METAPHOR, METONYMY AND THE IMPLICATURE/EXPLICATURE DISTINCTION[1]

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This paper explores the relationship between the relevance-theoretic treatment of inference in terms of implicatures and explicatures, and the Cognitive Linguistics approach to metaphor and metonymy as ways of understanding and reasoning about the world. Relevance theorists argue that explicatures are derived inferentially from the blueprint provided by the logical form of an utterance, which involves three subtasks: reference fixation, disambiguation, and enrichment. These procedures are based on the development or expansion of an initial assumption schema. We revise this view and contend that explicatures may also be obtained through mitigation or through the modification of an assumption schema by means of a metaphoric or a metonymic mapping. The explicatures thus obtained become available for the production of implicatures on the basis of the application of a premise-conclusion schema.

1. Deriving implications

Consider the following utterances:

(1) She's ready
(2) That's some distance from here
(3) I've told you a thousand times not to touch that wire
(4) You're getting nowhere that way
(5) I love Shakespeare

In order to interpret (1) we need to assign a referent to *she* and to complete the sentence by specifying what she is ready for. Imagine that *she* refers to the Queen of England, who is getting ready to attend a celebration which cannot start until she is present. Elaborating the sentence into "The Queen is ready to attend the celebration" does not tell us in what sense (1) is relevant, but in conjunction with the rest of the information given above, it may serve as an indication that the celebration may start.

Now think of (2) in a context in which speaker and hearer want to visit a new art gallery in the city centre but the speaker would rather drive than walk there. *That* refers to the gallery; *here* to the place where speaker and hearer are talking. However, this elaboration is not enough for interpretation since the expression *some distance* is vague. It has to be developed into something like "farther away from where we are than you think". This allows us to take (2) as an indication by the speaker that he is not willing to walk to the gallery.

Then, think of (3) as uttered by an angry father who is chiding his disobedient little son. The implication is that the father is not only warning the child not to touch the wire again but also that he has had enough. Hyperbolic statements like this are very consistent in implying that whatever is described by their propositional content is judged by the speaker to be excessive. The meaning of (3) could be paraphrased as "I have told you many times, more than I believe it necessary, not to touch that wire". Once this meaning has been worked out, the utterance may be taken as a warning from the speaker to the hearer not to disobey again.

Let us now consider (4) in a context in which the hearer is a rebellious teenage son who pays no heed to his father's advice. Obviously, (4) is easily interpreted as a warning, one based on the previous understanding of the utterance as "You are not going to achieve any goal if you act that way". In order to develop the meaning of (4) along these lines, it is necessary to think of goals metaphorically as destinations at the end of a path, and of whatever a person does as the route he takes.

Finally, in (5) we readily understand that the speaker loves not Shakespeare the writer, whom the speaker cannot have met, but his literary work. (5) may be used for various purposes. For example, it may be used by the speaker as a way of asking the hearer to buy some of Shakespeare's works for him, or of showing his literary preferences, or of countering criticism on Shakespeare. But for any such interpretation to be worked out, the hearer needs to understand that the speaker is referring to (at least a relevant part of) Shakespeare's literary production.

From this brief discussion of our examples, it becomes evident that the context contributes to the understanding of an utterance in two different manners: one, by helping the hearer to work out the meaning of the utterance on the basis of a development or parametrization of its basic conceptual structure; another by providing the hearer with supplementary information which allows him to derive inferences based on the information obtained by the previous operation. In Relevance Theory, as propounded by Sperber & Wilson (1986), the development of the basic conceptual blueprint

provided by the linguistic expression is known with the term *explicature*, while all other implications (i.e. those obtained on a premise-conclusion basis by bringing to bear supplementary information from the context) are called *implicatures*. However, Sperber & Wilson have only identified three forms of producing explicatures: *disambiguation*, *reference fixation*, and what they call *enrichment*, the latter of which would apply to the expression *some distance* in example (2) above. To these three procedures we may add other three: what we can call *mitigation*, which applies to cases of hyperbolic utterances, like (3), and what in Cognitive Linguistics is known as *metaphoric* and *metonymic mappings*, as in (4) and (5) respectively.

