

**“BABEŞ–BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY
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Metaphorical Structures in Contemporary Hungarian

SUMMARY

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B) Structural metaphors ordered alphabetically according to element B

Keywords: cognitive semantics, everyday metaphor, poetic metaphor, substantial metaphor, structural metaphor, attribute transfer, zoomorphism, focus shift, substantial similarity, sense structuring similarity, attributional similarity, relational similarity, analogy, collection of metaphors.

SUMMARY

Metaphors have always been in the forefront of linguistic research. However, it seems that in recent decades the number of works dealing with metaphor has increased considerably – in part due to the spreading of new insights provided by cognitive semantics. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work (1980) is a landmark in this regard. These authors emphasize the metaphorical nature of everyday language, presenting very many examples which point to the fact that a significant portion of our linguistic expression is determined by conceptual metaphors and metaphor systems. Although they have examined the English language, their findings are also useful in the research of Hungarian (see especially Kövecses 2005).

If our everyday speech is so pervaded by metaphors, it might naturally appear that we would want to gain an overall picture of these metaphors; a picture in which we can see the relevant connections or regularities of metaphor-generating tendencies. It is obvious that we cannot take into account all the metaphorical expressions of a language, but it may be worth creating a partial and experimental collection of them, which would allow for the testing of relevant theories and serve as a reference for further research.

The main purpose of my thesis is to present some preliminary questions of a possible methodology of creating a pilot collection of metaphors. My study is aimed at the metaphorical structures of contemporary Hungarian, dealing predominantly with everyday metaphors. A smaller part of my study is dedicated to comparing contemporary metaphors with their poetic counterparts. The fact that I deal with present-day language does not mean a strictly synchronous examination. It only means that the language data I am working from reflects the present-day state of the language.

The everyday language data analysed in this paper is taken partly from works of the cognitive theory of metaphor (see especially Kövecses 2005), and partly from other data collections: predominantly from explanatory dictionaries (mainly from ÉrtSz.), the Hungarian National Corpus (MNSZ.) and Vilmos Bárdosi's collection of phraseological units (2003). My goal was not to process these collections, but to find relevant instances of metaphors described by cognitive linguistics and to complete them with other linguistic examples.

Although the theoretical assumptions in the cognitive theory of metaphor have a considerable impact in my paper, I also tried to take into consideration other visions of metaphor (mainly the approach of Szilágyi 1996).

Since one of my intentions was to develop a formalized and operational way of managing metaphorical examples, a special system of notation is introduced in my paper (**Chapter 2**).

As a starting point for my study, I briefly synthesize the major relevant theories in a

hypothetical definition of metaphor, designed, first of all, to create an easily accessible theoretical basis for the practical management of the different instances of metaphorical processes. In this respect, I specify the following characteristics of everyday metaphorization: the semantic incompatibility, the duality of meanings, the motivation based on similarity, and the special linguistic identification. In this way the typical everyday metaphor is defined as being essentially a linguistic process of special (metaphorical) identification of two things on the basis of their similarity. Clarifying the nature of the two things mentioned in the definition, I point to the importance of the direction of metaphorical processes. Then I outline the relevant ways of metaphorical identification, as follows: identification having the role of naming things (arising from the communicational need of giving a name to something), "stylistic identification" (as a result of naming or renaming a thing with the name of another one for specific stylistic purposes) and "structural identification" (characteristic to structural metaphors, the nature of which will be presented in the following paragraph). **(Chapter 3.)**

Since the theoretical framework of my study was highly influenced by the cognitive theory of metaphor hallmarked by George Lakoff and his colleagues, I briefly describe the main features of the Lakovian approach. According to this approach (see for example Lakoff 1993), our metaphorical utterances are determined by underlying conceptual correspondences. For example, consider the following sentences (taken from Lakoff–Johnson 1980: 46; emphasis in the original text):

Is that the foundation of your theory?

We need to buttress the theory with solid arguments.

So far we have put together only the framework of the theory.

They exploded his latest theory.

