ESSAYS ON METAPHOR IN LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

(Ensaios sobre a Metáfora na Linguagem e no Pensamento)

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In October of 2002, a group of researchers and students met at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUC-SP – (Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil) for the Conference on Metaphor in Language and Thought, promoted by the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Lingüística Aplicada e Estudos da Linguagem (Post-Graduate Programme in Applied Linguistics and Language Studies) and by GEIM – Grupo de Estudos da Indeterminação e da Metáfora (Group of Studies on Indeterminacy and Metaphor).[1]

The essays in this book are revised versions of papers presented in the conference which resulted in two other publications under preparation. The first, entitled "*Confronting Metaphor in Use: An Applied Linguistic Approach*", is being organized by Mara Sophia Zanotto (PUC-SP), Lynne Cameron (Univ. of Leeds) and Marilda Cavalcanti (UNICAMP), and the second, entitled "*Metaphor in Applied Linguistics*" (provisional title), is being organized by Mara Sophia Zanotto (PUC-SP), Solange Coelho Vereza (UFF) and Maria Isabel Asperti Nardi (UNESP-Marília), the same editors of the present volume.

The five-day conference[2] consisted of non-simultaneous activities: plenary talks, round tables, workshops and individual papers. This resulted in an intense and productive interaction among the participants.

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1   The GEIM is coordinated by Mara Sophia Zanotto, from PUC-SP.
2   The conference was only made possible through the financial support of FAPESP (The State of S. Paulo's funding organization)

The theme of the book is the conference theme: Metaphor in Language and Thought, which refers to a recent discussion in the area of metaphor studies. While in the 70's there was a dramatic increase in the interest in metaphor, more evident in cognitive psychology and philosophy (some of the most representative work of this decade was published in Ortony (1979), in the 80's, research on metaphor gained even more impetus with the publication of Lakoff & Johnson's seminal book – *Metaphors We Live By* – which launched an innovative research agenda. Their proposal is still a paramount theoretical framework for studies on metaphor and, according to Gibbs (1999), it contributes for the status of metaphor as one of the most relevant contemporary research topics.

The central proposal of Lakoff & Johnson's research program is that the systematicity of conventional metaphor expressions constitutes "an important source of evidence for the idea that people think metaphorically" (Gibbs, 1999:42). According to Gibbs, it was this proposal which led metaphor to become a central issue in research in Human and Social Sciences in the last 15 years.

Lakoff and his followers have given more attention to metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon than to its linguistic manifestations. For this reason, some researchers, such as Raymond Gibbs and Gerard Steen, have recently raised questions regarding the interaction between metaphor in thought and metaphor in language. The central issue in this debate is whether the fact that people use metaphor in language indicates that they are thinking metaphorically. This fundamental question has motivated other related questions which concern the interface "metaphor in language and metaphor in thought", the theme of the conference.

Some of the questions raised concern how metaphors are originated; the role of people's embodied experiences in the arising of metaphors; how metaphor in thought might influence metaphor in language, and whether metaphor may help to structure the way a concept is mentally represented. Gibbs (1999:44) emphasizes that "metaphor scholars should recognize some of the complex motivation for why (a) people think metaphorically and (b) use metaphors so frequently in language, problem solving, remembering, creativity and so forth".

Most of these issues will be discussed by the essays in this book, which is divided into three sections. The first section concerns the relationship

between Conceptual Metaphor Theory and metaphor in use. The papers in the second section switch the focus from metaphor in language as use to metaphor in language as system. In the third and last section, the authors raise questions on and propose new developments for Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

The first section includes the articles by Raymond Gibbs, Gerard Steen and Jakob Mey, who will discuss more directly the theme of the book–Metaphor in Language and Thought. This discussion is carried out, fundamentally, by means of a dialogue between Conceptual Metaphor Theory (whose focus lies on metaphor in thought) and metaphor in use, which brings to evidence the linguistic dimension of metaphor (focus on metaphor in language).

