to as “generic-level metaphors” since the mapping consists not in a list of fixed correspondences but rather in higher orders constraints on what is an appropriate mapping and what is not. Conventional specific-level metaphors will be referred to as “basic metaphor” when there is no interest in contrasting them with generic-level metaphors (ibid: 80).

There are other types of metaphor taken from the website; they are as follow:

- An extended metaphor is one that sets up a principal subject with several subsidiary subjects or comparisons as in this example from William Shakespeare’s (As you like it 2/7):

All the world’s stage

And all the men and women merely players

They have their exits and their entrances;

The world is described as a stage and then men and women are subsidiary subjects that are further described in the same context (www.1, 2007: 3).

- A mixed metaphor is one that leaps; in the course of a figure, to a second identification inconsistent with the first one as in:

“Clinton stepped up to the plate and grabbed the bull by the horn.”

Here, the baseball and the activities of a cowboy are implied. (www.1, 2007: 3).

- An absolute or paralogical metaphor (sometimes called an antimetaphor) is one in which there is no discernible point of resemblance between the idea and the image as in:

“The coach is the autobahn of the living room.”

- A complex metaphor is one which mounts one identification on another as in:

“That throws some light on the question.”

Throwing light is a metaphor and there is no actual light.

- A compound or loose metaphor is one that catches the mind with several points of similarity as in:

“He has the wild stag’s foot.”

This phrase suggests grace and speed as well as daring (ibid: 3).

- A dormant metaphor is one which in its contact with the initial idea it denotes what has been lost as in:

“He was carried away by his passions.”

Here, it is not known by what the man was carried away.

- An implicit metaphor is a less direct metaphor in which the tenor is not specified but implied as in:

“Shut your trap!”

Here, the mouth of the listener is the unspecified tenor.

- A submerged metaphor is one in which the vehicle is implied, or indicated by one aspect as in:



“My winged thought.”

Here, the audience must supply the image of the bird (ibid: 4).

- A simple or tight metaphor: is one in which there is only one point of resemblance between the tenor and the vehicle, as in:

“Cool it.”

In this example, the vehicle, cool, is temperature and nothing else, so the tenor “it” can only be grounded to the tenor by one attribute (ibid: 4).

- A root metaphor “is the underlying personal attachments that shape an individual’s understanding of a situation. It is different from the previous types of metaphor in that it is not an explicit device in language but merely a part of comprehension. Religion is considered the most common root metaphor since birth, marriage, death and other life experiences can convey a very different meaning to different people based on their level or type of religions adherence”.

- Dead metaphors as Kövecses (2002: ix cited in Shokr, 2006: 96) states “metaphors that have been alive and vigorous at some point and have become so conventional and common place with constant use that by now they have lost their vigor” (ibid: 96). An example is: “money”, so called because it was first minted at the temple of Juno Moneta. Dead metaphors by definition, normally go unnoticed; people are typically unaware of the origin of words. For instance, “consideration” is a metaphor meaning “take the star into account”, “gorge” means throat, and so forth for thousands more” (www.1, 2007: 3).

Functions of Metaphors:

1. **They enliven ordinary language.** People get so accustomed to using the same words and phrases over and over, and always in the same ways, that they no longer know what they mean. Creative writers have the power to make the ordinary strange and the strange ordinary, making life interesting again (Kopp, 1998: 3).

2. **They are generous to readers and listeners; they encourage interpretation.** When readers or listeners encounter a phrase or word that cannot be interpreted literally, they have to think or rather, they are given the pleasure of interpretation. If one writes “I am frustrated” or “The air was cold”, one gives his readers nothing to do... they say “so what?” On the other hand, if one says, “My ambition was Hiroshima, after the bombing”, the readers can think about and choose from many possible meanings (Kopp, 1998: 3).

3. **They are more efficient and economical than ordinary language; they give maximum meaning with a minimum of words.**

4. **They create new meanings; they allow you to write about feelings, thoughts, things, experiences, etc. for which there are no easy words; they are necessary.** In writing poems, one will often be trying to write about subjects,



feelings, etc., so complex that one has no choice but to use metaphors. Therefore, it is an indispensable tool to interpret life experiences (Brooks and Warren, 1972: 322; Kopp, 1998: 3).

5. **They are a sign of genius.** Aristotle says in his POETICS: Metaphor is “a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilar” (Kopp, 1998: 4).

The Cognitive Turn:

Until quite recent times, metaphor was seen by most linguists, philosophers, and other researchers of language as a linguistic oddity, lying outside the center of their daily occupations. Metaphor was deviant, improper, *uneigentlich* (Steen, 1994: 3). It was regarded as “fancy language” used by poets, politicians, or people, otherwise mentally unbalanced.

As a consequence of its alleged odd status, metaphor was not deemed worthy a place at the core of linguistics. Its study was hence mainly left to the literary critics (Steen, 1994: 3).