Although these sentences are about different images (foundation, buttress, framework, something that can be exploded), they are all parts (or different aspects) of a single image (the image of building):

[<collection of assumptions etc. > – foundation]	}	[THEORY \cap BUILDING]
[argument – buttress] [argument – <solid thing>]		
[the system of main ideas – framework]		
[theory – <something that can be exploded>]		

According to Lakoff and his colleagues here we are dealing with the [THEORY \cap BUILDING]

"structural metaphor":¹ a set of conceptual correspondences between the "conceptual domain" of THEORY and that of BUILDING. In the Lakovian terminology the conceptual domain that typically represents a concrete image is called "source domain" (here: BUILDING), and the other one (which is expressed in the terms of the concrete image) is the "target domain" (here: THEORY).² The metaphor itself is the "conceptual mapping" of the source domain to the target domain. This mapping is performed by the different visual correspondences: [<collection of assumptions etc. > – foundation], [argument – buttress], etc. In this respect there is a difference between the term 'metaphor' and 'metaphorical expression': the former refers to a conceptual mapping, the latter denotes the linguistic manifestation of this mapping (a word, a phrase, or a sentence) (see for example Lakoff 1993: 203). (On the Lakovian theory of metaphor see **Chapter 4** of my thesis.)

In the next chapter, I outline all those types of similarities that can form the basis of metaphor. According to the traditional approaches, metaphors are motivated by external, internal, functional, or impression-based similarity (impression-based matches) (see for example MStilÚ. 481). The analysis of metaphorical expressions revealed that for a detailed examination, these kinds of similarities might need some further supplements and specification. All these kinds of similarities are perceived by comparing two concrete things (things that can be directly experienced by the senses), and I refer to each of these similarities with the term 'substantial similarity'.

At the same time, considering the fact that in the case of structural metaphors at least one of the two corresponding metaphorical elements is usually an abstract concept (the element A, i.e. the "target domain"), there is also a need for defining a new type of similarity characterizing these metaphors. Since this type of similarity has a mere semantic nature, I refer to it with the term 'sense structuring similarity' (this term denoting only the symptom, not the cause of structural metaphorization). So both substantial and sense structuring similarities are metaphor-generating, producing 'substantial' and structural metaphors respectively.

Examples of substantial metaphors (metaphors based on substantial similarity):

[<the lower part of a chair> \cap human/animal leg]

cf. *a chair with a broken leg* (OALD 673)³

[person \cap mine (of information)]

My grandmother is a mine of information about our family's history. (OALD 741)

¹ In presenting all metaphors in my own system of notation, I am using the sign " \cap " to express metaphorical correspondence. In the reference works structural metaphors appear mostly in the form of a sentence, for example: "THEORIES (and ARGUMENTS) ARE BUILDINGS" (Lakoff–Johnson 1980: 46), or, in Hungarian: "AZ ELMÉLETEK ÉPÜLETEK" (see Kövecses 2005: 21, 46, etc.).

² For some theoretical considerations, in my thesis I refer to these domains as to A and B elements of a metaphor (A denoting the "target domain" and B the "source domain").

³ OALD = Hornby, A. S. (Crowther, Jonathan, ed.): *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. Fifth edition. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.

Examples of structural metaphors:

[THEORY \cap BUILDING]

[IDEA \cap FOOD]⁴ *What he said left a bad taste in my mouth. All this paper has in it are raw facts, half-baked ideas, and warmed-over theories. There are too many facts here for me to digest them all. I just can't swallow that claim.*)

In order to distinguish metaphorical expressions from non-metaphorical ones, I take into account another major type of similarity: the 'structural similarity of events or situations' (see Szilágyi 1996: 84–88).⁵ In this case it is not two things (or concepts) that are similar, but the structure of two situations or scenarios. Consider:

Event1: *The cloud covered the sun.*⁶

Event2: *She covered her face with her hands.* (OALD 268)

In both cases we have the same subject–object relation: somebody/something covers something. Thus, there is a parallel between the two scenarios. Consequently, we can state a kind of connection between the corresponding elements of these event structures: [woman – cloud], [woman's face – sun]. The [woman – cloud] connection might suggest that we are dealing with a metaphor (the personification of the cloud: the cloud "did something" to the sun), but as there is no relevant similarity between the connected elements, it would be misleading to interpret their correspondence as being metaphorical. According to Szilágyi (1996: 84–88) the correspondence in question is the result of a so-called 'zoomorphism'.⁷ (The various kinds of similarities and metaphors are introduced in **Chapter 5**.)

