9 Investigating metaphor and representation with corpora

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9.1 Using metaphor to investigate representation

9.1.1 What is metaphor and how does it relate to representation?

Stuart Hall describes representation as the production of meaning through language. Representation is thus one of the central practices producing culture, where culture itself is defined as being about 'shared meanings' (Hall, 1997a, p. 1), produced and exchanged by language. Similarly, using metaphors draws on shared meanings to implicitly compare one thing to another by assigning a name, attribute or action characteristic (within the shared meanings involved) of one object to another to which it is not usually applicable. So when someone says 'silence is golden', they produce meaning about silence by drawing on their (supposedly shared) conception of gold representing high value, knowing that silence cannot literally be golden. Following the assumption that meaning is always produced from a particular cultural, social and ideological position (Voloshinov, 1929/1973, p. 21), in this chapter I adopt a constructionist approach to representation by which things in themselves don't 'mean', but it is us that 'construct' meaning, using representational systems such as language (Hall, 1997, p. 25).

Task A

Critically consider the following statement: 'Meaning comes about in both the individual psyche and in shared social experience through the medium of the sign, for in both spheres understanding comes about as a response to a sign with signs' (Voloshinov, 1929/1973, p. 48). What does this mean, for language in general and for metaphor in particular? Think of arguments in favour and against this view and try to relate some linguistic theories you may know to it. Construct a classroom discussion debating the different arguments.

A key contention in the above statement is that meaning arises only in (dialogic) interaction, not in isolated minds or speakers, a view that is shared by philosophies of language such as Bakhtin's dialogism (Holquist, 2002; Morson & Emerson, 1990, pp. 126–136) and Foucault's contention that 'everything is already interpretation' (Foucault, 1964/1990, p. 64). Approaching discourse from such a dialogic perspective, representation is a central issue in the construction of meaning, be it metaphorical or otherwise. If 'the subject comes into existence as an entity only through encounters with others' (Ahmed, 2000, p. 7), we are predominantly defined by how others represent us. We can work to present ourselves in a particular way, but a much greater part of our public perception in the form of discursive material is given by others' representation of us. Representation through others, it could be argued, is what gives us shape and makes us real.

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Representing someone or something metaphorically can be roughly defined as constructing meaning through language that seems incongruent in the current discourse but that can be understood in context by some meaning transfer. Traditional approaches to metaphor are based on the assumption that metaphor is characterised and recognised by semantic anomaly or deviance (for a comprehensive review, see Leezenberg, 2001, p. 135; see also Cameron, 1999, pp. 8–13). The conceptualist view that metaphor is a matter of thought rather than language is different from this and thus dismisses most previous work, especially what the authors term the 'objectivist view' (Lakoff, 1990, p. xii). The core, experientialist argument of conceptual metaphor theory is that metaphor is part of everyday language and thought, so that formal semantic accounts cannot adequately account for it. The idea that thought is metaphorical was already proposed by Black (1962), but only really developed in a series of works by Lakoff and colleagues (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Lakoff & Turner, 1989).

Their proposal is defined by the two key assumptions that thought is, first, 'embodied, that is, the structures used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it', and, second, 'imaginative, in that those concepts which are not directly grounded in experience employ metaphor, metonymy and mental imagery – all of which go beyond the literal mirroring, or representation, of external reality' (Lakoff, 1990, p. xii). Crucially, the conceptualist view sees metaphors as 'part of the cognitive unconscious' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 56), which is incompatible with an analysis of meaning-making, metaphorical or not, as a purposeful activity.

While the conceptual metaphor theory is often considered to have revolutionised thinking about language, this is to some extent only true because it attacked an artificial and regressive dichotomy between behaviourist and mentalist approaches that bestowed irrelevance on the mind and the body, respectively, and that had installed itself in the middle of the 20th century (see Sinha, 2010, p. 1268). Psychology and, by extension, cognitive linguistics have, however, always been a bridge discipline between behaviourist and mentalist extremes.

