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Why do we use metaphors?

Motto

„...whatever is, is a thing...”

Kotarbiński

Traditional and cognitive interpretation of metaphors

- literary ornament

- language phenomenon

Why are metaphors inevitable?



Two options:

- creation of totally new concepts and their names, independent of already existing;
- conceptualization of new abstracts in terms of already existing entities.

The first option implies an infinite growth of concepts and their names.

The other option refers to the already existing concepts and names, and only extends them metaphorically.

Instead of creating new units and storing an almost infinite number of them, the human mind took the latter course – it processes/extends the already existing units through comparison and inference.

Why such a path of conceptualization?



This path had been determined by the earlier development of abstract thinking. As it was easier to remember categories than individual objects, it was also easier to compare and infer, rather than to create and remember a huge number of new categories, concepts and names.

Problems



1. Experiential bases
2. Concrete-abstract distinction
3. New typology of metaphors
4. *Objectification*
5. Phylogenesis of metaphORIZATION
6. Structure and orientation

Experiential bases of metaphors



- Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Grady, Taub & Morgan 1996 confessed **ignorance in this matter***
- Lakoff and Johnson's typology of metaphors:
 - lack of uniform, consistent criterion
 - three different aspects of reality

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:19): “We do not know very much about the experiential bases of metaphors. Because of our ignorance in this matter..., etc.”

Grady, Taub & Morgan (1996:179) “...there is no clear or consistent understanding of what counts as experiential basis, nor of what the typology of experiential bases might be.”

Space as a source domain

- L&J 1980, Radden 2005, Langacker 1982, Grady 1996*
SPACE is fundamental
- **Space is confused with physical objects**
 - space is a relation between objects*
 - objects serve as reference points
- Szwedek 2009:
SPACE IS CONCEPTUALIZED AS AN OBJECT:
to give space, long space, thin space, bending space, ...
(AS A CONTAINER: *in space, empty space, unfilled space*)
- **Space is not the ultimate experiential basis**

Grady (in Taub, 1996:460):

Taub (1996) quoted Grady as arguing (in personal communication) “that the mapping ACTIONS ARE OBJECTS does not exist, and that all the putative examples derive from a different, much more productive metaphor, ACTIONS ARE LOCATIONS [= SPACE] (Taub, 1994).”

Rumelhart (1993: 81):

“[a] good example of this is our talk about the mind. Here we use a spatial model to talk about things that are clearly nonspatial in character.”

Radden (2005:117)

“The most important metaphorical source domain is that of “space”.”

Langacker (1982) *Space Grammar*.

Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976:380):

“Languages are designed to deal with relativistic space; with space relative to the objects that occupy it.”

Langacker (1993:16):

the phrase *Under the bed (is dusty)* names “... a spatial region – a type of “thing” [cf. the places are objects metaphor] – rather than a relationship (a relationship per se can hardly be dusty).”

Szwedek (2009):

Space itself is conceptualized as an object.

Structure as a source domain

- Grady, Taub & Morgan 1996:
 - **STRUCTURE is fundamental**
LOGICAL STRUCTURE IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE
is a metaphoric primitive for
THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS
- **Identical proposal – Lakoff 1990**
LOGICAL SYLLOGISM IS A CONTAINER
- **Structure is an aspect of objects**
- **Structure is not the ultimate experiential basis**

Space and structure - conclusions

- **SPACE** is a relation among objects
- **STRUCTURE** is an aspect of objects
- **Neither space nor structure can be the ultimate experiential basis.**
- **Object is the only independent entity and thus is the ultimate experiential basis.**

Concrete - abstract distinction

- commonly accepted, but very unclear
Johnson 1987, Gibbs 1996*
- Gibbs:
 - „JOURNEY is more concrete than LOVE”
 - „target domains are vague & incomplete”
- too general and vague to be of use

Johnson (1987) emphasized the role of embodiment “Understanding via metaphorical projection **from the concrete to the abstract** makes use of physical experience in two ways.”

Gibbs (1996:310), observed that “...we conceptualize of **love via more concrete understanding of journeys.**”

Ungerer–Schmid (1997:121) ...people rely on models of the **concrete** world in order to understand **abstract** phenomena.

