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ON THE ROLE OF SOURCE AND TARGET WORDS' MEANINGS IN METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

Abstract. The paper argues that metaphorical expressions do more than just instantiate conceptual metaphors. The main aim is to emphasize the role source and target words' meanings play in construing generic-level metaphors. The latter are taken to act as superordinate categories for other metaphors, occurring at various levels of schematicity. Identification of lower-level metaphors takes into account source words' metaphorical senses, not the central meanings of the categories they represent. This method brings the issue of source words' polysemy into play, and hence helps explain why metaphorical expressions relating to the same generic-level metaphor may activate different lower-level metaphors, which carry different metaphorical meanings.

Keywords: generic-level metaphor, lower-level metaphor, metaphorical expression, blended metaphor, source words' polysemy.

1. Introduction

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) makes a principled distinction between conceptual metaphor and metaphorical expression. Conceptual metaphor is the projection of a source domain onto a target domain. Metaphorical expression is the linguistic realization of a conceptual metaphor, namely the linguistic expression. This distinction originates in the main view that metaphor "is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason" (Lakoff, 1993: 208). This claim was first advocated by Reddy (1979) who showed, to cite Lakoff (1993: 204), "that the locus of metaphor is thought, not language, that metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world, and that our everyday behavior reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience". Within this research paradigm, language acquires a privileged

place, for it affords, as a window to the mind, the best means for studying conceptual structures (Handl and Schmid, 2011).

One important implication of this distinction is that conceptual metaphor is not on a par with metaphorical expression, at least within standard CMT. Conceptual metaphor is considered primary, whereas metaphorical expression secondary. As a matter of fact, CMT assumes metaphors are "preset and fixed in the minds of speakers" (Svanlund, 2007: 50). This raises the issue of how metaphors form in the conceptual system. One long held claim is that metaphors are embodied, namely primary metaphors that are directly grounded in sensorimotor experiences. For instance, the AFFECTION IS WARMTH metaphor is taken to arise basically from infants' simultaneous experience of warmth and affection (Grady, 1997; Lakoff and Jonson, 1999, Johnson, 2017). Individual linguistic expressions such as those in (1) come thus subsequent to the AFFECTION IS WARMTH metaphor.

(1) a. They greeted me warmly.
    b. She is warming to me slowly.
    c. She is a warm person.

Consequently, the role of metaphorical expressions appears to be limited to reflecting conceptual metaphors. On this assumption, related metaphorical expressions, despite their semantic differences and various levels of schematicity, might be taken to instantiate the same generic-level metaphor. According to Lakoff (1993: 209), for instance, the different linguistic expressions in (2) exhibit only "one metaphor, in which love is conceptualized as a journey". If this were not the case, he argued, each expression would constitute an entirely different metaphor.

(2) a. We cannot turn back now.
    b. We have hit a dead-end street.
    c. Love is a two-way street.

That metaphorical expressions do more than just instantiate underlying metaphors has long been debated (Deignan and Potter, 2004; Svanlund, 2007; Sanford, 2012; Sullivan, 2013, to cite but a few). Still, two additional questions are to be asked. First, if given expressions can be structured via a common generic-level metaphor, what may motivate the difference in their metaphorical entailments? Second, if the difference in metaphorical entailments lies in the difference in the expressions' meanings, to what extent can they be assumed to be shaped by the same generic-level metaphor?

The paper focuses on these issues. Most importantly, it seeks to clarify the way meanings of source and target words connect, and distinguish

between, generic-level metaphors and instantiating lower-level metaphors. Roughly speaking, a generic-level metaphor can be any high-level metaphor that acts as a schematic metaphorical category for a range of lower-level metaphors. The latter are rather specific in character, their identification being particularly dependent on the source and target words' senses that are involved in metaphorical conceptualizations.

As regards methodology, based on the assumption that "one reflection of our conceptual system is language" (Kövecses, 1986: 3), I will employ the method referred to as *lexical approach* (Kövecses, 1986, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2015) which involves examining linguistic expressions for discovering underlying metaphors. In so doing, nonetheless, my focus will be on the metaphorical senses of the source words rather than the central meanings of their categories. A case in point discussed in section 2 is animal-related words. Metaphors identified on the basis of these source words are sensitive to the sense 'human' they denote by metaphorical extension, not the central meaning 'animal' of the categories they represent.

The paper is organized as follows. The first part is devoted to showing how generic-level metaphors can work as schematic metaphorical categories for lower-level metaphors. The next part enlarges on lower-level metaphors and mainly examines why metaphorical expressions relating to the same generic-level metaphor exhibit different metaphorical entailments. The demonstration is limited to some expressions that evoke the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE. The last part expands on the issue of source words' polysemy raised earlier. Granted that source words may activate distinct metaphors as a result of their polysemy, a piece of answer is provided to the issue of whether metaphorical expressions bereft of explicit source and/or target words are or not real linguistic realizations of underlying metaphors.

2. Generic-level metaphors are schematic metaphorical categories

Metaphorical expressions serve the function of both instantiating and construing generic-level metaphors. Such an assumption calls on the conceptualist view of semantics which boils down meaning to conceptualization. Granted that a meaning can be metaphorical, the corresponding conceptual content can also be claimed to be metaphorical in character. An important implication follows. On the general view that conceptual content can be evoked 'in a fairly neutral manner" (Langacker, 2013: 43), various

metaphorical expressions construing the same conceptual content might give rise to different lower-level metaphors, with varying degrees of schematicity/specificity.

Schematicity and specificity go together as opposite poles of the same relationship. As cognitive abilities, they allow us to describe meanings of expressions either in a fine-grained or a coarse-grained fashion. Langacker (2013: 55) points out, by way of illustration, that the semantic characterization of *rodent* is schematic relative to that of *rat*. *Rat*, in turn, is schematic compared with *large brown rat*, and the latter, in relation to *large brown rat with halitosis*. Schematicity and specificity are linked to one another by means of elaborative relationships. Langacker concludes in this sense that "a schematic characterization is instantiated by any number of more specific ones, each serving to elaborate its coarse specifications".

The cognitive process of schematization gives rise to schematic categories. A schematic category can be defined as an abstract structure representing the commonality inherent in a number of instances. The question then is whether a schematic category can be metaphorical in nature. There is a chance this could be the case. If a metaphorical structuring is grounded in a recurring pattern of experience, there is likelihood that the category obtained by schematization would be metaphorical. Of note, a metaphorical mapping occurring at the most schematic level of conceptual organization necessarily involves the source and the target as whole domains. The result is a generic-level metaphor that acts as a schematic metaphorical category. As such, it is assumed to be generalized over a range of instances, varying along schematicity/specificity dimension. However, at more specific levels, the same metaphorical mapping would include the source and target only as parts of the domains evoked. The resulting metaphor is relatively specific in nature. This kind of metaphor is referred to here as *lower-level metaphor*.