Some influential examples of this early tradition of cognitive linguistics are Vygotsky's work on thought and language (Vygotsky, 1934/1986) and Karl Bühler's (1934) work on the cognitive role of metaphor, which anticipates many lines of thought adopted in recent decades. Bühler was aware of the omnipresence of metaphor and argued that every linguistic composite is metaphorical to some degree (e.g. German *Handschuh* ('glove'), which literally means *hand shoe*) and that the metaphorical is no extraordinary phenomenon (Bühler, 1934, p. 343). Bühler already saw metaphor as a *Mischverfahren* ('blending process'), a view taken also by modern conceptual blending theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). Based on experimental evidence, he argued that there are significant parallels between experiences, where there is a duality of spheres (words' ranges of meaning) and frequent interchange between these spheres that only disappears with advanced conventionalisation (Bühler, 1934, p. 343), which is an early treatment of the difference between conventionalised and novel metaphors (see Bowdle & Gentner, 2005).

The hold of conceptual metaphor theory and its basis in experientialism is such that much work was necessary to reintroduce the speaker as a purposeful agent into theory. The ability of studying language in use through corpus approaches played a significant role in this, and the emergence of CADS (see Chapter 14) has given greater empirical validity also to metaphor research. An approach that has become known as critical metaphor analysis, for instance, contends that 'metaphor can only be explained by considering the interdependency of its semantic, pragmatic and cognitive dimensions' (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 2) and should not be studied as an 'unconscious reflex' but

rather as a purposeful form of language use (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 11). Other work to this effect is found in Hart (2008), using the abovementioned conceptual blending theory.

The discourse dynamics approach is informed by the conceptual metaphor theory, but rejects the conceptualist formulation of metaphor 'in terms of highly generalised and abstract conceptual domains that pre-exist actual uses of metaphors in language' (Cameron, 2010, p. 77) and other basic tenets of conceptual metaphor theory:

> What I cannot accept are the more grandiose claims: that we cannot think or speak without metaphor, when we clearly can and do; that metaphors are hard-wired into our brains in some way and available always and to everyone, rather than learnt alongside everything else social and cultural that we learn, including categories and language; and most pertinent here, that conceptual metaphors are fixed and invariant mappings across domains.
>
> (Cameron, 2016, p. 28)

Consequently, this approach places importance on the systematicity of metaphor use as it emerges across a text (Cameron, 2010, p. 91). Metaphor, it holds, 'cannot be separated from its discourse context without becoming something different' (Cameron, 2010, p. 79). It thus constitutes a somewhat bolder theoretical development towards understanding the construction of meaning as a primarily social and context-based activity.

Modern metaphor research once again places meaning construction as a deliberate, purposeful act at the centre stage in language and cognition. Though that in itself is not a novelty in the theory of language, scholars establish broader categories than what is covered by semantics or pragmatics, and base their work on the concept of schema, which 'interfaces human neurobiology with the social context of cognitive process' (Sinha, 2010, pp. 1275–1276). Current theoretical advances represent the attempt not just to overcome the old mind-body dualism but also that of the individual vs the social. The value of those approaches is that they seek to connect the constructionist approach to representation with the role of metaphor in mental conceptualisation, arguing that meaning arises through dialogic interaction, that is, through social practice and situatedness, but also, on a wider basis, that the individual subject is only constituted through social contact and consequent representation through others in encounters (Ahmed, 2000, p. 7).

9.1.2 Case studies

The previous section focussed on the theoretical background of metaphor and its relation to meaning and representation. In this section, I present two case studies from the field of corpus-assisted discourse studies that exemplify how corpora can be used to study metaphorical representation.

The first case study is Dimitris Kitis et al. (2018), who analysed the metaphorical representation of black middle-class people in South Africa through terms like *black diamonds*, *clever blacks* and *coconuts* and their collocates. An approximately 1.4 million-word corpus was built by selecting from a larger dataset texts that contained the aforementioned terms and *black middle class*. The authors do not state whether or how they confirmed that the terms were indeed used metaphorically, which would be important to avoid false positives, for instance in the case of *coconuts*. The data stems from 20 mainstream South African newspapers published between 2008 and 2014. The aim

was to query how the black middle class is represented through language, how those representations are legitimated and who benefits from those representations. The authors found a combination of seemingly contradictory representations and paternalistic discourses that, from an intersectional perspective, show that 'we cannot treat categories like race and class as separate and discrete axes of privilege or subordination' (Dimitris Kitis et al., 2018, p. 168).

