The dimensionality of metaphor

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Introduction

There is overwhelming evidence in the semiotic, psychological, and language sciences that abstract concepts are knowable primarily (if not exclusively) as "metaphorized ideas," i.e. as signifieds that are constructed cognitively through metaphorical reasoning. The ongoing research on metaphor in cognitive linguistics, for instance, now strongly suggests that metaphorical modes of conceptualization characterize all representational systems — language, gesture, narrative, the arts, etc. (recent summaries of relevant work in this domain can be found in Gibbs 1994 and Goatley 1997). However, in my view, the ever-burgeoning literature on what has come to be known as *conceptual metaphor theory* (henceforward CMT) (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987) still lacks a synthetic semiotic framework for interpreting the diverse, multiform manifestations of metaphor in human symbolic and communicative behavior. The purpose of this paper is to provide such a framework, drafted from Peircean theory, called *dimensionality theory* (DT), which I proposed as a target for discussion in a previous study (Danesi 1998).

Dimensionality Theory

In terms of semiotic method, DT posits nothing new. It simply provides a framework for investigating representational systems in terms of three dimensions, which Peirce called *firstness*, *secondness*, *thirdness*. DT asserts that any act or token of representation involves an interaction, or a "cognitive flow," among these three dimensions, to varying degrees (e.g. a sign constructed and/or interpreted primarily as a *symbol*, nevertheless will invariably have elements of *iconicity* and

indexicality in it). Dimensionality undergirds how we extract meaning from a sign, from a text, and, more specifically for the purposes of the present paper, from a metaphorical statement. The objective in the remainder of this paper is, in fact, to look at how dimensionality manifests itself in metaphorical reasoning and discourse.

The current research on metaphor, when looked at from the particular perspective of DT, suggests that the creation and use of metaphorical concepts follows a *firstness-to-secondness-to-thirdness* pattern. A *firstness* metaphor is one that is constructed with concrete vehicles (i.e. with vehicles referring to concrete referents), a process which produces a *conceptual metaphor*, as it is called in the relevant literature (e.g. Fauconnier 1985, 1997; Sweetser 1990; Croft 1991; Deane 1992; Indurkhya 1992; Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996). In this paper, a conceptual metaphor will be renamed a *metaform*, for it is in essence a *form* made up of a signifier referring to an abstract concept in terms of a concrete signified (Sebeok and Danesi forthcoming). The formula [thinking = seeing], for example, is a metaform because it is made up of an abstract signifier, [thinking], that is conceptualized in terms of forms, structures, categories, etc. that involve the concrete signifieds associated with [seeing]. This metaform underlies utterances such as:

1. I cannot *see* what use your *idea* might have.
2. I can't quite *visualize* what that *theory* is all about.

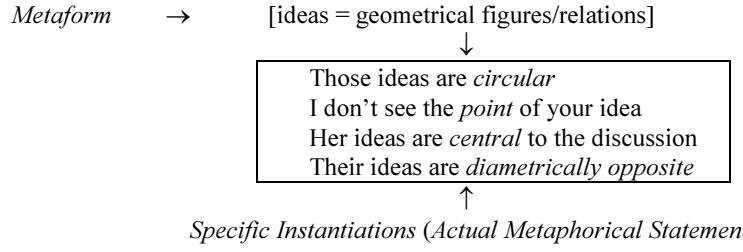
Each of the two parts of the metaform is called a *domain*: [thinking] is called the *target domain* because it is the abstract topic itself (the "target" of the metaform); and *seeing* is called the *source domain* because it enfolds the class of vehicles that deliver the meaning of the metaform (the "source" of the metaphorical concept) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). A specific metaphorical statement uttered in a discourse situation is now construable as a particular instantiation of a metaform. So, when we hear people using such metaphorical statements as the following

3. Those ideas are *circular*.
4. I don't see the *point* of your idea.
5. Her ideas are *central* to the discussion.
6. Their ideas are *diametrically* opposite.

etc.

it is obvious that they are not manifestations of isolated, self-contained metaphorical creations, but rather, specific instantiations of the

