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Metaphor is a fundamental cognitive mechanism that shapes human thought, enabling us to comprehend one concept in terms of another. This cognitive process structures our understanding and manifests in how we communicate about a given domain of experience (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). When used in discourse, metaphors function as ideological framing devices with significant persuasive power, which accounts for their prevalence in socio-political discourses (Charteris-Black 2004, 2011; Chilton 2004).

This volume comprises an introduction and twelve case studies in which metaphors in socio-political contexts are analysed from a Critical Socio-Cognitive perspective by renowned scholars in the field. The case studies are presented in independent chapters organised in three sections: (i) construing reality through metaphor (chapters 1-5), (ii) contesting the world through metaphor (chapters 6-8), and (iii) performing ideology through multimodal metaphors (chapters 9-12).

In the introductory pages, Manuela Romano walks us through a concise yet comprehensive overview of the critical socio-cognitive framework that underpins the case studies included in the volume. The introduction is particularly valuable; in addition to presenting the content, it articulates the rationale for adopting such a theoretical approach. Critical Socio-Cognitive Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2011; Hart 2010; Romano and Porto 2016; Soares, Cuenca and Romano 2017) addresses a gap in metaphor research, as socio-political metaphors have been examined either from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective (Charteris-Black 2004), which overlooks their socio-cognitive situatedness or from a Cognitive Linguistics perspective (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987), which fails to account for their ideological framing potential and their influence on people's attitudes and beliefs. A theoretical model synthesising elements from both Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis provides a more comprehensive account of metaphors in socio-political discourse. Romano traces the historical evolution of Metaphor Studies (pp. 2-5), beginning with the initial emphasis on the biological grounding of metaphorical thinking. She then examines the 'social turn' (p. 3), which foregrounded a social and usage-based view of cognition. She ends with the current approach that focuses on metaphor use in real communicative settings, incorporating 'discursive, cognitive, and socio-cultural variables in the study of metaphor' (p. 3). Scholars within this framework understand metaphors as "dynamic, complex and interactive processes grounded in social memory that evolve with the culture in which they are used and differ across languages and time" (p.4). Metaphors are also viewed as ideological weapons (p.5) since the mapping of a socio-political topic (i.e., target domain) onto a specific source domain results in a construal of reality, reinforcing certain interpretations over others (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987). Thus, metaphors impose an ideological frame on the understanding of socio-political issues. This approach is supported by the concepts of framing (Entman 1993) and construal (Langacker 1987), both of which suggest that reality is never presented in a neutral way but always offers a perspective. Methodologically, Critical Socio-Cognitive metaphor analysis endorses a usage-based approach, continuing the 'empirical turn' (p.9) that has characterised cognitive linguists and (critical) discourse analysts in recent decades (Kristiansen et al. 2006; Semino 2008).

The first section of the volume, 'Construing Reality through Metaphor', examines how metaphors shape specific perceptions of reality. In chapter 1, Cuenca and Romano conduct a comparative analysis of similes and metaphors in Spanish digital media coverage of COVID-19, highlighting differences in the conventionalisation, aptness, conceptual mappings, and discursive functions of these figurative devices. Their findings support the non-equivalence perspective on similes and metaphors (Bernárdez 2009; Romano 2017). Chapter 2 explores how LGBTQ+ users discursively construct gender identities on Tumblr. Filardo-Llamas and Roldán García analyse a manually compiled corpus of one hundred Tumblr posts, concluding that metonymy, metaphor and shared cultural knowledge are the predominant framing devices employed to construct identity and challenge traditional gender views. Chapter 3 investigates the metaphorical representations of Ukrainian

refugees in British Media. Koller analyses sixteen news articles between February and May 22, finding that both left- and right-wing publications predominantly employed the journey/movement and support metaphor scenarios (Musolff 2006). These findings indicate a departure from the common conceptualisations of immigrants as animals, water, and commodities (Santa Ana 1999, 2002) and reveal emotional framing as well. The predominant metaphor scenarios identified in the data establish two key participants: Ukrainian refugees and British hosts. Both are attributed to a diverse range of emotions, some of which are shared (e.g. horror, sadness and stress). This contributes to establishing a connection between both groups, promoting support for Ukrainian refugees. In Chapter 4, Peterssen and Soares examine the metaphorical construction of political polarisation in the tweets of far-right populist leaders Santiago Abascal (Spain) and Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil). Their study identifies a predominance of 'multi-group metaphors' (p. 112), such as CONFRONTATION, HUMAN BEING, JOURNEY, and RELIGION metaphors, which serve to reinforce polarisation by positively characterising the ingroup while negatively portraying the outgroup. Concluding this section, chapter 5, authored by Đurović and Silaški, explores metaphors used in Serbian pro-vaccination discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic. They find that both conventional (e.g. WAR/BATTLE metaphors) and more creative extensions of these metaphors (e.g. MEDIEVAL CASTLE) are effective in simplifying scientific information and enhancing persuasion, with their impact rooted in their 'argumentative and emotional appeal' (p. 153).