Actually, several researchers underlined the importance of distinguishing different levels of schematicity for metaphor (Musolff, 2006; Ruiz de Mendoza, 1998; Kövecses, 2010; 2017; 2020). Kövecses (2017: 339)'s multilevel view of conceptual metaphor provides a detailed explanation of "how the conceptual system may be organized and how this system participates in metaphorical conceptualization". This model consists of four levels of conceptual structures, arranging in a schematic hierarchy and ranging from the most schematic to the least schematic level, that is, images schemas, domains, frames and mental spaces. One important consequence of such a hierarchy is that metaphors occurring at less schematic levels act as special cases of the general metaphor they elaborate. This view proves crucial to understanding the hierarchical structure of metaphor. Nonetheless, I will

use the notion of lower-level metaphor in a rather narrow sense to distinguish it from the near-similar notion of special case or sub-metaphor, at least in two respects: first, it emerges on the basis of the source words' extensional senses rather than the central meanings of their categories. Second, because of that, its cognitive function is to account for which sense of a source word, conceived as a complex category of related senses (Langacker, 2008), is really intended by the speaker.

The main assumption is that metaphors occupying high levels of schematicity lend themselves as generic-level metaphors. As such, they may behave as superordinate metaphorical categories for the set of instantiating lower-level metaphors. Let us consider, by way of illustration, the system of metaphors underlying animal-related words. A long held claim in CMT literature is that animals serve as source domain for the target of humans. The model referred to as *Great Chain Metaphor* (Lakoff and Turner, 1989) helps explain why and how different forms of being (humans, animals, plants, objects, etc.) are mapped onto one another on the Great Chain of Being. As regards animals, the HUMANS ARE ANIMALS metaphor is the mechanism that projects the lower order of animals onto the higher order of humans. For Kövecses (2010: 153), this metaphor functions as a highly general metaphor – a generic-level metaphor indeed – which consists of a number of sub-metaphors such as PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS; HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR; OBJECTIONABLE HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR; OBJECTIONABLE PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS; DIFFICULT-TO-HANDLE THINGS ARE DOGS; SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE WOMEN ARE KITTENS, exemplified, respectively, in the metaphorical expressions in (3–7), all taken from Kövecses (2010):

(3) a. That man was a brute; he spent the little he earned on drink.
    b. He is a complete pig to the women in his life.

(4) His mother was catty and loud.

(5) He was an animal on Saturday afternoon and is a disgrace to British football.

(6) It is going to be a bitch to replace him.

(7) French sex kitten Brigitte Bardot.

The author concludes that this set constitutes "a grouping of conceptual metaphors that fit together in that they all have human beings as their target and animals as their source domain". On this view, all the sub-metaphors would function as special cases of the highly general metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS. It must be noted that the term *special case* is pre-

ferred in CMT literature to, say, *specific case*, probably because of the foundational tenet of metaphor generality: "Mappings are at the superordinate level" (Lakoff, 1993: 211). However, a closer look reveals that such a grouping is not random; rather, it is motivated in that the metaphors are related to one another as instantiating metaphors of the same general metaphor. In this sense, in particular, it would be more advantageous to describe the highly general metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS as a superordinate metaphor, and the sub-metaphors as its instantiating lower-level metaphors. As a result, both the superordinate metaphor and the lower-level metaphors are highly constrained, in the sense that their activation is dependent on the source words' senses being evoked.

I would claim, furthermore, that generic-level metaphors are, in most cases, only indirectly invoked, because speakers often highlight particular sub-domains of the whole domains concerned. In general, in a sentence like "My car has broken down", the speaker, though employing the word *car*, might refer to a particular active zone, a flat tyre, for instance (Langacker, 1987, 1999). Likewise, stating that the source words *brute* and *pig* in (3a-b) activate, respectively, the HUMANS ARE ANIMALS and the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphors, as Kövecses (2010) argues, would amount to referring to the superordinate metaphorical categories, not to the lower-level metaphors that are really involved in the metaphorical conceptualizations at hand. The reason is clear: the words *brute* and *pig* have self-evidently the sense 'animal', but it is obvious that the speaker does not intend that sense; otherwise the metaphorical projection s/he accomplished would sound odd here. Indeed, both *brute* and *pig* are metaphorically used in the senses of 'rough/violent person' and 'unpleasant person', respectively. Since it is these senses that are profiled, it proves somehow cognitively effortful to posit at the base of these expressions generic-level metaphors rather than lower-level metaphors.

It must be noted, incidentally, that such a claim raises the issue of whether metaphor is deliberate or nondeliberate. To the extent that it is hypothesized here that when a lower-level metaphor is activated the corresponding generic-level metaphor is only indirectly evoked, it might be deduced that the latter is not deliberate in that its processing does not activate the underlying cross-domain mapping. There is a lot of debate on such an issue in CMT literature (Gibbs, 1994, 2006, 2011; Gibbs and Colston, 2012; Steen, 2008, 2011, 2015). I limit myself here to examining very briefly Steen (2008)'s position, for his model comes closer to the model discussed here. Steen (2008)'s focus is on the need to distinguish between three levels of metaphor, metaphor in thought, metaphor in language, and metaphor

in communication; each fulfilling a particular function: framing, naming and perspective changing, respectively. For Steen, metaphor in communication is instrumental in distinguishing between deliberate and nondeliberate metaphor. Deliberate metaphor is a discourse strategy, the main function of which is to influence the speaker/addressee by means of using deliberately rhetorical effects. Granted their characterization as schematic metaphorical categories, generic-level metaphors would be rather nondeliberate,

That metaphors, irrespective of their varying degrees of schematicity, are deliberate has been evidenced by a number of psycholinguistic and experimental studies (see Gibbs and Chen, 2018 for an overview). I would suggest, in addition, that a generic-level metaphor, at least intuitively, is deliberate, if only because it is a superordinate metaphorical category for various lower-level metaphors. It is expected as such to be activated by means of the activation of any of its lower-level metaphors.

Now it must be asked which lower-level metaphors are at work in the expressions in (3–7). What about the HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR metaphor? Is it a lower-level metaphor? I suggest taking this metaphor for a metonymy we may put in the form of HUMAN BEHAVIOR FOR ANIMAL BEHAVIOR. This metonymy is complex in being made up of two metonymies, that is, A HUMAN FOR HER/HIS BEHAVIOR and AN ANIMAL FOR ITS BEHAVIOR. The merit of these metonymies is to provide us with insights about how we shift from the referents to the appropriate properties. Thus, the metaphors in (3–7) crucially rely on this metonymy. In other words, all the metaphorical senses denoted by the animal-related words here are basically metonymic, in that their processing activates that complex metonymy at a higher level of conceptual organization. This metonymy provides the cognitive basis for the regular metaphorical extension 'animal' → 'person acting as an animal'. This is the reason why we understand effortlessly animal-related words not only as referring by extension to humans, but more particularly to human characteristics.

Lower-level metaphors seem to be mostly concerned with metaphorical senses of polysemous source words. Indeed, any metaphorical expression with a source word denoting a metaphorical sense rather than the central meaning of the category it represents can be said to be motivated by a lower-level metaphor. A case in point is the metaphorical expression in (5). Since the source word *animal* is a superordinate word, it makes some sense to state that it is structured via the generic-level metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS. I would suggest that such an assumption, though valid, cannot be extended to the whole set of metaphor-based senses of animal-related words. Indeed, what makes it valid is that the metaphorical sense denoted by the word

animal is generalized over the metaphorical senses of many other animal-related words, indeed all those that manifest the same somehow negative behavior that is linguistically encoded as *unpleasant*, *disgusting*, *violent*, *savage*, etc. In many cases, notwithstanding, it is the other way around. For instance, the word *lion* denotes by extension the positive metaphorical sense 'courage' or 'outstanding importance'. Because of that, the source word *animal* in the example at hand cannot be taken to straightforwardly evoke the generic-level metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS, for the latter turns out to be neutral as between negative and positive metaphorical senses of animal-related words. On this premise, the underlying metaphor at work in (5) is AN UNPLEASANT PERSON IS AN UNPLEASANT ANIMAL, not the generic-level metaphor HUMANS ARE ANIMALS. In this sense, the HUMANS ARE ANIMALS metaphor lends itself as a schematic metaphorical category for the whole range of lower-level metaphors, which serve the main function of capturing individual metaphorical senses of animal-related words.