Opening this section, Raymond Gibbs'article (*Cognitive Linguistics and Metaphor Research: Past Successes, Skeptical Questions, Future Challenges*) presents a critical overview of cognitive linguistic research on metaphor, an area which has Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as its foundational stone. The author discusses the developments of research in this theoretical framework, presenting the validations and refutations, as well as criticisms that the theory has received in the last 25 years, proposing new directions or challenges for the future. The central assumptions of CMT are confirmed by evidence gathered from a variety of sources: research from historical linguistics, the analyses of contemporary, conventional linguistic expressions, analysis of how conventional metaphors are elaborated upon in poetry and literature, and research on "the systematic presence of conceptual metaphors in people's use and understanding of conventional expressions in a variety of languages"(p. 5, this volume), including American Sign Language. Most criticisms that CMT has received spring from the confrontation of the theory with metaphor in use in naturalistic environments since CMT does not offer an explicit model or proposal for identifying metaphors in real discourse/text. It is at this point that Gibbs criticizes the circularity of the methods in cognitive linguistics as the analysts start from linguistic expressions to identify the possible underlying conceptual metaphors, and then go back to language to confirm the conceptual metaphors hypothesized. He claims that psycholinguistic research, employing a variety of experimental methods, may break with this circularity by providing independent empirical evidence on metaphor in thought.

Within this perspective, Gibbs concludes that cognitive linguistics work "is insufficient to conclusively demonstrating metaphors role in thought and realistic language use" (p. 16, this volume), and, for this reason, it must be open to the dialogue with other disciplines such as Psychology, Applied linguistics and Corpus Linguistics to complement its findings. This dialogue is one of the challenges for the future proposed by the author.

Gerard Steen's article (*Metaphor in applied linguistics*: *Four cognitive approaches*) presents some considerations into metaphor in language and thought– "the topic and title of the first conference of its kind in Brazil". As the conference was promoted by the Program in Applied Linguistics of PUC-SP, there was a substantial participation of applied linguists in all sessions. The conference also counted with the presence of Lynne Cameron (University of Leeds), who organized the event on metaphor in Applied Linguistics (I RAAM – Researching and Applying Metaphor), and edited in 1999, with Graham Low, a book with the same name. For this reason, Steen's paper focuses on the discussions presented in the plenary talks, which were mostly directed to the empirical research on metaphor in Applied Linguistics[3] . This integrative and retrospective reflection on the papers presented will be conducted from the perspective of the debate into the relationship between metaphor in language and in thought. This central issue is at the core of Steen's proposal for four different approaches to metaphor, based on the interdependence between language and thought as system and as use:1) metaphor in language as system; 2) metaphor in thought as system; 3) metaphor in language as use and 4) metaphor in thought as use. It is within the framework of these categories that metaphors should be studied, with a certain degree of autonomy, so that their interdependence can be better understood.

The purpose of Jacob Mey's article (*Metaphors and Activity*) is to consider metaphor as a kind of activity in the spirit of Levinson's "Activity Types" or of Mey's "Pragmatic Acts". In this sense, he rejects the idea that metaphor belongs exclusively to the domain of abstract reasoning or is merely a linguistic or a psychological process. As our activities are essentially socially

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3   Among the papers discussed are Lynne Cameron's and three others presented in a round table on metaphor in Applied Linguistics, by the Brazilian applied linguists João Telles, Maria Isabel Asperti Nardi and Tony Berber Sardinha, wich will be published in a volume edited by Mara Zanotto, Lynne Cameron and Marilda Cavalcanti.

based and our conceptualizations must represent the social aspect of our actions, metaphors are socially important representations of activities. In other words, 'they are instances of pragmatic acting.' (p. 57, this volume). Thus, Mey approaches metaphor within a pragmatic perspective, proposing a more fertile conception of metaphor based in the 'anchoring' in the world, more specifically in the world of our activities.

The second part of the book has as its focus *Metaphor in language* as system and presents three interesting articles in which the authors call attention to metaphorical processes in the formation of words (Basilio's and Holmquist's) and of grammatical forms (Holmquist's), or to the interdependence of linguistic and conceptual factors in the production and interpretation of metaphors (Moura's)

Margarida Basilio's article (*Metaphor and Metonymy in Word Formation*) investigates the relevance of analogy, metonymy and metaphor in word formation patterns and their products. Initially, the semantic side of proportional analogy in morphological restructuring is analyzed. The work then concentrates on the role of metonymy in the formation of instrumental and agent nouns. The last part of the work is dedicated to the role of metaphor in compounding. The concept of metaphor assumed involves the following claims: (a) there exists a distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning, even if it is not easy to distinguish them in all cases; (b) metaphorical compounds are both linguistic and conceptual phenomena; (c) metaphorical compounds are related to word meanings, as opposed to speaker's meanings; and (d) metaphors have both rhetorical and cognitive functions in the lexicon. Considering the metonymic process as mentally accessing one conceptual entity (the target) by means of another entity (the vehicle), as in the always quoted examples of places standing for agents, and so on, metonymy turns out to be a fundamental instrument for the efficiency of the lexicon as a symbol storage system. This mechanism, together with the notion of metonymic models (Lakoff 1987, Chapter 5) constitutes a relevant word-formation strategy. The main point of the paper is to show how metaphor is fundamental to the constitution of the lexicon and, consequently, how the relative disregard to word formation processes is unfortunate for the discussion of metaphor in language.