2. Metaphoric mappings

Metaphor has been explained by Lakoff and his collaborators as a conceptual mapping between two discrete domains where one of them (the *source*) is used to help us understand, reason and talk about the other (the *target*). Lakoff & Johnson (1980) initially made a semantic distinction between three broad metaphorical types: *structural*, *orientational*, and *ontological*. Structural metaphors occur when one concept is understood in terms of another, as in ARGUMENT IS WAR, where a portion of the concept of battle characterizes the concept of an argument (people arguing are contenders who plan tactics, attack, defend, etc.). Orientational metaphors have to do with spatial orientations like up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, and central-peripheral. They have a basis in our physical and cultural experience. For example, from the fact that humans and most other mammals sleep lying down and stand up when they awaken, we obtain the metaphors CONSCIOUS IS UP, UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN (cf. *Get up, He fell asleep*). Finally, our experience with physical objects provides the basis for ontological metaphors which allow us to understand some feature of one entity in terms of another (e.g. the metaphor THE MIND IS A MACHINE, as in *I'm a little rusty today*). In later work (Lakoff & Turner 1989; Lakoff 1993) orientational metaphors have been studied as part of image-schematic patterns, like the PATH and the CONTAINER schemas, which have a richer experiential structure.

In this sense, it is possible to regard the up-down or front-back orientations as subsidiary to a path schema involving verticality or horizontality. Consider:

(6) Our association is moving ahead.

The PATH schema has a source and a destination; there may be entities which travel along the path, impediments to motion, landmarks, etc. As is evident from (6), in which many of these elements are present, metaphors based on image-schemas share with structural metaphors the fact that both have a rich internal structure. But they crucially differ in that image-schematic metaphors have a very generic source some of whose elements are to be fleshed out by incorporating other less abstract domains, which may be carried out by means of an ontological metaphor. Thus, in (6) an association (which is a non-physical entity) is seen as the travelling entity (which is a physical entity) and the expression *moving ahead* involves a metaphorical front orientation of the entity, which suggests successful progress towards a goal (the destination).

Consider now:

(7) He sank into a coma
(8) He was led into a depression

A coma is a negative state which here is envisaged as a CONTAINER in which a person is trapped (cf. the idea of a person sinking into quicksand). There is an implicit PATH schema, which is subsidiary to and enriches the CONTAINER schema, whose destination is the "down" position, which correlates experientially with the idea that down is unconscious. Here, the up-down schema is subsidiary to the PATH schema. In (8), in contrast, the CONTAINER is seen as the (negative) destination at the end of a path and there is a front orientation of the moving entity, which makes both image-schemas subsidiary to the PATH schema.

It is evident that some image-schemas (like front-back, and up-down) may be subsidiary to others. The greater their degree of subsidiarity the simpler their conceptual structure and the more they resemble ontological metaphors in this respect. Thus, while metaphors like *I'm feeling up* or *I'm*

really low seem to work only on the basis of one relevant correspondence (HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN), others like (7) above make use of a larger number of conceptual elements thereby providing us with a larger number of meaning effects. In this sense, an image-schematic metaphor like HAPPY IS UP is comparable to an ontological one like THE MIND IS A MACHINE, where there is also just one relevant correspondence: the way the mind works is the way a machine works, as in *I'm rusty*. In contrast, in the richer system ARGUMENT IS WAR, different metaphorical expressions make use of different correspondences. In *Your claims are indefensible* the person's poor reasoning is seen as a place which is vulnerable to attack. In *His criticisms were right on the target*, the person's reasoning is seen as the arrows or bullets shot at the contender. Metaphors like HAPPY IS UP or the MIND IS A MACHINE may be aptly called *one-correspondence* metaphors, while the others may be called *many-correspondence* metaphors.

It is evident that many-correspondence metaphors have a greater potential for explicature generation. If we go back to example (4) above, we see that there is one central explicature (9 below) and then other less central ones (see 10 below):

(9) The addressee is not going to achieve any goal if he keeps acting the same way
(10) The addressee is not making the expected progress in life
     The addressee's way of doing things is an erroneous one
     The addressee may make progress if he changes his way of doing things
     The addressee may not have clear goals etc.

In one-correspondence metaphors, however, there is only one possible explicature.