There is still a need to know whether there are any differences between the metaphorical expressions in (5) and those in (6–7). First, they are all structured by lower-level metaphors, because their source words stand for their respective metaphorical senses, instead of the central meanings of their categories. Second, unlike the superordinate word *animal*, the words *bitch* and *kitten* are basic-level words. They are associated as such with specific metaphorical senses, which arise from people's stereotypical conceptualizations about their respective behaviors. For this reason, they are most likely to activate the following lower-level metaphors A MALICIOUS PERSON IS A BITCH and A SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE WOMEN IS A KITTEN, respectively.

One important implication of the notion of lower-level metaphor is that it provides us with a rather practical strategy to sort out the thorny issue of whether metaphorical expressions such as "My lawyer is a shark/a pig/a fox, etc." are best accounted for in terms of CMT or Class-Inclusion Metaphor (Glucksberg and his associates, 1990, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2008). Within the latter framework, both the source and target function as instances of the superordinate category created. This model is based on the assumption that the meaning associated with the category created does not reduce to that of the prototypical instance that names the category. As an illustration, the word *shark* serves as the prototypical instance that names the new category, with both "my lawyer" and "shark" as its instances. However, considering the bundle of features that defines the category created (vicious, predatory, aggressive, merciless, etc.; see Glucksberg, 2008), we come to conclude in one way or another that it is the category's metaphorical sense that has become the central meaning of the new category. Surprisingly, in most

cases, such meanings which arise by metaphorical extension from categories' central meanings are well entrenched. As a consequence, it proves natural to describe such metaphorical expressions as exhibiting lower-level metaphors which mainly capture the source words' metaphorical senses being used as source domains for appropriate target domains. Further clarification of polysemous source words is provided in the last part.

Why should lower-level metaphors be distinguished at all? The answer is that conceptual domains, as well as complex categories lexical units represent, present varying degrees of structural complexity, requiring description by virtue of lower-level metaphors rather than generic-level metaphors. It is somehow erroneous to posit generic-level metaphors for complex domains and/or complex categories, when corresponding metaphorical expressions highlight rather sub-domains and/or extensional senses than whole domains and/or categories' central meanings. Lower-level metaphors, in short, help understand some less clear aspects in the interface between the conceptual level of metaphors and the linguistic level of metaphorical expressions.

3. Structural complexity of conceptual domains: the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE

The present account is limited to the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE. It is selected over many others for two main reasons; for it is well studied in cognitive literature; and for the complexity of its source and target domains. As such, it helps us attain a twofold objective; to gather insights about structural complexity of source and target domains at large; and to explain why given metaphorical expressions, being structured via lower-level metaphors, do not prompt similar metaphorical entailments, though relating to the same generic-level metaphor.

3.1. The source domain force

To begin with, the domain of FORCE serves as source domain for a number of targets, namely LOVE. It embraces various aspects, all grounded in embodied experiences. As Johnson (1987: 43) puts it: "There is no schema for force that does not involve interaction or potential interaction". The structural complexity of the schema for FORCE follows from the multiple kinds of force we experience when acting on, or being acted upon by, other entities. Johnson identifies not fewer than seven schemas for FORCE: COMPULSION, BLOCKAGE, COUNTERFORCE, DIVERSION, ENABLEMENT, ATTRACTION and REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT.

To the extent that these schemas derive from our embodied experiences of force, they seem to be essentially defined in terms of physical properties. For instance, the BLOCKAGE schema is based on our interaction with that kind of force that obstructs our movement towards a destination: one experiences blockage when being physically obstructed by force.

I would suggest that Johnson's definition of FORCE schema primarily invokes physical space (Langacker, 1987). As such, it does not pay much heed to its qualitative characterization, that is, the various ways force is experienced. Force can be quick, sudden, violent, smooth, terrible, slight, heavy, etc. Such properties are qualitative in character, and thus serve the role of differentiating qualitatively between distinct kinds of force. On this view, the images-schemas for FORCE should be assumed to evoke both physical space and quality space. As abstract schemas obtained by schematization over recurring patterns of physical experiences, they incorporate both physical and qualitative properties. The COMPULSION schema, for instance, emerges from the experience of being moved. Physical space is therefore the domain of its instantiation. However, since the movement is caused by an external force, the experiencer may be alert to many qualitative properties regarding the way the force is exerted upon her/him. These qualitative differences can be linguistically encoded. Let us consider, for instance, the verbs *push*, *blow*, *propel* and *catapult* exemplified in the following sentences.

(8) We were pushed along with a dense crowd.

(9) While walking along the beach, a gust of wind blew us in a nearby tree.

(10) At the moment of the accident, the passengers were propelled out of their seats.

(11) The explosion catapulted the passengers 60 yards along the road.

These verbs instantiate the COMPULSION schema; they denote a physical movement caused by an external force. Focusing only on their common instantiation in physical space would lead us to regard them as (near)-similar in meaning. However, to the extent that involuntary movement includes various qualitative properties, their fuller description seems to require additional qualitative specifications. In other words, there is a need to provide a qualitative characterization for the FORCE schema each verb instantiates.

To begin with, the verb *push* in (8) does not explicitly encode a qualitative sense. For this reason, it often collocates in such constructions with adverbs which provide description of the way force is experienced.

(12) We were pushed along helplessly, violently, gently, etc. with a dense crowd.

In contrast, the semantic characterization of the verb *blow* specifies a qualitative sense for the FORCE schema involved. Expectedly, any object described as being blown presupposes that the external force, say wind, is strong enough to carry it from one place to another. Thus, only facultatively does *blow* collocate with adverbs expressing a qualitative relation of intensity, as shown in (13).

(13) We were (strongly, violently, etc.) blown along in the wind.

As regards the verb *propel*, the use of an adverb to add a qualitative feature to the FORCE schema would be pleonastic or emphatic. This means that the qualitative sense for *propel*, unlike *push* and *blow*, is linguistically encoded.

The verb *catapult* is rather similar to the verb *propel*. The kind of movement or action the verb denotes is qualified at the same time as physically forceful and qualitatively rapid. Consequently, both the physical space FORCE and the quality space VELOCITY form the domain of its instantiation.

Granted that these lexical items evoke specific sub-structures of FORCE schema, they are expected to depart from one another in light of their physical and qualitative specifications. For this reason, a metaphorical projection involving a given sub-structure of FORCE as the source domain must be taken to activate a lower-level metaphor whose level of meaning matches that of the metaphorical expression.

