The fabric of metaphor in argumentative discourse:
interweaving cognition and discourse in figurative language use

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The claim that we should take "metaphor out of our heads and put it into the cultural world" (Gibbs, 1997) seems to indicate that the so-called cognitive turn in metaphor studies, which has theoretically transferred the *locus* of metaphor from language to thought, does not seem to have successfully accounted for aspects of metaphor *in use.* Since the publication of Gibbs's paper, a significant amount of research has focused on these aspects, attempting, mostly, to explore two interrelated questions: what role does metaphor play in the construction of meaning in discourse and, conversely, what role does discourse (or features of discourse) play in the construction of metaphorical meaning? This research trend, therefore, can be characterized as the recent 'cognitive-discursive turn' in metaphor studies, which addresses one of the criticisms of conceptual metaphor theory: that it views metaphors as "highly conventional static conceptual structures" (Kövecses, 2010) which, though supposedly underlying all instances of metaphor (creative or conventional) in language use, do not seem to account, in a satisfactory way, for the more dynamic and multidimensional nature of metaphor in discourse. Following this trend, the aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it aims to present and discuss some studies which have significantly contributed to the understanding of metaphor in use, particularly by proposing concepts which, besides shedding light on the specific discursive nature of metaphor, function as units of analysis of metaphorical language in use. Among these, we will discuss and compare the following: *metaphoreme* (Cameron and Deignan, 2006), *context induced metaphor*s (Kövecses, 2010), *systematic metaphor* (Cameron and Masley, 2009), *low-level mappings* (Wehling, 2016), *situated metaphors* and *metaphor niche* (Vereza, 2013, 2016). The second aim of this paper is to explore in greater detail the latter two concepts (*situated metaphors* and *metaphoric niche)* as they have been found to reveal, more clearly, the discursive nature of metaphor, particularly as a frequent rhetoric tool in argumentative discourse. Furthermore, analyses of argumentative texts, based on these two concepts/units of analysis, have evidenced the interdependence between the conceptual (more stable), and the discursive (more dynamic) dimensions of metaphor and the way they are interwoven in actual language use. A more general distinction, therefore, between system and use, proposed by Steen (2006), has proved to be highly pertinent for this type of analysis. Drawing on this distinction, it is suggested in this paper that, on the one hand, at the level of system, we have higher-level, *off-line* representations, such as conceptual metaphors, frames, and idealized cognitive models, and, on the other, at the level of use, there are episodic, often deliberate, *on-line* situated and context-dependent conceptualizations which are textually developed. Examples of analyses of different niches and situated metaphors in different argumentative texts (internet memes and editorials from Brazilian and English/American newspapers) will illustrate the way the dimension of use is articulated, in different manners, with the dimension of system, weaving, textually, a particular viewpoint. It is our contention, therefore, that, to cite Platin (2009), "figures are, in their original rhetorical context, an authentic constituent of a theory of argumentative discourse". However, traditional theories of argumentation do not seem to satisfactorily account for the cognitive force of figurativity, which, as we intend to demonstrate in our discussion, is at very basis of trope-based argumentative discourse.