Kövecses (2002: 6) “This unidirectionality suggests that metaphorical processes normally go **from the concrete to the abstract**”.

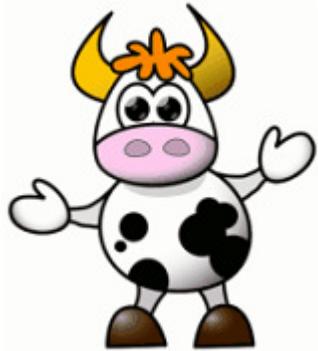
Aquinas “... attain to **intellectual truths through sensible objects**, because all our knowledge originates from sense. Hence in Holy Writ, **spiritual truths** are fittingly taught under the likeness of **material things.**” (Aquinas, First Part, Question 1, Article 9).

Krzeszowski (1997) proposed a sharp distinction between the **material domain and the phenomenological domain.**

What is concrete?

- **Concrete = having density (mass).**
- **\pm density distinguishes
the MATERIAL
from
the PHENOMENOLOGICAL world.**
- **Concrete entities are physical objects.**

The level of object is absent from thought and language

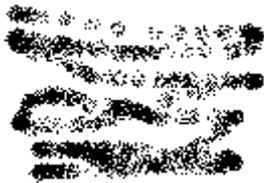


- **This is an object, and it's a cow.*
- **This is an object, and it's a lamp.*
- We do not perceive things as objects,
„...because they are always before our eyes.”
Wittgenstein
- The object schema is also absent from the linguistic literature.

(wyjątek - Krzeszowski 1991)

Why aren't we
aware of the object
level?

Neuroembriological argument



- The most essential property of objects is density.
- Density is experienced by **touch** only.
- **Touch** develops in the 8th week.
- Neural system develops in the 8th week.
- Experience of density (object) through touch is programmed earliest and at the deepest level.
- A physical (concrete) object is whatever we can touch.

Psychological argument



David Katz ([1925]1989): touch is fundamental in developing our belief in the reality of the external world: What has been touched is the true reality; no reality pertains to the mirrored image (1989: 240)

Popova (2005): the tactile sense is phenomenologically unique in providing first person experiences. Touch thus incorporates self-awareness uniquely and distinctly from the other senses.” (2005:401).*

„The inner experience of my fingertip touching my lips produces a sensation both on my lips and fingertip. Standing in front of the mirror, however, I can only see myself from a third person perspective. Hence, while I can feel myself touching, I cannot see myself seeing; I can hear my own voice, but not myself hearing. Crucially, such first-person knowledge of the world originates in one’s own (hand or body) movements.” (2005:401).

Language data

In an interesting study, Joseph Williams 1976 proposed, on the basis of language analysis, the following transfer of senses:



Williams added that Democritus, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas considered touch to be the „basis of all senses” (Williams 1976: 472). On the analysis the language of Byron, Keats, Wilde and, Ullman (1957) showed that the semantic field of the tactile experience renders the highest number of lexemes transferred to other sensory modalities.

Many language expressions referring to ‘touching’ and ‘holding’ are used to refer to abstract domains:

Ang.: *behold* (‘ujrzeć’), *perceive* (< Lat. *-cipio* = ‘capture’), *capture* (< Lat. *capere* ‘take’), *take* (‘I take this to mean...’), *grasp* (‘the rudiments of the science’), *catch* (‘the exact meaning’).

Niem: *fassen* znaczy ‘dotykać, łapać’ a także ‘rozumieć’; *greifen* ‘łapać’ i *begreifen* ‘rozumieć’; *nehmen* ‘brać’, i *zur Kenntniss nehmen* ‘zauważyć’.

Fin: popularne słowo ‘rozumieć’ to *käsittää*, od *käsi* ‘reka’ – w sensie ‘chwywania’; *käsite* to ‘pojęcie’, coś, co można złapać.

Słow. rdzenie *-iąć*, *-imać* wywodzą się z dotyku (*-imać* pochodzi z tego samego IE rdzenia co stang. *naman*, niem *nehmen*), np., *u-jąć* (‘złapać’), *po-jąć* (‘rozumieć’). Inne słowa: *chwytać*, *brać* (słowa za dobrą monetę).

