
CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Our ordinary conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.



Identify the metaphors:

- Your claims are indefensible.
- He attacked every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were right on target.
- I demolished his argument.
- I've never won an argument with him.
- If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.
- He shot down all of my arguments.

“ARGUMENT IS WAR”

- Attacking a position.
- Gaining ground.
- Shooting down
your opponent.
- Winning; losing.



Identify the metaphors:

- You're wasting my time.
- This gadget will save you hours.
- I don't have the time to give you.
- How do you spend your time these days?
- That flat tire cost me an hour.
- I've invested a lot of time in this project.
- He's living on borrowed time.

“TIME IS MONEY”

We waste it, save it, spend it...



Identify the metaphors:

- I'm feeling up.
- That boosted my spirits.
- My spirits rose.
- You're in high spirits.
- Thinking about her always gives me a lift.
- I'm feeling down.
- I'm depressed.
- He's really low these days.
- I fell into a depression.
- My spirits sank.

HAPPY IS UP / SAD IS DOWN



Identify the metaphors:

- Get up.
- Wake up.
- I'm up already.
- He rises early in the morning.
- He fell asleep.
- He dropped off to sleep.
- He's under hypnosis.
- He sank into a coma.

CONSCIOUS IS UP / UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN



Identify the metaphor:

- Look how far we've come.
- We're at a crossroads.
- We'll just have to go our separate ways.
- We can't turn back now.
- I don't think is relationship is going anywhere.
- He's cruising down the highway of success.
- You'd better slow down and think about what you want to do with your life.
- As we go through life, I hope we'll always be friends.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY



Identify the metaphor:

- Our relationship has hit a dead-end street.
- Our love has been a long, bumpy road.
- We may have to go our separate ways.
- The relationship isn't going anywhere.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY



Identify the metaphor:

- She is just another one of his conquests.
- They fought over her for months, but in the end her old boyfriend won out.
- She fled from his advances.
- He won her hand in marriage.
- He made an ally of her mother.

LOVE IS WAR



Identify the metaphor:

- His remarks left a bad taste in my mouth.
- I can't digest all these ideas at once.
- Now there's an idea you can sink your teeth into.
- He expected us to swallow his claims about the new product.
- Well, now, there's food for thought.

IDEAS ARE FOOD



Identify the metaphor:

- She got all steamed up.
- He was bursting with anger.
- She blew up at me.
- He managed to keep his anger bottled up inside.
- You make my blood boil.
- He erupted.
- He exploded.
- His temper flared up.
- His eyes smouldered with rage.
- He has a fiery temper.

ANGER IS HEAT



MAPPING

- **Source domain:** the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions (e.g., love is a *journey*).
- **Target domain:** the conceptual domain that we try to understand (e.g., *love* is a journey).
- A **mapping** is the systematic set of correspondences that exist between constituent elements of the source and the target domain.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

Mappings

Source	Target
• Travelers	• Lovers
• Vehicle	• Relationship
• Destination	• Goal
• Obstacles	• Difficulties
• Speed	• Intensity
• Forward	• Growth

ARGUMENT IS WAR

Mappings

• Position	• Opinion
• Combatant	• Debate Participant
• Occupy a position	• Have an opinion
• Same position	• Agreement
• Different position	• Disagreement
• Conflict	• Argument
• Allies	• Allies
• Adversaries, Opponents	• Adversaries, Opponents

Common source domains

- **the human body** (the heart of the problem)
- **health and illness** (a healthy society, she hurt my feelings)
- **animals** (a cow, a bitch)
- **plants** (the fruits of her labour, exports flourished)
- **buildings and construction** (he's in ruins financially)
- **machines and tools** (conceptual tools, she produces a book)
- **games and sport** (to toy with the idea)
- **money and economic transactions** (spending time, investing in a relationship)
- **cooking and food** (to cook up a story, a recipe for success)
- **heat and cold** (a cold reception, icy stare)
- **light and darkness** (a dark mood, a cloud of suspicion)
- **forces** (he's driving me nuts)
- **movement and direction** (he went crazy, inflation is soaring)

Common target domains

- emotion
- desire
- morality
- thought
- society/nation
- politics
- economy
- human relationships
- communication
- time
- life and death
- religion
- events and actions

Conventional vs novel metaphors

Linguistic level

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

Our relationship isn't going anywhere / is off the track / is on the rocks. (conventional)

Vs.