The chapters comprising the second section, 'Contesting the World through Metaphor,' focus on the use of metaphors to challenge dominant narratives. In chapter 6, Musolff investigates the integration of WAR metaphors and conspiracy theories (CTs) in discourses disseminating COVID-19-related conspiracies. He introduces the concept of 'super-scenarios' (pp. 169–170), which emerge from blending war metaphors with conspiracy theories, demonstrating their heightened framing power and identity-constructing potential. Musolff advocates for the cognitive deconstruction of these super-scenarios to counter their pernicious effects. In the case study that follows (chapter 7), Porto investigates the intentional use of alternative metaphors in digital discourse to promote attitudinal change in relation to social issues such as health, the environment, and education. Three competing metaphor pairs—GREENHOUSE/BLANKET (for global warming), WAR/JOURNEY (for health), and TRANSMISSION/GUIDANCE (for teaching)—are analysed, revealing different degrees of success in resisting entrenched (inapt) conventional metaphors. The findings highlight the significance of metaphor awareness and discussing publicly their aptness in facilitating the replacement of dominant frames. This section ends with chapter 8, in which Tay, Jin and Yu introduce 'survival analysis' as a methodological tool for examining the lifespan of metaphors in blame discourse within Chinese online discourse. Comparing the relative lifespan of conventional vs. novel metaphors of two target domains (i.e., organisations and citizens) reveals that blame metaphors serve to express anger and assign pejorative labels, offering new insights into the persistence and 'critical time points' of metaphorical expressions.

The third section, 'Performing Ideology through Multimodal Metaphors', explores the ideological functions of metaphor in visual and other multimodal contexts. Chapter 9, by Asenjo and Muelas-Gil, analyses the pictorial and verbal metaphorical portrayal of women in Northern Ireland's iconic Catholic and Protestant murals during the armed conflict. Their findings reveal commonalities in the metaphorical schemas (LINK, CONTACT, PART-WHOLE, ENABLEMENT, PATH, SURFACE) across communities to conceive women's roles during the conflict. However, divergences emerge regarding the number of sources and the level of involvement, with the former being more numerous and the latter more intense in Catholic depictions. The authors highlight the need for further analysis by expanding the corpus nationally and chronologically to facilitate statistical comparisons. In Chapter 10, Forceville revisits his previous work (Bounegru and Forceville 2011; Forceville and Van de Laar 2019; Zhang and Forceville 2020) on political cartoons, focusing on the challenges of identifying and interpreting creative metaphors. He critically evaluates VISMIP (Šorm and Steen 2013, 2018) and proposes a model that better accounts for visual and multimodal metaphors. Building on Black's (1962, 1979) theory of creative metaphors (as opposed to structural and orientational metaphors) and applying Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995), which posits that each cartoonist aims to convey meaning to an intended audience, he provides practical guidance on the significance of (1) intertextual references, (2) shared cultural background knowledge, and (3) non-metaphorical elements in retrieving a metaphor's intended interpretation. His model also considers the original medium of political cartoons, the delimitation of target domains, the level of abstraction in labelling sources, and the verbalisation of metaphors. In chapter 11, Górska presents a case study demonstrating how the socio-political context influences the construal of image-schematic structures in metaphors. The study examines the image-schematic structure (primarily FORCE, MOTION and UP-DOWN) underlying the metaphorical interpretations of Jerzy Kalina's sculpture 'Monument of an Anonymous Passer-by'. Through an analysis of the dynamic activation of metaphoricity (Górska 2020) and the qualitative data from surveys, she concludes that the respondents' metaphorical interpretations are highly dependent on their situated contexts, including communist rule, Poland's post-war political transformation in the 1990s, and the contemporary presence of Ukrainian refugees. Recontextualisation is viewed as a dimension of metaphorical creative interpretations (p. 302). The section concludes with chapter 12, which examines metaphors in discourses of political protest. Hart first analyses three source domains FIRE, WAR and REVOLUTION—defining their structure and interrelations based on FrameNet (Ruppenhofer et al. 2010). His analysis evidences the framing effect of these metaphors in verbal and pictorial media discourses. He then focuses on the multimodal realisations of the metaphors PROTEST IS FIRE and PROTEST IS WAR in British media. He demonstrates how they function as persuasive construals that delegitimize the protesters' actions while legitimising the authorities' responses. However, their interpretation remains subjective, dependent on the reader's ability to recognise intertextual and interdiscursive references.