Węg. *ért* ‘rozumieć’ pochodzi ze sttur. *er* ‘dotykać’, ‘sięgać’. ‘Dotykanie’, ‘sięganie’ jako ‘rozumienie’ jest obecne także w czasowniku *fog* ‘chwytać, trzymać’ np.. w *fel+fog* - ‘rozumieć’, *fel+fog+hat+atlan* - ‘niezrozumiały’, *fog+alom* - ‘pojęcie’.

Alb. *nuk marr vesh* ‘nie rozumiem’ (*marr* = ‘brać’).

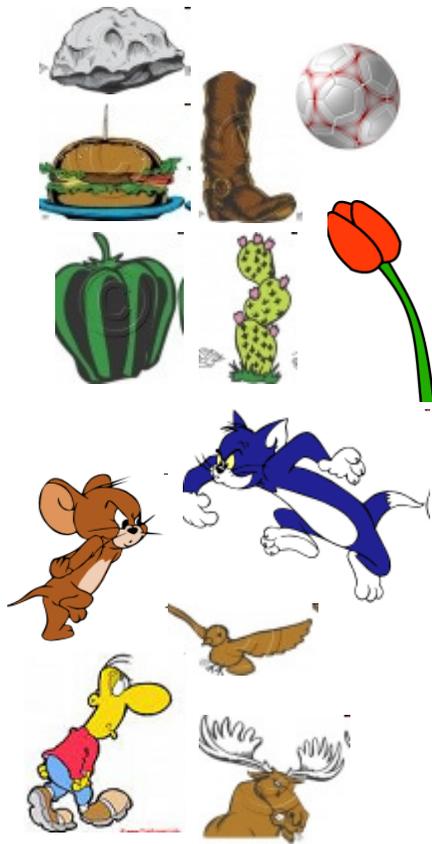
Łać. *sapio* = ‘mieć smak’; >> ‘rozumieć’, ‘być mądrym’.

Tybet.: *rtog-pa* = ‘myśleć’, ‘pojąć’ ← ‘see’; *go* = ‘rozumieć’ ← ‘być pełnym’, ‘mieć czegoś dosyć’; *dgongs-pa* = ‘myśleć, rozważać’ ← ‘ciężar, trzymać’; *yid-la-‘dzin* = ‘myśleć’ ← dosł. ‘w umyśle trzymać’.

Jap. *łapać* has a literal and metaphorical sense ‘to understand’)etaforyczne ‘rozumieć’.

Similar relations hold in the domain of emotions: ‘czuć’ *feel* (OHG. *fuolen* ‘dotknąć’, ‘macać’; OE. *folm*, OHG. *Folma*, Gr. *παλαμη*, L. *palma* (pożyczone do ang *palm*), Skr. *pani* (z **palni*).

Kotarbiński's *reism* (1929)

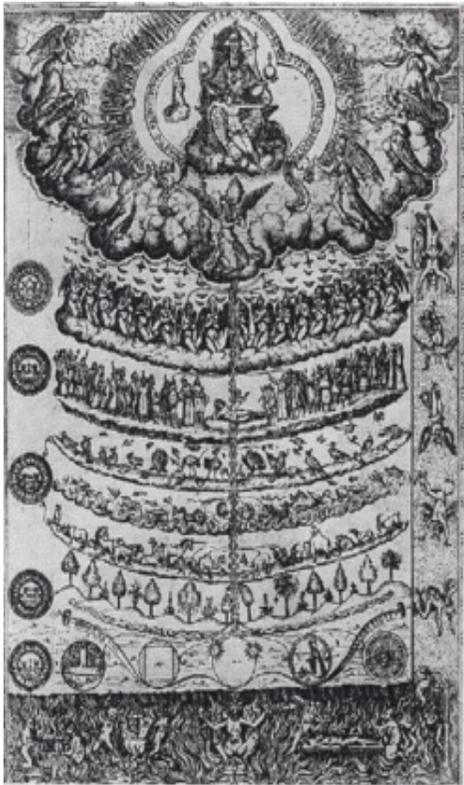


- „...*whatever is, is a thing...*”
- „*there are things inanimate, as well as animate...*”
- Thing: extension (3-D) and inertness (stawia opór) (= density, mass).*
- Aristotle's: *ens per se* (Kotarbiński: „... *There is no need of other things in order to exist.*”)
(and *ens ab alio*)