3.2. The target domain love

Regarding the cognitive domain of LOVE, a number of studies have stressed its metaphorical pluralism – the likelihood of domains to be characterized by various metaphorical conceptualizations that are culture-specific in character (see for more details Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Kövecses (1986, 1988, 2005) pointed out in this respect that LOVE is structured in English in terms of a number of metaphors, among which are the following: LOVE AS NURTURE; LOVE AS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER; LOVE AS A NATURAL FORCE; LOVE AS INSANITY. Most of these metaphors bear on the domain of LOVE as a whole, and hence the reason they are posited at a higher level of generality (on this topic, see Cameron, 1999; Low, 1999).

Actually, cognitive linguistics assumes that domains are complex knowledge structures (Fillmore, 1982; Langacker, 1987; Croft, 1993; etc.). It seems, however, that this claim applies rather to concrete domains. Hence two main

questions suggest themselves. (1) Could abstract concepts also form complex domains? (2) If so, how could their structural complexity be accounted for?

From the standpoint of cognitive semantics, given that any kind of conception constitutes a cognitive domain (Langacker, 1987), it stands to reason that abstract concepts are internally complex. In this case, conceptions that are part of their semantic structures are corollaries to corresponding constituent sub-domains. The latter are qualitative in nature because of the abstractedness of their inclusive domains. Each conception serves, thus, to highlight a specific aspect of the cognitive domain involved. In addition, granted their meaningfulness, conceptions tend to be linguistically encoded as they become conventional and psychologically entrenched in the speech community.

As regards the second issue, it can be suggested that structural complexity of abstract concepts can best be accounted for on the basis of the lexical units that encode their constituent sub-domains. As an illustration, the words *romance*, *liaison*, *amour* and *crush* encode some of the most salient constituent sub-structures of the domain of LOVE. Consider the following examples.

(14) a. He asked her for a date and *romance* blossomed (*English Oxford Living Dictionaries*).
b. He formed an *attachment* with a young widow (*English Oxford Living Dictionaries*).

(15) a. He regretted his *liaison* with a woman from the office (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).
b. He had an *adulterous relationship* with his wife's best friend (*Cambridge Dictionary*).

(16) a. In her memoirs the diva candidly recalls her *amours* with some of opera's best- known tenors and baritones (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).
b. If you are one of the beautiful elite, summer is a fizzy whirl of suitors and *intrigues* and liaisons (*English Oxford Living Dictionaries*).

(17) a. I have a *crush* on a friend who is very near and dear to me (*English Oxford Living Dictionaries*).
b. I have seldom seen a man more *infatuated* with a woman than he is with our beautiful neighbor (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).

Given in (14a, 15a, 16a, 17a) are the lexical units that denote some usual conceptions of LOVE, and in (14b, 15b, 16b, 17b), some of their synonyms (i.e. the words in italic). Such conceptions have attained a high de-

gree of conventionality in English, and hence are entrenched as symbolic units in speakers' mental lexicon. The claim that these symbolic units profile specific sub-domains, not the entire domain, of LOVE, can be evidenced by the difference in their individual meanings. Hence, *romance* is seen especially as a sentimental or idealized love; *liaison* as an adulterous relationship; *amour* as a clandestine and illicit love affair; and *crush* as an intense short-lived love. These meanings are attested by most of English dictionaries.

In view of its structural complexity, it is hard to see why the target domain of LOVE has to be evoked as a whole in metaphorical expressions whose target words carry specific conceptions pertaining to particular sub-domains. In this case, activation of a generic-level metaphor instead of a lower-level metaphor would come at mighty cognitive costs. Indeed, just as the concept of BULLDOG, for instance, evokes primarily the specific concept of DOG, then the less specific concept of ANIMAL and finally the generic concept of MAMMAL, so too can a metaphorical conception activate in the first place a lower-level metaphor, then a higher-level metaphor and finally a generic-level metaphor.

Incidentally, structural complexity of LOVE must not come as a surprise; many abstract domains behave the same way. For example, the common concept of HOUR is highly complex, in that it encompasses several sub-domains, each corresponding to a specific conception that highlights a particular period of time within the whole concept. These sub-domains are entrenched as various symbolic units, and serve as such to conceptualize various actions, events or emotions, as illustrated in these examples:

(18) He always gets tired after running for a quarter of an hour.

(19) Their meeting lasted only half an hour.

(20) Her rage did not last more than two minutes.

3.3. Structuring lower-level metaphors

Structural complexity of source and target domains helps understand why meanings of metaphorical expressions relating to the same generic-level metaphor are best accounted for in terms of lower-level metaphors. The following account is confined to the examples in (21) and (22) that have long been discussed in CMT literature (see for instance Gibbs, 2017).

(21) She swept me off my feet.

(22) Waves of passion overcame him.

These expressions are commonly considered conventional expressions of the LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE metaphor. They are semantically related to one another. Yet, they carry different metaphorical inferences. This is testimony to the fact that there is a gap between their individual metaphorical meanings and the meaning of their generic-level metaphor. On this view, the difference in their meanings is due to their respective individual lower-level metaphors; each provides us with a particular conceptualization of love as force. The expressions profile, though, sub-domains, not the whole domains, of LOVE and FORCE. As a result, only broadly are they shaped by the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE.

It must be noted that such an assumption relies on a multi-domain rather than a two-domain model of metaphor. Actually, conceptual metaphors involving complex domains such as FORCE and LOVE turn out to be blended conceptualizations, in that they emerge from conceptually integrating properties from source and target spaces (Langacker, 2008; Dancygier and Sweetser; 2014; among others). There is thus a need, before going any further, to indicate how the conceptions that provide the conceptual materials for blending operations arise from the linguistic meanings of source and target words. To clarify this issue, I enlarge on Langacker (2013)'s analysis of the example in (23).

(23) The thought just flew right out of my head.

For Langacker, the metaphor at the base of this expression manifests itself in a set of connections between three spaces: the source, the target and the blend. The source and the target spaces are populated by the elements of two conceptions. The conception in the source is that of a bird conceptualized by the viewer as flying out of a cage. The conception in the target is that of a thought experienced by the subject as disappearing from the head. The blended space consists of properties projected from both spaces, thereby yielding a new metaphorical conception that depicts the thought as a bird flying away. The whole blending network is sketched in Figure 1, reproduced from Langacker (2013: 51).

The conceptual elements in the target space raise no problem; they are activated by the words *thought* and *head*. As regards those in the source space, however, it is unclear where they can be assumed to arise from. The semantic structure of the verb *fly* turns out to be helpful here. It can be taken a priori that *fly* activates our encyclopedic knowledge about all winged forms of being. Notwithstanding, to state that the expression in (23) highlights exclusively the conception of a bird amounts to taking for granted the key role the semantic structure of *fly* plays in the metaphorical interpreta-

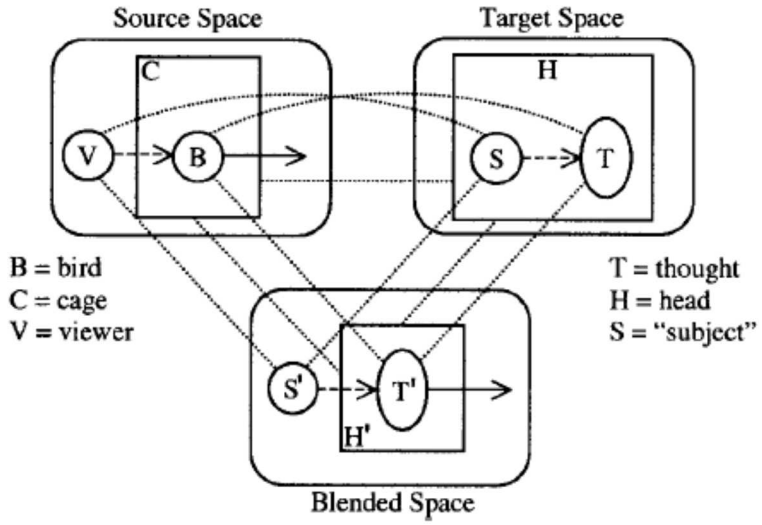


Figure 1. The THOUGHT IS A BIRD metaphor

tion of the expression. The verb *fly* proves rather instrumental, in that it evokes not only the conceptual element BIRD but also the conceptual element CAGE it conventionally collocates with. Though not linguistically encoded in the expression, CAGE is a salient element in the conceptual materials that are carried over to the target input. As such, it is systematically linked to the element HEAD.