After describing the relevant types of similarity and metaphor, I briefly present those non-metaphorical linguistic operations that might seem metaphors "at first sight". I refer to them as 'attribute transfers' having a local and rule-application character: contrary to metaphor, they are local (in principle, they do not affect the lexicalized meaning of a word), being only the applications of a linguistic rule for expressing efficiently a certain situation. The following kinds of attribute transfer are taken into consideration: metonymic transfer of attribute (metonymy with its kindred

⁴ This metaphor with its associated sentences (as examples) have been taken from Lakoff–Johnson (1980: 46; emphasis in the original text).

⁵ A non-metaphoric linguistic phenomenon based on this similarity is also defined by Szilágyi (1996: 84–88). Below, I am following mainly his ideas in presenting this phenomenon.

⁶ This is the translation of the Hungarian sentence: "A felhő eltakarta a napot" (quoted by Szilágyi 1996: 86). The English version – with some irrelevant modifications – has been extracted from the *British National Corpus* (www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk), (<http://bnc.bl.uk/saraWeb.php?qy=cloud+covered&mysubmit=Go>). (The source codes of the sentence are: APU 2309 and K8T 1270.)

⁷ This term refers to both humans and animals.

operations), zoomorphism, and the so-called `focus shift`. The latter – as defined by Szilágyi (2004a: 25–26) – is a kind of linguistic transformation of the intended message, in the course of which we change the focus from the acting agent to another element of communication, transferring the relevant attribute of the agent (which meanwhile has become implicit) to the element in question. For example, if the intended message is 'I can write very smoothly with this pen', its linguistic manifestation – by focus shift – will be: *This pen writes very smoothly*.⁸ (On the attribute transfers see **Chapter 6**).

As a next step, I take into account significant practical questions that might arise when collecting and sorting linguistic expressions (from everyday language) relevant to an analysis concerning their potential metaphorical nature. Since the primary characteristic of a metaphor in a text is semantic incompatibility, then firstly I draw attention to the problem of elaborating an easily applicable method for detecting this incompatibility; a method which – if possible – would eliminate linguistic intuition and subjectivity. The presence of semantic incompatibility in a certain expression implies a correspondence of two linguistic elements: an element that breaks the semantic homogeneity of the text, and another element with the help of which we can interpret the meaning of the first element, restoring semantic homogeneity. So special practical questions arise concerning the exact identification and denomination of these elements. Analysing some concrete cases, I demonstrate that in naming these elements it is worth trying to eliminate the inherent metaphoricity (if any), and finding, if possible, a precise, one-word denomination.

Next, I raise the issues of assorting the metaphorical expressions from those linguistic expressions that presumably contain semantic incompatibility. As a first stage of this assortment, I deal with excluding similes from these expressions by using mostly syntactic criteria. Having excluded similes, we can be sure that the rest of the expressions we are working with are motivated either by a metaphoric identification or by an identification-like operation (attribute transfer). As a result, this set of linguistic data can be considered, in its strict sense, relevant to the analysis of metaphoricity.

For an efficient way of managing this set of linguistic data, I elaborate an algorithm for testing whether the semantic correspondences motivating each of the linguistic expressions are metaphorical or not. Depending on the presence or the absence of metaphor-generating similarities and the different kinds of attribute transfer, I distinguish five basic types of the aforementioned correspondences in everyday language:

⁸ The source of this sentence is the British National Corpus (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>), (<http://bnc.bl.uk/saraWeb.php?qy=writes+very+smoothly&mysubmit=Go>). (The source codes of the sentence are: JYM 529 and JYM 532.) (This sentence is, to some extent, similar to a Hungarian sentence cited by Szilágyi – 2004a: 26 – to illustrate focus shift.)

	Is there any kind of substantial similarity?	Is there any kind of attribute transfer?	Is there a sense structuring similarity?
A-type correspondences: substantial metaphors	Yes	No	
B-type correspondences: (seemingly) hybrid cases	Yes	Yes	
C-type correspondences: non-metaphorical correspondences	No	Yes	
D-type correspondences: structural metaphors	No	No	Yes
E-type correspondences: correspondences of unidentified, but presumably metaphorical motivation	No	No	No

This categorization reveals that there are two major categories of correspondences (B-type and E-type) the motivational basis of which is unclear – at least in the initial phase of assortment. B-type correspondences are expected to occupy an intermediate position between metaphor and attribute transfer, while the category marked by the E-type correspondences is only a methodological group, a "waiting list" of those cases which probably belong either to the A-type or D-type, but the classification for which is pending until further information is found about them.