At the end of 1970s, however, landmark publications such as Ortony (1979), Honeck and Hoffman (1980), and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) completed what may be called the ‘cognitive turn’ in metaphorology. From ‘the resurgence of metaphor’ through its promotion to a position as the ‘figure of figures’, ‘the ubiquity of metaphor’ can be arrived at. It is a cognitive mechanism, ‘helping in the construction of a conceptual world with its own laws’ (ibid: 3).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. It has been found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (ibid.: 3).

But our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of:

In most of the little things we do everyday, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by looking at language. Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3)

This cognitive approach to metaphor has grown into one of the most exciting fields of research in the social sciences, with psychologists, leading the way for cognitive linguists, anthropologists and poeticsians (Steen, 1994: 3).



The most provocative linguistic account of metaphor that has emerged from the cognitive turn is that of George Lakoff and his colleagues. Their's is a radical departure from the position that metaphor is a figure of speech. Instead, Lakoff (1986a cited in Steen, 1994: 6) argues that metaphor is a figure of thought. Figures of speech are just a surface manifestation of such metaphorical figures of thought, and indeed, figures of thought can be expressed by other means than language (ibid.: 6). Thus, linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson, started the cognitive linguistics revolution when they wrote the innovative and mind-expanding book 'Metaphors We Live By' (1980). They said: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 5). This definition is favoured for a number of reasons:

1. It recognizes that metaphor is capturing the essential nature of an experience.
2. The definition acknowledges that metaphor is an active process which is at the very heart of understanding ourselves, others and the world about us.
3. Metaphor need not be limited to verbal expressions. A metaphor can include any expression or thing that is symbolic for a person, be that nonverbal behaviour, self produced art, an item in the environment, or an imaginative representation. In other words, whatever a person says, sees, hears, feels or does, as well as what s/he imagines can be used to produce, comprehend and reason through metaphor (Tompkins and Lawley, 2006: 2).

Ortony (1993: 622) identifies three characteristics of metaphors that account for their utility: "vividness, compactness and expressibility". In short, metaphors carry a great deal of abstract and intangible information in a concise and memorable package.

In addition, there is a fourth property, and it is the one which most impacts the way students learn. "Because metaphors describe one experience in terms of another, they specify and constrain our way of thinking about the original experience, the way it fits with other experiences, and the actions we take as a result" (Tompkins and Lawley, 2006: 2).

The Cognitive Theory of Metaphor:

On various traditional views, metaphor is, as mentioned earlier, a matter of unusual language, typically novel and poetic language, that strikes us as deviant, imaginative, and fanciful. Metaphor is studied and theorized about for over two millennia. Unfortunately, most scholars have been led astray by the Literal Meaning Theory and related doctrines (Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 135-136).

However, researchers have argued instead that metaphor is a conceptual matter, often unconscious, that underlines everyday language as well as poetic language.

It is true that the word "metaphor" is used in a nontraditional way. The reason behind using the word this way is to reflect the claims about the nature of all those



poetic expressions that have traditionally been called metaphors. To accept the traditional use of the term would be to accept the traditional theories that guided that use of term. As the understanding of the nature of metaphor changes, so the use of the term must change to accommodate what have been learned (ibid: 138).

It was Reddy in his essay "The Conduit Article" (1979) who first demonstrated by linguistic analysis that ordinary English is mainly metaphorical and that metaphor is used to conceptualize the world. Metaphor is used to reason with and thus people base their actions on it. A word, image, or sound used metaphorically is likely to be drawing upon a complex web of associations that reflect how people think and feel about a concept (Ortony, 1979: 284; Saffer. 2005: 5; Travers, N.D.: 2).

The fundamental tenet of the cognitive or conceptual or more recently Contemporary Theory of Metaphor as it is called by Lakoff (1993) is that metaphor operates at the level of thinking.

Bailey (2003) stated that man talks about things the way he conceives of them, and this is grounded in experiences and cultures; man's basic conceptual system "is fundamentally metaphoric in nature". In particular terms,

this theory of cognition and language provides for two levels of metaphor: conceptual metaphor and linguistic metaphor. The former is superordinate, epistemic and semantic mappings that take the form of TARGET DOMAIN IS/AS SOURCE DOMAIN. The latter is motivated by conceptual metaphors and are the realizations that appear in everyday written and spoken forms.