Of note, within the framework of blended metaphor, correspondences between source and target domains should not be necessarily unidirectional. To put it another way, the topological structure of the source domain does not do the whole work; it does not predetermine the aspects of the target domain it maps onto. Conceptual correspondences may also qualify as interactional in character. In this regard, the mapping of the element CAGE onto the element HEAD depends on the extent to which the latter gives access to the former and, thus, fosters its occurrence as a relevant aspect of the source conception. In other words, the element HEAD makes the element CAGE highly salient in the overall knowledge the verb *fly* activates. This is one possible reason why we understand *fly* in the expression as naturally applying to birds, though many other forms of being do fly, say bees. That is to say, the word *head*, given the context of the expression, activates the specific-level schema of CAGE rather than the high-level schema of CONTAINER. One has only to remove the word *head* to appreciate that CAGE is no longer evoked. It should be noted, then, that the activation of CAGE instead of the image-schema of CONTAINER is testimony to the main claim advocated

so far that metaphorical conceptualizations need not always be located at the subordinate level. The conceptions that serve as input information for the blending operation are indeed expected to consist of context-specific elements that best enable participants to communicate at lesser cognitive costs. Here, the image-schema of CONTAINER is just evoked as the base of the profiled context-specific CAGE. Accordingly, it makes sense to say that the metaphorical expression in (23) is structured by a lower-level metaphor such as A THOUGHT IS A BIRD rather than by a generic-level metaphor like A THOUGHT IS A WINGED ENTITY.

There is still a need to ask how the elements CAGE and BIRD, in the absence of their explicit mention, arise as conceptual materials for the blending operation. Within cognitive semantics, especially conceptualist semantics, meaning is encyclopedic in character. Lexical units are assumed indeed to have encyclopedic characterizations including various domains, some of which are central, whereas others, peripheral. Though not specifically linguistic in nature, domains are exploited as conceptual materials for linguistic purposes. On this assumption, the encyclopedic information relative to the practice of keeping birds in cages is conventional and entrenched, in such a way that it constitutes "a part of the encyclopedic characterization of both *bird* and *cage*" (Langacker, 2013: 53). Thanks to this cultural practice, the co-activation of CAGE and BIRD sounds rather unproblematic.

Let us now apply this method to the examples in (21–22) to see which source and target words activate which lower-level metaphors, and what metaphorical conceptualizations of love as force are delivered. The expression in (21) comprises the idiom *sweep someone off their feet*, which means "quickly and overpoweringly charm someone" (Oxford Dictionary of Idioms). It should be noted, incidentally, that idioms as formulaic expressions have been the topic of many studies falling within the wide framework of cognitive linguistics. Several studies have handled them from the standpoint of CMT, and demonstrated that they are motivated via conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Kövecses, 1987; Gibbs and O'Brien, 1990; Kövecses and Szabcó 1996; Gibbs, et al. 1997; Lakoff, 2014; among others). Similarly, several psycholinguistic and experimental researchers have addressed them with respect to some semantic factors such as *transparency*, *decomposability*, *familiarity*, etc. (Gibbs, et al., 1989; Titone and Connine, 1999; Libben and Titone, 2008; Titone and Libben, 2014; Cacciari and Corradini, 2015; Carrol and Littlemore, 2020; among others).

Both paradigms of research tend to hold that meanings of source words in idioms remain active, and serve as prompts for the metaphorical entailments the conceptual mappings allow for. Granted this assumption, the

meaning of the word *sweep* proves crucial in specifying the sub-structure of FORCE schema that acts as the source domain. But the fact that *sweep* is a polysemous verb raises the issue of which of its senses can be claimed to participate in the semantic interpretation of the idiom. There is every reason to believe that the sense involved is the following: "to drive or carry along with irresistible force" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). In light of this sense, it is synonymous with such verbs as *push*, *pull*, and the like. All these synonyms evoke FORCE schema; but what distinguish them from one another are the qualitative properties they individually encode. Those properties which the verb *sweep* denotes are mainly suddenness and unexpectedness. It can be suggested, thus, that these properties are intrinsic to the FORCE image-schema that frames the figurative meaning of the idiom. This is not to say, however, that the meaning of the idiom reduces to those properties; only is it stated that they remain active in, and contribute to, its whole idiomatic meaning, in addition to the other components, namely, the preposition *off* and the noun phrase *my feet*. All things considered, the whole framing may work this way. The literal meaning of the idiom remains active, and participates as such in our understanding of the idiom as description of a particular kind of love. In this sense, the information in the source space originates in the conception of a force making a person lose his or her balance and fall down. This source space conception is analogous to another conception that occurs in the distinct domain of LOVE, namely, the conception of a love relationship that makes lovers lose their self-possession. This is the target space conception. Their similarity is what brings them together and triggers their mappings. Conceptual materials from both spaces are projected to the blend. The result is a different conception, which casts lover as losing their self-control. The overall blending network is sketched in Figure 2.

Given its novelty, this conception is assumed to be structured via a specific metaphor that arises from the blending operation of the information in the source and target spaces. I suggest that such a metaphor be the LOVE IS FATE metaphor. It is noteworthy that the element FATE is not projected to the blend from the source and target spaces. But, this does not undermine the foundations of blending. As Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 19) state, a blend has some properties of the input spaces, and some others of its own. As a source domain of the blended metaphor, the concept FATE fits the semantic structure of the idiom *sweep someone off their feet*, if only because it allows us to grasp the main idea that the love experience is sudden, unexpected and, to some extent, uncontrollable.