The focus of Kelly Holmquist's article (*Shifting Meanings, Forgotten Meanings: Metaphor as a Force for Language Change*) is the use of metaphor as an important force of changing in the process of language evolution. The

author discusses the variety of forms of metaphor, including metonymy, synecdoche and euphemism. There is also a discussion of Turner and Fauconnier's notion of combination of concepts (blending), typical of the metaphorical process of language in use, which leads to the diversification and extension of the reference of words, which, in turn, leads to changes in the meanings. Holmquist calls attention to the fact that effects of this use, together with the ones of another related figure, the simile, can even be seen in the evolution of grammatical forms of various languages. The author presents and discusses examples which demonstrate the role of the use of metaphor in the evolution of words and grammatical forms, ranging from the proto-indo-European language to the modern indo-european languages.

Heronides Moura's article (*The Conceptual and the Linguistic Factors in the Use of Metaphors*) presents two hypothesis concerning metaphors. First, he argues that conceptual and linguistic factors are interdependent in the production and interpretation of metaphors. Secondly, he considers that metaphor, at least in some cases, involves a compositional process. The author argues that, although metaphors involve the ability of perceiving or apprehending new concepts or new aspects of old concepts (and in this sense they are indisputably a conceptual process), they also involve new arrangements of the conceptual structure into which language is framed. He points out difficulties faced by the purely cognitive representation of metaphor and presents an alternative view that favors the interdependence of conceptual and linguistic factors. He tries to answer the question on how are we capable of producing and interpreting the new concepts in the structured frames of language and of what are the mechanisms that we have at our disposal for the production of metaphor.

The three articles in Part Three have in common the fact that they challenge the way an important aspect of metaphor is approached in the conceptual metaphor theory: the generation of metaphors. Each paper also proposes alternative views or concepts to explain the specific aspect of metaphor generation they focus.

Firstly, Lenz'article (*About Primary Metaphors*) discusses Grady's Primary Metaphor Hypothesis (1997) as an important contribution to the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor, which claims that the emergence and nature of conceptual metaphors are often grounded in more experiential metaphorical patterns, called primary metaphors. The new hypothesis changes considerably the ideas concerning the generation of metaphors,

in comparison to the former view. The author discusses some of these main changes, namely *the characteristics of source and target domain*, the *fundamental construct*, and *the licensing of metaphorical expressions*.

Helena Martins' article (*Novel Metaphor and Conceptual Stability*) raises questions concerning the issue of novel metaphors by discussing three radically different views to the matter: the classic view, according to which metaphor is itself defined by its novelty with respect to our established conceptual systems; the cognitivist view, in which novel conceptual metaphors are considered a possible but relatively rare phenomenon; and the deconstructionist view, in which novelty in metaphor is seen as either impossible or a non-issue. The author explores the possibility of reconciling insights derived from each of these approaches, and she makes the case for taking the matter under a non-representationalist, Wittgensteinian angle.

In the last article, entitled *Metaphorical reasoning with an economical set of mappings*, Wallington, Barnden, Glasbey e Lee introduce a new concept, the *commas*, (conceptual metaphor mappings adjuncts) to explain the nature of the *map transcending elements* involved in the production and understanding of a great number of metaphorical utterances. These utterances contain metaphorical extensions, which transcend the list of mappings of the conceptual metaphor from which they have originated. The authors argue against the creation of new source to target mappings for these novel concepts, proposing, instead, that these concepts are adjuncts to any conceptual metaphors. A partial inventory of the types of adjuncts is provided.

Finally, we hope the essays in this book will provide scholars interested in the study of metaphor with some insights into the theme "Metaphor in language and thought" and help them construct further explanatory theories and search for further empirical evidence for the ways in which metaphor in language and metaphor in thought might interact.

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