While social categories such as ethnicity, class and gender are commonly analysed in discourse studies, one valuable aspect of this study is that it analyses how power imbalances are produced through the 'mutual constitution' of these categories, that is, how various categories affect each other. Thus, through an investigation of 'the mutually constitutive intersections of race and class in contemporary South African media representations', the study attempted to 'understand whether and, if so, how representational inequalities take place in a context of social change' (Dimitris Kitis et al., 2018, p. 151) like South Africa. The study is an excellent example of how an in-depth, context-sensitive and qualitative analysis can be built on a corpus-assisted exploration of a large amount of texts.

The second case study is one I conducted myself (Bisiada, 2018) on the expression of *doing homework*, as in the example 'the Greeks are in crisis because they haven't done their homework for years', a metaphor that is frequent and recurrent in languages such as English, German and Spanish. It is a combination of structural metaphor and understatement that simplifies public debates by presenting complex issues such as economic reforms as simple tasks. It also stifles critical and consensual political debates by replacing questions of fairness and adequacy with unquestionable moral obligation. The paper investigated its emergence and pragmatic effects in American and German newspaper discourse through the Corpus of Historical American English, the Corpus of Contemporary American English and *Die ZEIT* corpora. It was found that in both English and German, the metaphor has been used for positive self- and negative other-representation ('we have done our homework' vs '[he] urged Europeans to do their unfinished homework'; Bisiada, 2018, p. 620), but also in a general way to frame debates in terms of simple duties: If the press uses metaphoric language like 'Tsipras's homework has been thrown back in his face' unironically, such discourse sides with the more powerful creditor countries and grossly oversimplifies the complexity of the socio-economic situation (Bisiada, 2018, p. 623).

The *homework* metaphor evokes shared meanings of education, thus representing some discourse actors as pupils who have failed to deliver on a particular duty and others as teachers who are in an authoritative position to set tasks. While discourses discussing the state of a crisis often draw on health or nature metaphors, discourses on the solutions to crises are here shown to draw on education metaphors, thus 'establishing differential power relations between the discourse participants and framing political negotiation in terms of a classroom situation' (Bisiada, 2018, p. 625), which may serve to bypass debate on the necessity or appropriateness of particular measures.

9.2 Practical activities in metaphor and representation

9.2.1 Getting to know metaphor and representation

On 13 October 2022, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, gave a speech at the inauguration of the European Diplomatic Academy. In the part of the speech reproduced below, he drew on a metaphorical

analogy between a garden, representing Europe, and a jungle, representing the rest of the world:

> (1) Yes, Europe is a garden. We have built a garden. Everything works. It is the best combination of political freedom, economic prosperity and social cohesion that the humankind has been able to build—the three things together. […]
>
> The rest of the world […] is not exactly a garden. Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden. The gardeners should take care of it, but they will not protect the garden by building walls. A nice small garden surrounded by high walls in order to prevent the jungle from coming in is not going to be a solution. Because the jungle has a strong growth capacity, and the wall will never be high enough in order to protect the garden.
>
> The gardeners have to go to the jungle. Europeans have to be much more engaged with the rest of the world. Otherwise, the rest of the world will invade us, by different ways and means.
>
> […]
>
> Keep the garden, be good gardeners. But your duty will not be to take care of the garden itself but [of] the jungle outside.[1]

Let us now, without reading anything else on the speech or its context, analyse how discourse participants or places are represented through metaphors in the extract. The first step during close reading of the speech is to formally identify the metaphors. Methodologically, we note that there are words and phrases to do with gardening that are somehow anomalous in a speech about politics, so those terms must be interpreted metaphorically to make sense of them in the present discourse context.

Task B1

Make a list of terms in the extract that strike you as anomalous, and thus potentially metaphorical.

In the terminology of the discourse dynamics approach (Cameron et al., 2009), the terms you have identified are *linguistic metaphor vehicles* that are used to talk about the *topic*, in terms of speech, building a free and prosperous society.