We're driving in the fast lane on the freeway of love. (novel)

Conventional vs novel metaphors

Conceptual level

LOVE IS A JOURNEY (conventional)

Vs.

LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART (novel)

e.g. Our relationship is a beautiful mosaic we have made together.

Identify the metaphors:

- He has never let anyone *get in his way*.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

- I can't afford to spend time talking here.

TIME IS MONEY

- President Obama won the debate last night.

ARGUMENT IS WAR

-
- This plan is half-baked.

IDEAS ARE FOOD

- He's without direction in life.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

- She got all steamed up.

ANGER IS HEAT

- Let me chew on that for a while.

IDEAS ARE FOOD

- Their marriage has really gone off the track.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

-
- It'll take some time to digest that information.

IDEAS ARE FOOD

- Wake up.

CONSCIOUS IS UP

- The diversion should buy him some time.

TIME IS MONEY

- They swallowed whatever garbage he gave them.

IDEAS ARE FOOD

- This relationship isn't going anywhere.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

- I am where I want to be in life.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

- She has an insatiable curiosity.

IDEAS ARE FOOD

- I am feeling up today.

HAPPY IS UP

- She devoured every article about China she could find.

IDEAS ARE FOOD

- I'm feeling down today.

SAD IS DOWN

1. Match the corresponding constituent elements of the source (indicated by numbers) and the target domains (indicated by letters) in the LOVE IS WAR metaphor. In other words, what are the mappings?

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. the battles in the war | (a) the damage in love to the lovers |
| 2. the belligerents in the war | (b) to allow the partner to take control |
| 3. the damage in the war to the belligerents | (c) the dominance of a partner |
| 4. the strategies for the war actions | (d) the events of the love relationship |
| 5. the victory of a belligerent | (e) the lovers in the love relationship |
| 6. to surrender to a belligerent | (f) the plans for the love relationship |

Practice

Identify source and target domains. Identify the metaphor.

1. His ego is very fragile.
2. Inflation has robbed me of my savings.
3. He's rich in ideas.
4. She has a fertile imagination.
5. Life is empty for him.
6. He fell ill.

1. His ego is very fragile.

THE MIND IS A (BRITTLE) OBJECT

2. Inflation has robbed me of my savings.
INFLATION IS A PERSON
3. He's rich in ideas.
IDEAS ARE MONEY
4. She has a fertile imagination.
IDEAS ARE PLANTS
5. Life is empty for him.
LIFE IS A CONTAINER
6. He fell ill.
SICK IS DOWN

Practice 2:

1. I'm starved for love.
2. She looks like a Ferrari.
3. What is the foundation of your theory?
4. He is burning with love.
5. I'm under her spell.

1. I'm starved for love.

LOVE IS FOOD

2. She looks like a Ferrari.

WOMAN IS A CAR

3. What is the foundation for your theory?

THEORY IS A BUILDING/HOUSE

4. He is burning with love.

LOVE IS FIRE

5. I'm under her spell.

LOVE IS MAGIC

Practice 3

1. He is in a dark mood.
2. He is a lion.
3. He has a blot on his past/ a clean past.
4. He doesn't want to get his hands dirty.
5. He's a budding artist.
6. She's past her bloom.

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1. He is in a dark mood.

SAD IS DARK

2. He is a lion.

PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS

3. He has a blot on his past/ a clean past.

He doesn't want to get his hands dirty.

MORALITY IS CLEANLINESS

4. He's a budding artist.

5. She's past her bloom.

PEOPLE ARE PLANTS