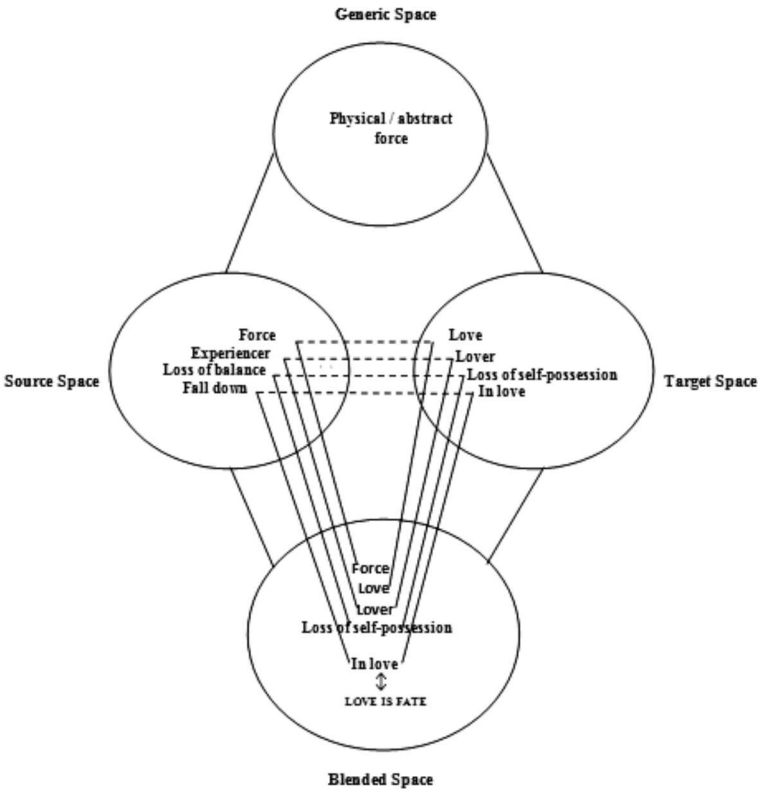


Figure 2. The LOVE IS FATE metaphor

The extent to which the LOVE IS FATE metaphor can be said to be linked back to the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE depends on how the concept FATE is thought of within a given culture. In Western culture, FATE is conceptualized as a supernatural power governing the course of events outside persons' control. It lends itself in this respect as an instance of the more schematic concept of NATURAL FORCE. By that token, the lower-level metaphor LOVE IS FATE functions as an instance of the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE. Nonetheless, despite their metaphorical relatedness, they should not be put on a par as regards the role each plays in the metaphorical meaning of the expression. Central to the use of metaphors, indeed, is our intention to convey special meanings, along with various metaphorical inferences. For this reason, we single out the right metaphorical expressions for the purposes of expressing the intended meanings. In this case, the use of the metaphorical expression in (21) is neither arbitrary nor a matter of whim. Rather, the speaker picks it out over

many others, because s/he assumes that its meaning meets the needs of the participants' apprehension of the overall communicative situation. All in all, the specific metaphorical inferences the LOVE IS FATE metaphor allows for are in tune with the kind of love experience we commonly portray by means of the expression in (21). It seems hard, in contrast, to figure out how the LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE metaphor affects our conceptualization of a love experience conceptualized on the whole as unexpected, sudden and uncontrollable.

Still, the source domain FATE poses a serious problem for the standard view of metaphor. It can be reasonably argued that the source domain FATE in the LOVE IS FATE metaphor is more abstract than the target domain LOVE, which is in conflict with CMT's central assumption that source domains are concrete, while target domains, abstract. In and of itself, this assumption is highly constraining, in that it rules out any kind of metaphor whose source domain proves to be rather abstract. I would assume that such restrictiveness has its source in the basic claim, taken for granted, that metaphors, as well as cognition at large is embodied. Crucial to this claim is probably the fact that the standard definition of metaphor is particularly sensitive to the kinds of metaphors that are straightforwardly grounded in physical experiences, namely ontological and orientational metaphors (see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). However, to be valid for various kinds of metaphors, an appropriate definition has to be self-evidently less restrictive. It can be suggested, to remedy such a shortcoming, that source domains would best be characterized as 'familiar' rather than 'concrete'. On this view, conceptual metaphor would be delineated as the understanding of a concept in terms of another concept, which is familiar to speakers within a speech community. In light of this refinement, the source concept FATE proves suitable for understanding the target domain of LOVE. Once again, what must matter here is our conventional knowledge that FATE is a supernatural power that decides the course of someone's life.

The metaphorical meaning of the example in (22) is rather complex. The experiencer is conceptualized not only as submerged but also as attacked and defeated by love. This conceptualization is due in particular to the combination of *waves of passion* with *overcome*. The complex unit *waves of passion* may be taken to activate the LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE metaphor, while *overcome*, the LOVE IS A CONQUEROR metaphor. Of note, the source domain CONQUEROR must come as no surprise, if only because of the salient meaning of the verb *overcome*, namely 'defeat", 'beat', 'vanquish', etc. Both metaphors are integral part of the whole conception of the expression, in that they provide together the cognitive mechanism that underpins its semantic

coherence. On the one hand, the LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE metaphor motivates the combination of *waves* with *passion*. On the other hand, the LOVE IS A CONQUEROR metaphor motivates the combination of *waves ofpassion* with *overcome*. This clarification helps account for the correspondences between the two conceptions that participate in the metaphorical meaning of the expression. The source conception is that of an experiencer that is swept out to sea by waves. The target conception is that of a person that is conquered by love. The blending operation results in a new conception which describes the lover as being attacked and defeated by love, as depicted in Figure 3. Overall, this conception seems to derive from a lower-level metaphor that can be put in the form of the LOVE IS CAPITULATION metaphor.

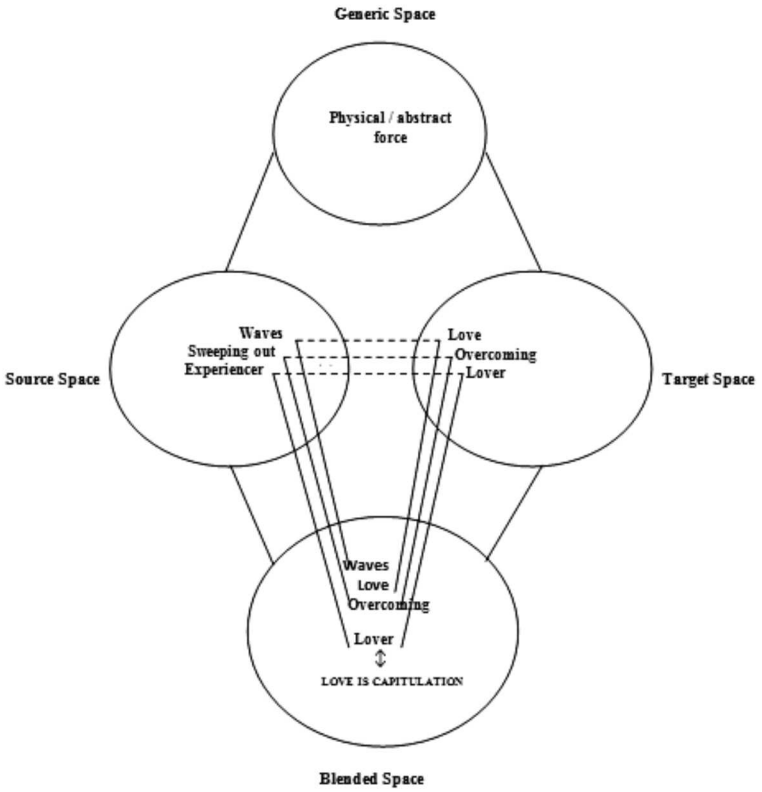


Figure 3. The LOVE IS CAPITULATION metaphor

As a conclusion, in both cases, the sets of correspondences between the source and target spaces involve specific conceptions of the domains evoked. This supports the claim that the meanings of the metaphorical expressions in (21–22) arise from specific lower-level metaphors. Their source

domains are indeed prompts for different metaphorical inferences. In other words, the emergent concepts FATE and CAPITULATION are meant to indicate that the speakers seek to express by means of each expression a particular conception of love as force. Not surprisingly, since speakers intend what they mean (Gibbs, 1999), they would not, given the spontaneous character of communication in the free flow of discourse, use these expressions at random, or in an undifferentiated fashion. This means then that they construct their metaphorical meanings at discourse level. As such, each expression turns out to be primarily motivated by an emergent metaphor of the sort discussed here rather than by the generic-level metaphor LOVE IS NATURAL FORCE.