The metaphor vehicles identified above can be assigned to a *vehicle grouping* of the analyst's choice, to aid in the search for patterns and systematicity in metaphor use. Establishing these categories across a whole corpus of discourse is one of the most challenging tasks in metaphor analysis and the one that is most prone to introducing subjectivity into the research, as there is no right answer as to what the right level of abstraction is.

Task B2

Try to establish one or two grouping(s) for the metaphor vehicles you have identified. Having thus identified some systematicity, state how building a free and prosperous society is metaphorically represented by Borrell.

Having conducted the analysis, we can argue that, through a pattern of metaphorical representation, the meaning that is made here is that building a free and prosperous society is like controlling and dominating the growth of plants. This showcases an important potential of metaphor: to explain a complex concept through a much simpler activity. As any simplification does, this analogy necessarily draws on 'common sense', in other words, unspoken assumptions that are considered to be normal, under the prevalent ideology. This is where the interpretations and implications of what makes a *garden* and what makes a *jungle* come in and where controversies may arise.

While the discourse dynamic approach to metaphor and conceptual metaphor theory share the basic procedure of analysis, with linguistic metaphors being the basic unit of analysis, albeit with different terms (vehicle terms are called source domain terms), the crucial difference is that 'there is no a priori assumption that a particular conceptual metaphor is active when a speaker produces a linguistic metaphor' (Cameron et al., 2009, p. 75). In other words, while conceptual metaphor theory uses discourse data to draw conclusions about the mind, assuming that the use of linguistic metaphor equates to the presence of thought metaphor, the discourse dynamics approach does not draw inferences about the mind, assuming that no such inference is empirically possible based on discourse data, and so concentrates on language use by specific speakers in specific texts.

The coded data now has to be analysed according to the research questions. Let's say that in our present example, we wanted to find out how global society is metaphorically represented in Borrell's speech. We have identified that Borrell uses vehicle terms from horticulture to describe Europe as a *nice small garden* that *we* have built, indicating that Europe is ordered, neat and created by design, and *everything works*. Staying within the semantic field of horticulture, he represents the rest of the world as a *jungle* that has *strong growth capacity*, through which it is threatening to *invade* the garden. The rest of the world is thus represented as wild, chaotic and out of order.

Task B3

Now, reflect on some of the implications of the meanings that are constructed by this metaphorical representation. Consider the following questions:

1 Who in your understanding is meant when Borrell says that *we* have built a garden? Is there something potentially problematic in this view?
2 How do you understand *growth*: in economic terms or in terms of population growth, or both? Reflect on the difference between the reader's understanding and a supposed 'meaning' present in the speech. What evidence is there in the speech to argue for one or the other?
3 My analytic guide here is informed by my own interpretation of *garden* and *jungle* from a Central European perspective. How might your perspective or that of others differ?

9.2.2 Further exploration

Borrell uses the term *gardeners* to represent the addressees and compel them to adopt a particular ideological position. He calls on them to *go to the jungle* and *take care* of it because just building *high walls* will not protect the garden. This presumably refers to converting the *jungle* into a *garden*. How he envisages that conversion is left open.

Task C

Now extend your analysis to other parts of Borrell's speech (see link above for the full transcript) using your preferred theory of metaphor.

1 What other metaphors or analogies can you identify? Are they related to the metaphor identified in the previous section? How do they contribute to our analysis of the entire speech?
2 Evaluate the use of the extended horticulture metaphor and other metaphors within the immediate context of the speech (i.e. its occasion and participants), within the wider context of events in Europe at the time of the speech and within a large historical context of the relation between European nations and other parts of the world.

3 There is a critique of

> A tendency to restrict 'data' in critical discourse analysis (but also on a more general level of pragmatics and sociolinguistics) to *linguistically identifiable* data. […] [P]rocesses of intertextuality, dialogism, textualisation and so on are stopped and reduced to one textual event (in itself reduced to one textual object) which is then supposed to tell the whole (political, historical, cultural, ideological) story.
>
> (Blommaert, 1997, p. 79)

4 Try to reformulate this critique in simple terms to be sure to understand it. Then think about what data that is not 'linguistically identifiable' in the Borrell speech could be analysed for metaphorical representation or could inform an analysis of it.