3. Metonymic mappings

Metonymies are cases of one-correspondence mappings where one of the conceptual domains involved is a subdomain of the other. We may distinguish between two basic metonymic types:

one, where the target is part of the source, as in (11) below, and another in which the source is part of the target, as in (12):

(11) Chrysler has laid off 1000 workers
(12) The ham sandwich is waiting for his bill

In (11) *Chrysler* stands for the person or persons in charge of employment regulations within the company, the target being a subdomain of our knowledge about the source. In (12) —in the context of two waitresses talking in a restaurant— the source domain (i.e. the ham sandwich) is a subdomain of the metonymic target (i.e. the customer who has ordered a ham sandwich). As with metaphoric one-correspondence mappings, there is only one possible explicature for each of these metonymies, which may roughly be worded as follows:

(11') The person or persons in charge of employment regulations at Chrysler have laid off 1000 workers.
(12') The customer who has ordered a ham sandwich is waiting for his bill.

The status of (11') and (12') as explicatures is evidenced if we observe that they are necessary to construct other implications which have implicature status. Thus, in a context in which the addressee is always complaining about his own company's employment policies, (11) might implicate that the addressee should not complain since he is luckier than those who work for Chrysler. In a restaurant context (12) may be used as a way of calling a waitress's attention to a prospective problem with a customer and of asking her to do something about it.

Finally, there are two important differences between the explicatures obtained through the metonymic operations in (11) and (12). First, the metonymic target in (11') involves a reduction of the initial source domain: in contrast, the target in (12') is an expansion of the source. Second, the metonymic target in (11') is a rather imprecise conceptual domain, while the one in (12') is fully developed.

4. Interaction

The importance of the role of domain reduction and expansion through metonymy is further evidenced in cases of metaphor-metonymy interaction. Take the following two examples:
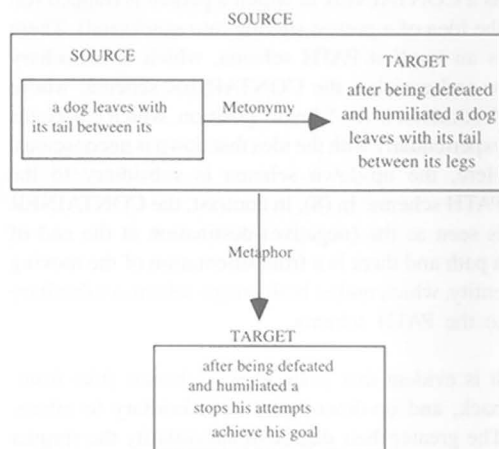
(13) She has broken my heart

FIGURE 1
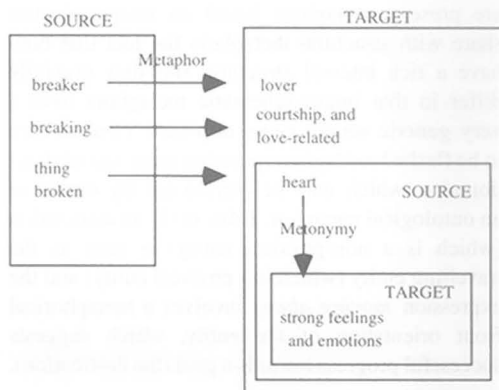
(14) He left with his tail between his legs

FIGURE 2

Example (13) is a case of metonymic reduction of the 'heart' domain and has a twofold effect: on the one hand, it allows us to refer to a rather vague subdomain culturally associated with the heart (emotions, envisaged as if contained in the heart); on the other hand, using the whole container for the part stresses the damaging effect of the protagonist's actions on the affected entity. Example (14) is a case of expansion. In fact the overall framework is an elaboration of the ontological metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS into a richer structural metaphor based on the stereotyped scene of a dog's leaving with its tail between its legs after being beaten. Since the linguistic expression only gives access to part of the conceptual material in the scene, in order for the mapping to take place the metaphoric source needs to be developed metonymically, while the selected conceptual material focuses on the most relevant part of the scene (the one suggesting defeat and humiliation).

5. Conclusion

Our discussion strongly suggests that metaphor and metonymy are cognitive mechanisms, like reference fixation, disambiguation, enrichment, and mitigation, whose main purpose is to make the information provided by utterances meet contextual requirements. This results in the production of (sets of) explicatures. On the other hand, further inferential work, particularly the one resulting in the generation of implicatures, is not based on cognitive procedures but on the application of the premise-conclusion reasoning schema.

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