By the analysis of linguistic expressions I show that the dividing lines between the above mentioned categories are blurred, and perceiving the presence of some characteristic features might often be uncertain. There are lots of transitory cases depending on the extent we are sure of the existence of a certain feature. In this way the basic types of correspondences can be considered prototypes⁹ of their categories, having primarily a guiding role in judging metaphorical nature "at first sight". (On the practical issues of separating metaphorical expressions from non-metaphorical ones see **Chapter 7**.)

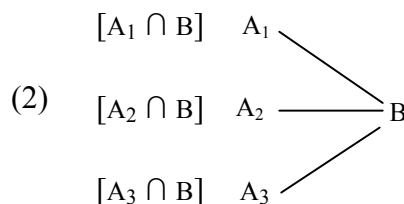
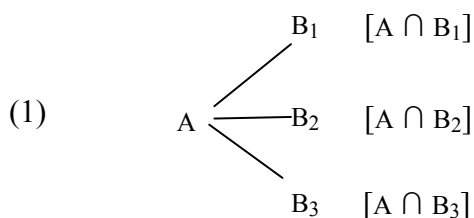
Since the process of detecting the motivational basis of a given linguistic expression is mostly determined by the perception of similarity, I devote a separate chapter to the investigation of this perception. In doing so, I use a special method: that of the analogy-centered view of metaphor research. Based, for the most part, on the theory of analogy elaborated mainly by Dedre Gentner

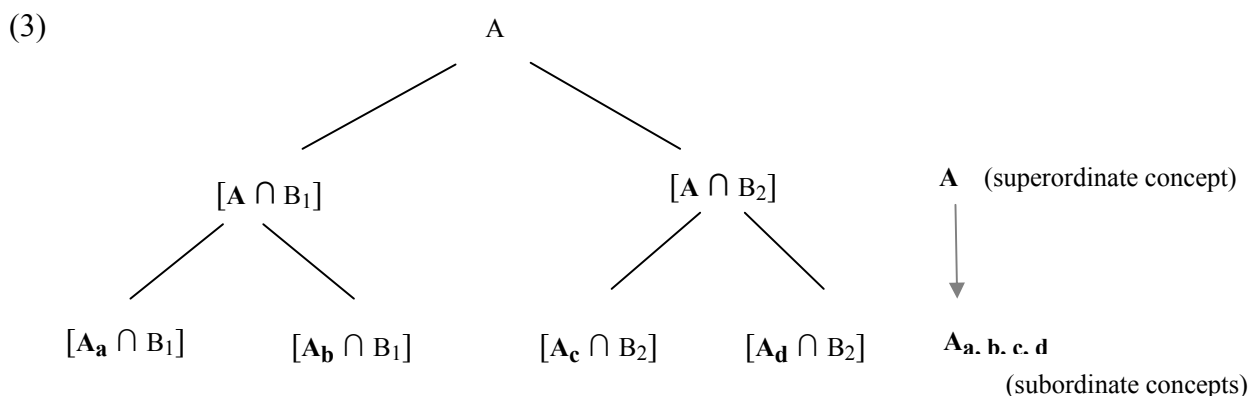
⁹ I am using the term `prototype` to refer to the prototype theory elaborated by Eleanor Rosch (on this theory see for example Lakoff 1987b or Taylor 2003³).

and her colleagues (see Gentner 1983, Gentner–Markman 1997, etc.), I make a distinction between the similarity of things (“attributional similarity”) and the similarity of relations (“relational similarity”). In this context analogy is defined as being basically determined by relational similarity, which, in the optimal case, manifests itself in mapping a complex structure from one knowledge representation to another. Thus, the analogy-centered view provides a special method for the decomposition of metaphorical correspondences involving at least four elements: $[a_1 : a_2 :: b_1 : b_2]$; this decomposition contributing to a more detailed analysis of the different kinds of similarities.