Borrell's metaphor drew a lot of criticism, accusing Borrell of, among other things, neo-colonialism and racism. He wrote the blog post *On metaphors and geo-politics*[2] as an apology for the controversy, claiming that part of what he said 'was taken out of context and given a certain spin'. He explained his intentions in using the metaphor as follows:

> (2) The metaphor of "the garden" and "the jungle" is not my invention. Some truly dislike it because, among others, it has been used by US neo-conservatives, but I am far from this school of political thought. In fact, the concept has been present in academic and political debates for decades, because it refers to a simple question that we face every day: should the international order be based on principles accepted by all, regardless of the strength of its actors, or should it be based on the will of the strongest, which is commonly called "the law of the jungle"?
>
> Regrettably, the world in which we live today looks more and more like a "jungle" and less and less like a "garden", because in many parts of the world, the law of the strongest is eroding agreed international norms.

If taken seriously, this clarification affects our interpretation and grouping of metaphors. The juxtaposition of *garden* and *jungle* as well as other metaphors in the speech suggested an analogy with horticulture, but not with the existence of animate beings or issues of strength.

Task C2

1 Have a classroom debate, in which one group takes the role of supporting Borrell's defence and another group that of supporting the initial analysis. Both groups should try to find evidence in the form of (linguistic) metaphors to argue their positions.
2 Assuming his explanation is truthful, what does this clash of interpretations tell us about using metaphor to study the way people think?
3 Among others, Borrell used the 'invasion' metaphor. What does that interpretation mean for his explanation of the metaphor?
4 Comment on the importance of context in regard to this matter: how much context should the study of metaphorical representation involve and to what extent can context be used to hide the researcher's bias?
5 Leezenberg (2001) argues that metaphor is a mode of interpretation rather than of expression. Relate this claim to the present text. To what extent is text, especially metaphoric meaning, dependent on the receiver and independent of the issuer?

9.2.3 Independent task

The tasks above have been guided to a greater or lesser extent by pointing you in a particular direction. They have also not relied greatly on corpora in order to underline the point that the most important aspect of the analysis of (representation through) metaphor is close reading, taking the context into account.

Task D

Now, using what you have worked out so far, try to use a corpus-assisted approach to study the *garden vs jungle* metaphor further, as discussed in Chapter 5. How has it been used in other texts and by other speakers, if at all? In what other language does it exist and how is it used? This may well require you to consult other or bigger corpora. Consider which corpora might be most useful for this. Can you draw on existing corpora, such as the EUROPARL or CLARIN corpora, or do you have to create your own? How would you go about designing a corpus study into this metaphor: Would you look for collocates (see Chapter 3), such as the ones found in the current speech? Try to describe your methodology in a detailed way and list the search keys you are using so that other researchers can retrace your steps.

9.3 Reflecting on metaphor and representation

9.3.1 Good practice

Be transparent about how you identify metaphor. The most widely known and applied procedure is MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010), an extension of MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). In recent years, this procedure has become usable in more and more languages (Nacey et al., 2019). As metaphor identification is generally a subjective activity, there are some steps of good practice that you should take:

- Keep in mind that different manifestations of metaphor in discourse may make it hard to apply the same procedure throughout your study
- Consider having someone else analyse your data separately (this is also called 'intercoder reliability', as discussed in Chapter 6), then compare your results, consider using a statistical measurement such as Cohen's kappa and discuss your interpretations
- Report on your methodology in as detailed a fashion as possible – the time-consuming process of annotating corpora[3] provides a good example for this

Avoid starting from predetermined political categorisations. Often, research sets out to study how 'populist actors' or 'racist parties' metaphorically represent particular phenomena or people, to then confirm in their findings that they are indeed populist or racist. This tendency in discourse analysis has been critiqued extensively: for excellent overviews of critiques of critical discourse analysis and the importance of context and ideology, see Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000, pp. 455–456), Breeze (2011, pp. 513–516) and Pennycook (2021, Chapter 5).