For example, the conceptual metaphor LIFE (target) IS A JOURNEY (source) motivates common linguistic metaphors such as:

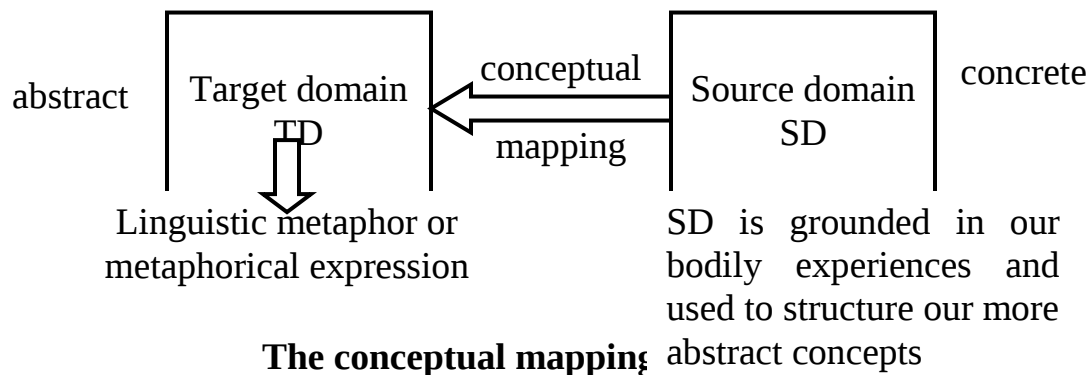
We're on the right (wrong) track (path).

We've come too far down this road to turn back now.

He's looking for a change of direction.

(Bailey, 2003: 1)

Great many more typical everyday expressions as well as more elaborate extensions occur in poetic language. It is from those linguistic instances that the existence of a wide range of conceptual forms can be hypothesized. All the previous expressions use different words and if metaphor were no more than a linguistic device it would not be possible to talk about them as essentially the same metaphor (Bailey, 2003: 1). The following figure illustrates how conceptual mapping takes place:



It is a prerequisite to any discussion of metaphor that one draws a distinction between basic conceptual metaphors, which are cognitive in nature, and particular linguistic expressions of these conceptual metaphors. Thus, though a particular poetic passage may give a unique linguistic expression of a basic metaphor, the conceptual metaphor underlying it may nonetheless be extremely common (Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 50).

Any discussion of the uniqueness or idiosyncrasy of a metaphor must therefore take place on two levels: the conceptual level and the linguistic level. A given passage may express a common conceptual metaphor in a way that is linguistically either commonplace or idiosyncratic (ibid.: 50). An idiosyncratic conceptual metaphor is another matter. By its very nature, it cannot yet be deeply conventionalized in our thought, and therefore its linguistic expression will necessarily be idiosyncratic in at least some respect. Modes of thought that are not themselves conventional cannot be expressed in conventional language. In short, idiosyncrasy of language may or may not express idiosyncrasy of thought but idiosyncratic thought requires idiosyncratic language (ibid.: 50).

Kovecse (cited in Tompkins and Lawley, 2006: 2) compares the traditional and new Cognitive Linguistic views of metaphor as in the following table:

No	TRADITIONAL VIEW	COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC VIEW
1	Metaphor is a property of words; it is a linguistic phenomenon.	Metaphor is a property of concepts and not of words; it is a conceptual phenomenon.
2	Metaphor is used for some artistic and rhetorical purpose	The function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts.
3	Metaphor is based on a	Metaphor is based on a set of



	resemblance or similarity between two entities that are compared and identified.	correspondences or mappings between constituent elements.
4	Metaphor is a conscious and deliberate use of words and you must have a special talent to do it well.	Metaphor is used effortlessly and automatically in everyday life by ordinary people.
5	Metaphor is a figure of speech that we can do without; we use it for special effects	Metaphor is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning.

Kovecses' comparison between the traditional and the cognitive view of metaphor in Tompkins and Lawley (2006: 2)

However, it can be shown that Kovecse (2002 – cited in Salih, 2006: 25) has not mentioned an important feature that characterizes both theories, that is disembodied (traditional view) vs. embodied (cognitive view).

To add, psychological research conducted since the 1970s has shown that metaphors are omnipresent in everyday discourse. Moreover, they are in most cases easily understood and produced. Gibbs (2005: 45 cited in Wisniewski, 2008: 1) argues that numerous research results show that perception and comprehension of metaphors do not require more time than understanding statements deprived of any metaphorical expressions.

Gibbs (1994: 1) argues that “Human cognition is fundamentally shaped by various poetic or figurative processes. Metaphor, metonymy, irony, and other tropes are not linguistic distortions of literal mental thought but constitute basic schemes by which people conceptualize their experience and the external world.”

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 117) argue that a basic domain of experience is structured within our experience that is conceptualized as what we have called an *experiential gestalt* which are natural kinds of experience. They are *natural* in the following sense: These kinds of experiences are a product of:

“Our bodies (perceptual and motor apparatus, mental capacities, emotional makeup, etc.).

Our interactions with our physical environment (moving, manipulating objects, eating, etc.).

Our interactions with other people within our culture (in terms of social, political, economic, and religious institutions).”

In other words, these “natural” kinds of experience are products of human nature. Some may be universal, while others will vary from culture to culture (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 117; Gibbs, 1994: 203).



Steen (1994: 7) argues that “Lakoff (1987a) approaches understanding one of the basic objects of study for psychology in terms of gestalt, whence experience, perception and categorization are linked”.

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