In order to highlight the defining features of everyday analogies, I contrast them with scientific analogies, because these present a higher consistency when exploiting relational similarity. Next, I examine the possible relational nature of the different types of metaphor-generating similarities. As a result of this examination, I show that while sense structuring similarity is undoubtedly relational in its nature, there is only one subtype of substantial similarity – namely functional similarity – that can unquestionably be regarded as being relational. Considering that the zoomorphism-generating structural similarity of situations or events has also a relational character, I show how the analogy-based method of similarity investigation can help in distinguishing metaphors from zoomorphisms. (On the issues of the analogy-focused view of metaphor-research see **Chapter 8**.)

So far I have examined the inner characteristics of metaphors, especially their determinant similarities, and the practical issues of delimiting them from non-metaphorical processes, bringing lots of examples from everyday Hungarian. Based mainly on the findings of the Lakovian approach (adapted for Hungarian by Kövecses 2005), in the next section I draw attention to some external characteristics of metaphorization: the way structural metaphors occur in language, tending to form various clusters and systems. Generally speaking, an $[A \cap B]$ structural metaphor can occur in the following three main patterns:-





Pattern (1) indicates that when referring metaphorically to a certain abstract concept (element A), we highlight its different aspects by using various concrete images (different B elements). The reversed pattern (2) displays those abstract concepts (A_1, A_2, A_3) that can be connected metaphorically to a concrete one (B), leading us to realize which of the aspects of this latter concept can have a role in metaphorization. Pattern (3) represents a complex system of metaphors in which visual relatedness is combined with conceptual hierarchy. (In the cognitive theory of metaphor, researchers have thoroughly examined these patterns, illustrating them by many examples – see, for example, Kövecses 2005. Adapted to my thesis with some additions, I briefly present their findings in **Chapter 9**.)

As a final stage of my research, I make an attempt to view the nature of everyday metaphorization in contrast with its poetic manifestations. I point to the fact that poetic metaphors can have as their source in common language not only metaphors, but also other quasi-metaphorical operations (i.e. comparisons and attribute transfers). Everyday linguistic phenomena, either metaphorical or not, can be transferred into poetic metaphorization in countless ways, showing various forms of creativity (from simple mirroring of everyday linguistic patterns to sophisticated transformations). I illustrate this by showing some instances of poetical inventiveness in Hungarian poetry (chiefly following Lakoff–Turner 1989 and Kövecses 2005: 59–67). I also throw light on the fact that the structuring forms of poetic metaphors differ significantly from those of everyday metaphors; the former are meant to create a unique visual coherence of a clearly delimited, autonomous literary work, whilst the latter are mostly conventional manifestations of a vaguely confinable tradition of image creation of a certain linguistic community (see **Chapter 10**).

In summary, I highlight the practical, data-oriented character of my thesis. All theoretical questions raised during my research are meant primarily to help to develop a methodology for creating a pilot collection of everyday metaphors in Hungarian, not to form the basis of far-reaching theoretical debates. In this regard, in the need for a suitable terminology and notational system for handling linguistic examples, in some cases I introduce provisionally new terms and marks. At the

same time, I point to the practicability problems of some theoretical assumptions.

In addition to the (seemingly) theoretical questions, I also bring into focus significant methodological issues, especially with the possible publishing forms of a collection of metaphors. In this respect, in the **Appendix**, I outline a sample of such a collection in a form similar to a bilingual dictionary, listing some Hungarian structural metaphors alphabetically according to element A, and B respectively. (Grouping structural metaphors in this way already has some kind of antecedents, see, for example, Kövecses 2005.) Considering, however, the findings of present-day linguistics and the achievements of language technology, we can hope for a future representation of a metaphor-collection in the form of a network. This would be a network in which the elements of a metaphor, A and B, would be nodes connected to each other and to very many other elements by metaphorical matches (Lakoff's neural theory of metaphor – Lakoff 2008 – might provide a theoretical reference for this).

Regarding the sources of the metaphorical expressions to be collected, there are useful reference works containing a series of relevant linguistic data, but for a more precise and extended practical research, one will inevitably need to process a vast linguistic database, applying the methods of corpus linguistics (as applying these methods already has a tradition in metaphor study – see, for example, Stefanowitsch 2007a, b, Deignan 2008).

All in all, though the methods in my study will certainly need further refinements and supplements, by this research, I mean to sketch out a kind of panoramic vision of the relevant issues, and the questions they raise, which may in their turn, stimulate the future research of metaphor.

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