9.3.2 Potential pitfalls

As I have tried to show above, metaphorical representation is all about meaning and context. Corpus approaches help us make our studies meaningful and systematic beyond anecdotal or impressionistic observations, but they bear the potential of making us lose

sight of the importance of qualitative, context-sensitive analysis of a text. Always try to find a balance between these two poles.

Be careful with supposed 'background facts': if we uncritically accept supposedly established 'background facts' related to a particular text or discourse, we risk undermining our critical analysis of it by giving it an ideological bias and 'neutralis[ing] the socially constructed nature of scholarly practices' (Blommaert, 1997, p. 70). This is especially important in metaphor research, where so much depends on (assumedly) shared meanings in interpretation, as the tasks above have shown.

A key pitfall to be aware of concerns the way you group your metaphors together, in other words, the analysis you impose on the authors' construction of meaning, by which in turn you construct your own meaning as you see it in the text. Regardless of the theoretical approach you favour, whether it's the selection of particular mappings, image schemas or systematic metaphors, thought should be given to how you label them. Choose explanatorily strong and theoretically motivated labels over apparently arbitrary or ad hoc ones (see McGlone, 2007). Culture-specific formulations should also be avoided, especially in conjunction with theories that posit universality of metaphorical mappings: the common metaphorical domain 'theories are buildings' parts from a Western-inspired notion of building that may not be as universal as Western speakers assume.

Don't confuse the analysis of discourse in the form of expressions and text with the analysis of thought or supposed mental models. While this impression is often generated by the idea that metaphors structure our thoughts, we should not assume uncritically that conclusions on how someone's mind is structured can be drawn from what they say.

9.3.3 Areas of academic debate

Various points for debate have been identified in this chapter. Here are just two main ones:

- Is meaning located in social interaction or in individual minds?
- Does the corpus approach lend empirical strength to the study of metaphor and representation in discourse?

9.4 Further reading in metaphor and representation

9.4.1 Case studies

1 Patterson, K. J. (2018). *Understanding metaphor through corpora: A case study of metaphors in nineteenth century writing*. Routledge.

Patterson (2018) is a case study of a corpus-based approach to metaphor drawing on lexical priming theory and also makes an excellent argument for the use of corpus methods in metaphor research.

2 Semino, E., Demjén, Z., & Demmen, J. (2018). An integrated approach to metaphor and framing in cognition, discourse, and practice, with an application to metaphors for cancer. *Applied Linguistics, 39*(5), 625–645. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw028

Semino et al. (2018) is a key publication applying the notion of framing to metaphor research and discussing its potential at various levels of analysis.

3 Taylor, C. (2022). The affordances of metaphor for diachronic corpora & discourse analysis: Water metaphors and migration. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics, 27*(4), 451–479. https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.22004.tay

Taylor (2022) is a case study of water metaphors in migration contexts, arguing for the potential of metaphor and corpus approaches in diachronic analyses.

4 Huang, X., & Bisiada, M. (2021). Is obesity just a health issue? Metaphorical framings of obesity in the *People's Daily*. *CADAAD Journal, 13*(2), 18–40.

Huang and Bisiada (2021) study the metaphorical representation of obesity in Chinese media, where obesity is constructed as a matter of national collective social character rather than just an individual health issue.

5 Stefanowitsch, A., & Gries, S. T. (Eds.) (2006). *Corpus-based approaches to metaphor and metonymy*. Mouton de Gruyter.

A variety of case studies can be found in Stefanowitsch and Gries (2006).

9.4.2 Theory

1 Deignan, A. (2005). *Metaphor and corpus linguistics*. John Benjamins.

A key text on corpus approaches to metaphor from a variety of theories is Deignan (2005).

2 Semino, E. (2017). Corpus linguistics and metaphor. In B. Dancygier (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of cognitive linguistics* (pp. 463–476). Cambridge University Press.

Semino (2017) provides an overview of the use of corpora in conceptual metaphor research.

