

Desiderata for a theory of metaphor and the Motivation and Sedimentation Model

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Research in metaphor and other figures within cognitive linguistics and related fields has developed and diversified considerably over the last decades, but four general desiderata for a general and consistent theory of metaphor remain arguably unfulfilled: 1) It should be able to account for both general, "universal" tendencies, and for extensive cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation; 2) It should be able to apply not only to language, but to other semiotic systems such as gesture and depiction, and to combinations of these in polysemiotic communication; 3) It should focus on the dynamics of metaphor use, and not just on conventional types, or static "mappings"; 4) It should provide clear theoretical and operational definitions, allowing us to distinguish between metaphor and other types of figuration (such as metonymy and hyperbole), and ultimately to account for their interaction.

I will argue that the Motivation and Sedimentation Model (MSM) developed in our research group over recent years comes a good way to meeting these desiderata. Inspired by the theory of language developed by Eugenio Coseriu (1985), but generalizing it to sign use in general, and to some degree reinterpreting it (Zlatev, 2011), MSM operates with three distinct levels of meaning-making: Situated (S), Conventional (C) and Embodied (E). In brief, it is the E-level of prelinguistic phenomenological experience (Zlatev & Blomberg, 2016) that motivates the use of a novel metaphor (in any semiotic system) in which one or more signs do not signify what they do so non-metaphorically, but rather signify some concept that is related to the non-metaphorical signification through *gestalt iconicity*, creating a tension, and giving rise to relevant pragmatic "connotations" (Steen, 2008) (e.g. "You are such a hippopotamus"). If communicatively and socially successful, these become sedimented into the C-level as *metaphoremes* (Cameron & Deignan, 2006), which on their own right can motivate new uses of the metaphoreme on the S-level, which will consequently be less novel. To the extent that the connection to the E-level becomes attenuated with time, the expression will lose its metaphoricity, and be experienced as more or less "literal" (e.g. "The road crawls through the desert"). Crucially, metaphors on both the S- and C-levels consist of more or less sedimented *signs* (i.e. words, gestures or pictures), while the experiences and iconic (analogical) operations on these on the E-level are treated as motivations and not as metaphors *per se*, in contrast to most theorizing in cognitive linguistics.

In my presentation, I will elaborate the Motivation and Sedimentation Model and exemplify it with the help of studies from our research group and beyond, focusing on the metaphorical expression of *emotions*.

References

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