4. Structural complexity of source words

4.1. Polysemy of source words

The method followed in describing how metaphorical expressions construe underlying generic-level metaphors emphasizes, despite the long held assumption that "mappings are at the superordinate level" (Lakoff, 1993: 212), the key role lower-level metaphors play in the process of constructing metaphorical meaning at discourse level. This strategy leads to another important issue, no different in kind from that raised by basic level source words at large, that is, source words polysemy. This issue is closely linked to the implications of the general principle called "Inheritance hierarchy" (Lakoff, 1993), according to which metaphors are arranged in elaborative hierarchies, varying along schematicity/specificity dimension. Generic-level metaphors are viewed as occupying the highest level of conceptual organization. As such, they may consist of various elaborative submappings, occurring at more specific levels on the hierarchy. The inheritance principle states that each submapping "inherits the structures of the "higher" mappings" (Lakoff, 1993: 222). In and of itself, a generic-level metaphor structures the whole set of its special cases. Conversely, each special case in an elaborative hierarchy inherits the structures of the upper metaphors. A case in point is the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor. The latter is a general mapping generalized over a large range of submappings abstracted, in turn, from myriad expressions pertaining to one or more aspects of the target domain EVENTS. As such, it helps us understand states as locations, changes as movements, causes as forces, difficulties as impediments, actions as self-propelled movements, means as paths, purposes as destinations, long-term, purposeful activities as journeys, and the like. To the extent that events can be purposeful, and "since events in a life concep-

tualized as purposeful are subcases of events in general" (Lakoff, 1993: 223; see also Gibbs, 2017: 27), the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor splits into the metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY. The latter, in turn, breaks down into the special cases LOVE IS A JOURNEY and CAREER IS A JOURNEY, insofar as events in a love relationship and a career are subcases of life events. On the whole, these metaphors are organized in a hierarchy with three levels, ranking from the more generic to the more specific: the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor splits into the metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which splits into the PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, which splits into the LOVE IS A JOURNEY and CAREER IS A JOURNEY metaphors (see Gibbs, 2017).

A corollary of the principle of inheritance hierarchy is that source and target domains are evoked by means of generalizing schematic meanings over related senses of various metaphorical expressions. Lakoff (1993) calls this generalization "Polysemy generalization". To put it in a nutshell, the source domain JOURNEY, for example, is conjured up in a number of metaphors because of a common schematic meaning that is abstracted from the meanings of such expressions as *dead-end street, crossroads, stuck, spinning one's wheels*, and the like. In this kind of cross-category pairings, the senses we rely on in evoking source domains are, indeed, the central meanings of the categories denoted by the expressions. So, it is no accident that such domains and, thus, the metaphors they are part of occupy a high level of schematicity and can, as such, be elaborated by various submetaphors that inherit their structures. The question to be asked then is why generic-level metaphors should be taken to be at work even when expressions are used in the flow of discourse in specific senses, not in the central meanings of the corresponding categories.

Of note, Lakoff (1993: 225) pointed to another kind of polysemy generalizations he referred to as "generalizations about lexical items". By way of illustration, he considered the word *crossroads* and concluded that its "central meaning is in the domain of space, but it can be used in a metaphorical sense to speak of any extended activity, of one's life, of a love relationship, or of a career". Here, the meaning that serves to evoke the domain of JOURNEY is generalized over the senses the word acquires, first, at the lower level of love and career and, second, at the higher level of life. On this assumption, the senses concerned correspond to the different uses of the word at the different levels generated by the inheritance hierarchy. What is hard to understand, nonetheless, is why the metaphorical sense of *crossroads* should still activate the source JOURNEY since it is no longer in the physical space but in the abstract space instead.

The point being emphasized here is that CMT does not seem to pay much heed to source words' polysemy in the process of identifying conceptual metaphors. Source domains are generally singled out on the basis of categories' central meanings, and hence the reason that underlying metaphors identified might not match the source words' meanings at the base of the conceptualizations involved. As noted above, such a stance relies on the long held claim that source domains are concrete in comparison with target domains, which are abstract. As a consequence of this, metaphors that arise from specific senses of source words, and hence occupy lower levels on the schematicity dimension are relegated to a second role.

Why should polysemy of source words matter for CMT? The reason lies seemingly in the fact that senses of lexical items might serve properly as source domains in conceptual metaphors. Such a view is consonant with the conceptualist characterization of a lexical item as a complex category that "does not have just one meaning, but a variety of related senses with varying degrees of entrenchment" (Langacker, 1999: 4). Thus, the more conventional and entrenched the sense is, the more likely it is to conjure up a source domain, different from the one evoked by the central meaning of the corresponding category. In a word, the main claim is that conceptual materials carried over to targets might be provided by the extensional, not the literal, senses of source words. Let us take once more the word *crossroads*, exemplified in (19).

(24) Our relationship is at a crossroads.

It is commonly claimed within CMT that the source domain JOURNEY in the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor at work in (24) is evoked because of the central meaning of the source word *crossroads* (i.e., the place of intersection of two or more roads). Notwithstanding, *crossroads* denotes also a well-entrenched abstract meaning, namely, "A crucial point especially where a decision must be made" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). For Lakoff (1993), this abstract sense arises from the central spatial meaning of *crossroads* by means of the submetaphor LONG-TERM, PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES ARE JOURNEYS. What one expects then is that the framing it induces should be recognizable from the extensional sense. This is not the case however. A closer look at the submetaphor reveals that the target LONG-TERM, PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES is not part of the sense derived by metaphorical extension. This is not to say, however, that no metaphorical mapping is at play here. Nevertheless, any metaphor invoked has to account for how the extensional sense links back to the central meaning it arises from.

For further clarification, I suggest considering the word *butcher*. What is particular about this word is that it is associated with two well-entrenched metaphorical senses that can both serve as source domains, that is; (1) 'One that kills ruthlessly or brutally'; and (2) 'One that bungles or botches' (according to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). Assuming that these senses carry main meaning foci, Kövecses (2011) pointed out that the well known expression *This surgeon is a butcher* is ambiguous, in that it licenses two interpretations, each being based on a distinct sense. Speakers understand the expression as meaning either that a surgeon has "killed one or several patients as a result of an unsuccessful operation" or that s/he is sloppy, carless and thus incompetent. Therefore, if we posit for both interpretations only one generic-level metaphor whose source domain is generalized over related senses of cross-domain parings of expressions, we will fail to understand the reason why the central meaning of *butcher* (i.e. 'A person who slaughters animals or dresses their flesh') has come to denote two separate senses. It stands to reason then that each interpretation of the expression is grounded in a separate lower-level metaphor which serves the function of motivating the extension of the sense from the central meaning of *butcher*, as well as providing the conceptual materials that are carried over to the target SURGEON.