3 Cameron, L., Maslen, R., Todd, Z., Maule, J., Stratton, P., & Stanley, N. (2009). The discourse dynamics approach to metaphor and metaphor-led discourse analysis. *Metaphor and Symbol, 24*(2), 63–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926480902830821

Cameron et al. (2009) outline the discourse dynamics approach, whose view of metaphors as a linguistic and cognitive phenomenon, not in isolation from context, but emerging dynamically in the course of language in use makes it one of the theoretically soundest approaches to metaphorical representation in discourse.

4 Tirrell, L. (1989). Extending: The structure of metaphor. *Noûs, 23*(1), 17–34.

Tirrell (1989) critiques metaphor research for ignoring broader linguistic context and sees interpreting discourse metaphorically as depending on shared assumptions.

5 Musolff, A. (2006). Metaphor scenarios in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol, 21*(1), 23–38. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms2101_2

A similar point is made on the notion of scenario by Musolff (2006).

9.4.3 Reflection (e.g. critical discussion of metaphor)

1 Cameron, L. (2016). Mixed metaphors from a discourse dynamics perspective: A non-issue? In J. Raymond & W. Gibbs (Eds.), *Mixing metaphor* (pp. 17–30). John Benjamins.

An excellent overview and critique of metaphor studies is found in Cameron (2016).

2 Leezenberg, M. (2001). *Contexts of metaphor*. Elsevier.

Leezenberg (2001) is one of the most comprehensive histories of metaphor up to the year 2000.

3 McGlone, M. S. (2011). Hyperbole, homunculi, and hindsight bias: An alternative evaluation of conceptual metaphor theory. *Discourse Processes, 48*(8), 563–574.

The interchange of McGlone (2011) and Gibbs Jr. (2011) is an interesting debate on critiques and defences of the conceptual metaphor theory.

4 Gibbs Jr., R. W. (2011). Evaluating conceptual metaphor theory. *Discourse Processes, 48*(8), 529–562. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2011.606103

5 Jackendoff, R., & Aaron, D. (1991). Review article of Lakoff & Turner (1989). *Language, 67*, 320–338.

Jackendoff and Aaron (1991) provide a substantive critique of the scholarly work of Lakoff, Turner and Johnson.

9.5 Commentary on practical activities

Task A

Your discussion may revolve around the question of how we can theorise metaphor to make it work within a constructionist approach to representation? The way we understand metaphor is fundamentally tied to how we view meaning in language as a whole. A key question for any theoretical framework is whether it locates meaning in mental representations given to children at birth (see Chapman & Routledge, 2009, pp. 110–111) or in perspectival representations constructed through social acts (see Tomasello, 2008, pp. 343–344). While this might seem like a mainly philosophical question, the key empirical difference lies in where we assume our data to originate: can we study minds or just texts? If meaning does not reside in mental representations but in social acts, can we draw conclusions about collective or even individual minds? Does an insistence on empiricism mean we must ultimately be interested in knowing how the mind works (as argued strongly by Chilton, 2005), or does it mean we must focus on what is empirically observable in the form of texts (as argued strongly by Teubert, 2010)?

Task B1

For example, there is *(building/keeping a) garden* and *gardeners* that *take care* of it on one side and a *jungle* that could *invade the garden* on the other. One sentence is particularly metaphorically rich: 'A *nice small garden* surrounded by *high walls* in order to *prevent the jungle from coming in* is not going to be a solution'.

Task B2

In this reduced extract, we might choose *horticulture* to group together both plant design (*garden*) and uncontrolled growth (*jungle*), but depending on the number of metaphor vehicles, dialogically related discourse or contextual information, we could also establish *garden* and *jungle* as separate groupings.

Task B3

1 Such formulations may aim at the creation of 'others' by establishing an 'us vs them' binary, which simplifies global relations and existence. The term 'we' is generally used to invite the addressees to align with the value position of the speaker. In an analysis of representation, it should be problematised as it is normally loaded with assumptions that may not be accurate for all the addressees.