The twelve case studies presented in this volume affirm the critical socio-cognitive approach as a robust theoretical framework for analysing the role of metaphor in the triad of society, cognition and discourse. However, there is some imbalance in the number of studies included in each section, varying from three in the second section to four and five contributions in the first and third sections. Therefore, the issue mainly concentrates on the framing and ideological power of metaphors in socio-political contexts. The metaphors used to construe COVID-19, LGBTQ+ identity, (Ukrainian) refugees, women and social protests convey values and ideas that influence how these socio-political issues are framed, shaping societal interactions and responses (Thibodeau and Boroditsky 2011). The nine contributions in Sections One and Three demonstrate that metaphors, regardless of their level of schematisation, creativity, or mode of manifestation (verbal, pictorial, sculptural), serve ideological functions across diverse domains, including health, gender, politics, and armed conflicts. On the other hand, only the three studies included in Section Two deal with how metaphors are used for ideological contestation. These chapters highlight how individuals can resist detrimental metaphorical construals that incite hate, violence, and anti-social behaviour and instead use alternative metaphorical sources to reframe concepts in ways that promote social equality, deradicalisation, and solidarity. The inconsistency in the number of studies each section comprises could be due to metaphors being traditionally seen as ideological strategies by which speakers privilege one understanding of reality over another (Chilton 2004, Langacker 1987, Charteris-Black, 2011), and only recently, attention is being paid to the study of how metaphors are resisted (Gibbs and Siman 2021, Poppel & Pilgram 2023). Consequently, in future issues like the current one, more case studies regarding contesting metaphors would be expected to be included.

Beyond validating the critical socio-cognitive approach for the investigation of metaphors in (socio-political) discourse, this volume offers valuable insights into Metaphor Studies within the cognitive linguistics paradigm. Regarding the debate on the equivalence of metaphor and simile, the cognitive and discursive distinctions identified by Romano and Cuenca provide evidence in favour of the non-equivalence perspective (p. 11). Various studies reveal that, in making sense of socio-political issues, metaphors interact with other figurative processes, such as image schemas and metonymies, cultural frames (e.g. Filardo-Llamas and Roldán, Forceville, and Górska), and conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), as demonstrated in Musolff's chapter. Culture, common background knowledge, and shared sociocultural experiences are crucial for using and interpreting the metaphors examined in this volume, reinforcing arguments for metaphor and cognition's contextual and temporal situatedness (Frank et al. 2008). In this regard, Chapter 8 by Tay, Jin, and Yu introduces a new avenue for investigating metaphor "survivability" and the factors contributing to metaphor durability. Additionally, studies by Hart and Đurović and Silaški underscore the importance of subjectivity and contextualisation in metaphorical construals of reality. Contributions in Section Two further enhance our understanding of the deliberate use of metaphors (Steen 2011, 2017), illustrating how speakers strategically challenge harmful metaphors by selecting alternative source domains to contest inadequate portrayals of social issues.

As noted in the introduction, "the book offers readers the most recent work on empirical research relating metaphor, ideology, persuasion and contestation" (p. 2). It presents a diverse range of quantitative and qualitative methods applied to mostly self-compiled datasets, comprising linguistic and multimodal metaphors from a diverse range of international digital press (British, Spanish, Serbian and Brazilian), social media platforms (Twitter, Tumblr and Weibo), as well as street art (murals and sculptures) and interviews. The procedures for metaphor identification in real discursive contexts vary: some studies rely on established methods such as the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) MIP (e.g. Koller), Steen et al.'s (2010) MIPVu (e.g. Peterssen and Soares da Silva) and Šorm and Steen's (2013) VISMIP (e.g. Asenjo and Muelas-Gil). Górska, by contrast, searches for metaphoricality indicators and their level of activation (Górska 2020). Tay, Jin and Yu focus on coherent metaphorical ideas instantiated through vehicle terms dispersed throughout discourse (Cameron and Maslen 2010). Due to the morphological complexity of Slavic languages, Đurović and Silaški employ a self-tailored method to identify the metaphors in various Serbian news media. For cases where the metaphor on the verbal level cooccurs with other modes or is just visual, Forceville distances himself from VISMIP (Šorm and Steen 2013, 2018) and proposes a model emphasising the level of abstraction in verbalising visual or multimodal metaphors, as well as contextual and non-metaphorical references as key factors for identification and subsequent interpretative analysis.

The authors featured in this volume contribute cutting-edge research through case studies grounded in solid theoretical foundations, offering rigorous language-in-use methodologies, outlining practical applications, and indicating future avenues for future research. As a result, this volume serves as an essential resource for both early-career researchers and established scholars in the humanities and social sciences who seek to examine how key global issues are conceptualised and communicated through metaphor, how metaphor shapes our understanding of contemporary challenges, and its potential to drive social transformation.

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