In general, conceptual metaphors are motivated in the sense that they are grounded in recurrent patterns of experience. On this premise, the two metaphorical senses originate in two scenes characteristic of the frame of BUTCHERY. The first sense has its root in the act of killing animals for food, which we conceive of in tones of negativity, namely as a cruel act. Let us refer to it as 'A butcher is a pitiless animal-killer'. I would suggest then that this meaning gives rise by extension to the sense 'A butcher is a pitiless people-killer'. Such an extension is motivated by the metaphor A PITILESS PEOPLE-KILLER IS A BUTCHER. It is therefore this metaphor that structures the target SURGEON in the metaphorical expression and generates its first interpretation. The second scene refers rather to the act of cutting carcasses and preparing meat for sale. We experientially know that such an activity is not cruel in itself since in this case more particularly butchers work on dead rather than live animals. However, to the extent that our attention is drawn to the way they dismember carcasses with butchery-specific tools, we come to think of them as being carless and sloppy, and hence the reason we understand the word *butcher* in the following meaning 'A butcher is a carcass-careless cutter'. The latter serves as the source for the emergence of the metaphorical sense 'A BUTCHER IS A TASK-BUNGLER'. The metaphor behind such a metaphorical extension can be put in the form

of the metaphor A TASK-BUNGLER IS A BUTCHER. As such, it accounts for the second interpretation of the expression, in that it provides the basis for thinking metaphorically of a surgeon who operates on patients in a sloppy fashion as a butcher.

4.2. A further issue: are metaphorical expressions real metaphorical expressions?

So far I attempted to argue for the important part source words polysemy plays in pinning down the metaphors that shape expressions' metaphorical meanings. I set out in the remainder of the section to create some clarity about whether expressions bereft of explicit source and/or target items constitute or not real metaphorical expressions. The main aim is to indicate the way polysemy sorts out this issue.

To begin with, the expressions we are concerned with are of the kind exemplified in (26a-b).

(25) a. Your claims are indefensible.
b. He shot down all of my arguments.

(26) a. He is known for his many rapid conquests.
b. He fled from her advances.

The expressions in (25) are taken to be structured via the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor and those in (26), via the LOVE IS WAR metaphor (see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). They fall into two groups in line with the distinction Stefanowisch (2006: 55–56) draws between metaphorical expressions that contain target items, which he calls *metaphorical patterns*, and those that do not. I would argue rather that the examples in (26a-b) do comprise overt target items, and consequently, also fall under the subcatory of metaphorical patterns.

For Stefanowisch (2006: 67) the expressions in (26a-b) do not constitute metaphorical patterns. He argued that "the word *conquest* is the only word that evokes the source domain WAR, while the target domain LOVE is not evoked by any lexical item at all". As noted above, such a view is based on the long held claim that source domains are concrete relative to target domains, which are always abstract. On this premise, Stefanowisch's observation that the source word *conquest* refers to the source domain of WAR essentially calls on the literal meaning of the word, that is, "The subjugation and assumption of control of a place or people by military force" (Oxford English Dictionary). I would rather suggest that *conquest* is employed here in the sense of "A person whose affection or favour has been won" (Oxford English Dictionary). This sense is metaphorical in charac-

ter; it is assumed to derive by extension from the central meaning of the category denoted. As such, *conquest* has at its root a conceptual metaphor wherein love is conceptualized as war. This is to say, it has, thanks to its metaphoricity, the source domain WAR and the target domain LOVE as integral part of its semantic structure. Such a characterization makes it possible to argue that *conquest* qualifies as a 'hybrid' word, serving both as a source and target word in the expressions in (26a). There is, hence, every reason to state that the expression activates the LOVE IS WAR metaphor, and mostly that the target domain of LOVE is explicitly evoked by the item *conquest*.

The same holds for the example in (26b). But some details require further clarification. Likewise, the claim that this example contains no explicit target item is questionable. The reason is that the word *advances* does evoke the target domain of LOVE. It is a polysemous word, and hence exhibits, in the same fashion as the word *conquest*, a set of senses, namely the literal and the figurative senses in (a) and (b), respectively (Oxford English Dictionary).

a. 'A forward movement'
b. '(usually advances) An approach made to someone with the aim of initiating sexual or amorous relations'.

The question then is whether the metaphor involved arises from the literal sense in (a) or the figurative one in (b). If taken into account, the literal meaning of *advances* would produce no metaphor at all. The expression remains literal in character; it describes literally the action of someone who runs away from someone else. It follows then that the figurative sense in (b) is what licenses the whole expression's metaphoricity. It can be assumed, moreover, that this sense emerges by extension from the literal meaning of the word. Central to its figurativity is the projection of the conceptual materials carried in the literal sense onto the domain of LOVE. It is no surprise, though, that the word *advances* acts as an overt item that activates the target domain of LOVE in the LOVE IS WAR metaphor.

Still, it is unclear why CMT concludes that WAR is the source domain in the metaphor; the expression comprises no item that could, arguably, invoke it explicitly. Even the verb *flee* would not prove a good candidate. Expectedly, one may run away for various reasons other than war. As such, *flee* seems to conjure up any situation that is fraught with danger. Therefore, it is more likely to activate the LOVE IS DANGER metaphor than the LOVE IS WAR metaphor.

5. Conclusion

The paper focused on the part metaphorical expressions play in construing generic-level metaphors. The line of argumentation rested on a double assumption. On the one hand, conceptual metaphor, especially in line with Langacker (2008; 2013), lends itself as blended in character. On the other hand, linguistic meanings of source words are crucial to identifying metaphors and determining their level of conceptual organization. Despite their conceptual nature, metaphors are affected by the various construals linguistic realizations impose on them. Consequently, metaphorical expressions relating to the same generic-level metaphor appear to differ as regards their metaphorical meanings, as well as their metaphoric entailments. It was shown, for instance, that the expressions *She swept me off my feet* and *Waves of passion overcame him*, because of the difference in their meanings and metaphorical entailments, turn out to be primarily structured via separate lower-level metaphors rather than by their common generic-level LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE.

A special emphasis was put on source words' polysemy. This line of research opens up, indeed, a new perspective for studying conceptual metaphor at large. Actually, on the view that source domains are concrete relative to target domains, metaphors appear to be defined in standard CMT mainly in light of literal meanings of source words. Still, as complex categories, source words denote by extension a number of figurative senses, which raises the issue of which senses activate which metaphors. Polysemy helped us achieve two main aims: account for metaphorical expressions' ambiguity and gather insights about the metaphorical status of expressions apparently bereft of explicit source and/or target items. As regards the first issue, the polysemy of the word *butcher* was shown to be behind the ambiguity of the expression *This surgeon is a butcher*. This provided additional evidence in support of the main claim that meanings of expressions are best described in terms of lower-level metaphors. Concerning the second, it was argued that the words *conquest* and *advances*, thanks to their polysemy, act in the metaphorical expressions *He is known for his many rapid conquests* and *He fled from her advances* rather as explicit items for the target domain of LOVE.

Polysemy of source words is an important topic for discussion and research. Further study is still needed to clarify in particular how metaphorical senses of source words arise by extension from the central meanings of their categories. The main goal of the paper seems, however, to be reached; I mainly indicated the way the meanings of source and target words lead

to appropriately identify the conceptual metaphors at work in metaphorical expressions.

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