2 This question is speculative and subjective of course. *Growth* could be understood in terms of economic growth, given recent economic advantages in the 'developing world', or in terms of population growth, which is a known issue in some parts of the world. Chances are that the ambiguity here is deliberate and that the metaphor consciously invites several interpretations. Note also that, within the horticulture context, the underlying assumption that a jungle grows faster and stronger than a garden is incorrect because growth either takes place in completely unhindered circumstances, in what is then called a jungle, or in completely controlled circumstances, in what we then call a garden. In other words, what is actually a non-determined precondition of the label is turned into a characteristic feature of it. It is this circularity that makes the simplifying potential of metaphor problematic in certain circumstances. The other questions aim to get you to reflect on where meaning is located. Of course, the answer is probably somewhere in the middle: it's a combination of what the author intends to say and what addressees interpret. But especially in metaphorical language, the balance can swing over to the interpretation side.
3 An alternative perspective, for instance, might interpret the analogy in terms of longevity and empires: a garden is an artificial creation and will disappear quickly if not cared for while a jungle is a naturally resilient entity.

Task C1

As hints to get you started, take a look at the following metaphors and questions:

- Identity is today the real battlefield.' – explore the way Borrell represents identity in the speech (not just through metaphors) and how he connects it to Europe's "offering to the world the recipe for peaceful coexistence, cooperation, integration and development".
- The world needs Europe. My experience of travelling around the world is that people look at us as a beacon. Why [do] so many people come to Europe? Are there flows of illegal or irregular migrants going to Russia? Not many.' – Analyse the metaphorical representation of Europe as a beacon. How is the issue of migration represented and instrumentalised here?

Task C2

1 The immediate context is the inauguration of a centre for diplomacy. Is the use of metaphors that can be interpreted as neo-colonial adequate for such a setting? The wider context is the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe, where many NGOs critique the practice of letting refugees drown by making their rescue illegal, or by things such as the massacre of Melilla. In how far is it adequate to use garden vs jungle metaphors in this context? The historical context is imperialism and colonialism perpetrated by almost every European nation in the world. Should a top diplomat from that continent, especially of Spanish nationality, use such metaphors?
2 The main issue is that his interpretation seems to involve animate beings (*strong actors*) in a jungle, which are not part of a horticultural semantic field. Whether it is credible or not that he actually meant this is to some extent irrelevant: what matters in metaphorical speech is that you open yourself to a range of interpretations, some of

which may not have been intended. Cases like this demonstrate that it can be difficult to reach conclusions on what or how people think based on what they say. Conceptual metaphor theory is exactly that: a theory. In an overview of a range of experimental studies about the issue, Thibodeau et al. (2019) summarise the state in a modest fashion:

> Conventional metaphors really do seem to *reflect* how people think, and people readily recruit one domain to talk about and think about another. Still, some experiments suggest that this may not *always* be the case, and not everyone agrees that embodied experience plays a significant role in the use and understanding of metaphor. There is broader consensus about the power of metaphor to *shape* thought and action, though the magnitude of these effects is fairly modest, and there are many factors that moderate the efficacy of metaphor framing. (Thibodeau et al., 2019, p. 11)

3 The INVASION metaphor can be understood as referring to migration (see Nerlich, 2022; Taylor & Dewsbury, 2018), which would be a further complication for Borrell's explanation of the metaphor.

4 The amount of context to include is subject of an important decision: too little context means your argument might not be informed or might miss layers of meaning. But the more context you provide, the more you will have to decide on *which* context you use, and thus open yourself to criticism of being selective with the context to support your position. The provision of context is thus a difficult art to master (see also the comment on background facts below).

5 A point to keep in mind is the role of folk stereotypes in metaphorical representation: 'metaphorical interpretation often involves not the actual properties of the term used metaphorically, but rather the stereotypical properties that are commonly associated with it' (Leezenberg, 2001, p. 74). For instance, while gorillas are shy and sensitive beings, they are commonly thought to be fierce and violent, and so representations based on the gorilla metaphor will draw on those latter properties (Searle, 1979/1993, p. 92). It is the constructed meaning that represents gorillas and that decides how a metaphorical representation of someone as a gorilla is understood, even if the material reality is different. There is empirical evidence that the same metaphor can be understood differently by different people Winter et al. (2020).

Notes

1 The full transcript and video recording are available at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-diplomatic-academy-opening-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-inauguration_en
2 Available at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/metaphors-and-geo-politics_en
3 See, for instance, http://www.vismet.org/metcor/documentation/home.html

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