„... a body is something that is extendible and inert.” (356)

„...we can colloquially say that inertness consists in offering resistance in attempts to move an object.” (365)

The Great Chain of Being



Shepherds Thieves
 Beggars Gypsies
 Actors Animals

feature \ level	matter	life	instincts	reason
humans	+	+	+	+
animals	+	+	+	-
plants	+	+	-	-
things	+	-	-	-

„ *But unfortunate is the man who does not have anyone he can look down upon.*”

Tomas Nash, 1593

If experience of density (mass)

is

the ultimate test for

the material/phenomenological

distinction, then

PHYSICAL OBJECTS

are

THE ULTIMATE SOURCE DOMAIN

A new typology of metaphors

- A. **Concrete to concrete:** *Capt. Jones is a perfect iceberg.
He is an old fox; a vegetable,...*
- B. **Concrete to abstract:** *give a thought, heavy thoughts,
collect scattered thoughts,...*
- C. **Abstract to abstract:** *LIFE IS A JOURNEY,
Love is the wisdom of the fool.*
- D. **Abstract to concrete:** *He is a threat/nuisance?*

Tactility as a criterion of the distinction between
material and phenomenological worlds



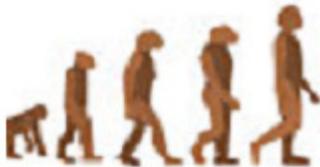
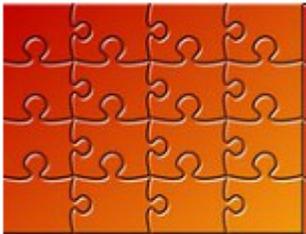
is

simple

uniform

fundamental

The typology based on this distinction



is

simple

internally consistent

phylogenetically attractive

Type A. Concrete to concrete



Capt. Jones is an iceberg

The two expressions are metonyms for character and coldness.

(Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud)

The earliest type of metaphorization – some abstract thinking

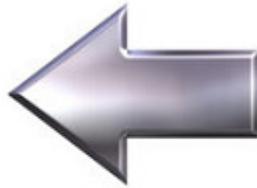
Type B. Concrete to abstract (*objectification*)



Thought is an object

- *have a thought, give a thought, collect scattered thoughts, heavy thought, thought is born, ...*
- **The second stage in metaphorization: abstract entities were identified, conceptualized and referred to in terms of objects with appropriate vocabulary.**
- Most important stage requiring full abstracting power.
- Analogy to writing: from pictographic to ideographic.

Type C. Abstract to abstract.



LIFE

IS

A JOURNEY

- The **source** and **target domains** are **abstract**, with physical components in their structure.
- L&J's structural metaphors.
- Before structures can be compared/projected, the two concepts must be *objectified* – conceptualized as objects.

give, take life, have, make, break a journey,

Type D: abstract to concrete



He is a threat / a nuisance

- Relatively rare?
- Possibly *threat* & *nuisance* are first
OBJECTIFIED

Phylogenetic implications



Our ancestors talked first about concrete matters:
Big mammoth big meat. Yummy, yummy.



- First abstractions:
- *Me Crazy Horse you Red Cloud.*

A feature from the source was abstracted and transferred to a feature of the target.

The fundamental character of metonymy

1. Metonymic perception is universal and also characteristic for animals. (cf. Searl's 'aspectual perception', or Michott's 'amodal perception').
2. Linguistic metonymy is a consequence of 'aspectual/amodal perception' (*Cpt. Jones* for *unemotionalness*; *iceberg* for *coldness*).
3. It is the simplest form of abstraction based on material objects; the form of abstraction closest to the physical objects domain.

Type B - concrete to abstract

OBJECTIFICATION

- was the biggest leap in the development of **ABSTRACT THINKING**
- It required **CREATION** of abstract concepts, such as **THOUGHT, LOVE, MIND, FEAR**, etc.



**Emotional and mental worlds
were then created and conceptualized**



IN THE IMAGE

AND

AFTER THE LIKENESS

of the only world our ancestors had known -

THE WORLD OF PHYSICAL OBJECTS.

THANK YOU

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