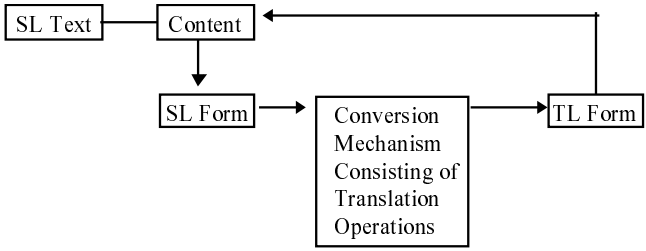
metaform whose target domain is [ideas] and whose source domain is identifiable as [geometrical figures/relations]:



Psychologically, metaforms relate the "experience" or "understanding" of some target domain to something that is familiar and easily picturable in both mental and representational terms. They reveal a basic tendency of the human mind to think of abstract concepts iconically. Among the first to point this out was the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1688–1744), perhaps the first to see metaphor as the unique ability of the human mind to interconnect things and events in the world (Danesi 1993). Before Vico, metaphor was viewed as a manifestation of *analogy*. In traditional logic, analogy is defined as an inductive form of reasoning asserting that if two or more entities are similar in one or more respects, then a probability exists that they will be similar in other respects, as some continue to claim (Skousen 1989; Way 1991; Mitchell 1993). For Vico, on the other hand, metaphor was hardly an analogical strategy; it was the primary mental tool humans use for creating analogies themselves and, thus, for thinking about otherwise unknowable things.

The above metaform, [ideas = geometrical figures/relations], is, in effect, the reason underlying the common practice of representing ideas and theories with diagrams based on geometrical figures (points, lines, circles, boxes, etc.). All "models" are, in effect, geometric diagrams. For example, the "model" of a translation system reproduced below (from Antenos-Conforti, Barbeau, and Danesi 1997) was drawn in such a way as to show how any systematic conversion of an input, or source language (SL), text into an output, or target language (TL), text that preserves the intended meaning or content is purported to unfold. Note the use of lines, arrowheads, and boxes to make the model visually depictable:

A General Translation System



Metaforms reveal the deployment of a mental strategy that allows for abstractions to become knowable in concrete picturable ways. In Peircean theory, firstness corresponds to iconicity and metaforms are, indeed, iconic forms in that they attempt to simulate some abstract notion in some sensory or perceptual way. This aspect of metaphorical reasoning was, needless to say, noticed even by Aristotle (384–322 BC), who, as is well known, coined the term *metaphor*, because he noticed its common use in the production of knowledge and of new concepts. The sapient animal is a metaphorical thinker, Aristotle contended. However, Aristotle also affirmed that, as knowledge-productive as it was, metaphor's most common function was to spruce up literal ways of thinking and speaking. Remarkably, it was this latter position of Aristotle that became the accepted view of metaphor in Western society at large, until recently.

Since the source domain of a metaform encompasses concrete signs, it follows that the selection of one sign or another from a particular domain will produce connotative nuances. Take, for example the metaphorical statement "The professor is a *snake*," which is an instantiation of the metaform [human personality = perceived physical features of animals]. The meaning of [snake] that this statement embodies, however, is not its denotative one, but rather, the culture-specific connotations perceived in snakes, namely "slyness," "danger," "slipperiness," etc. It is this complex of connotations that is implied in the depiction of the topic, [professor]. Each different instantiation of this metaform changes the view we get of the topic: e.g. in "The professor is a *rat*," the [professor] is portrayed instead as someone "aggressive," "combative," "rude," etc.—a complex of connotations which are implicit in the new selected vehicle [gorilla].

The secondness dimension of metaphorical reasoning inheres in an extension of firstness metaforms; i.e. once the first "layer" of abstract metaforms in a language has been formed, on the basis of concrete source domains, then this layer itself becomes a new productive source domain for creating a higher (= more abstract) layer of concepts. Elsewhere, I have referred to this as the *layering principle* (Danesi forthcoming). Secondness associations among metaforms can be called *meta-metaforms*. Thus, for example, in utterances such as the following the target domain of [ideas] is rendered by source domains that are themselves metaforms [devising something in the mind = upward motion] and [reflecting = scanning motion].

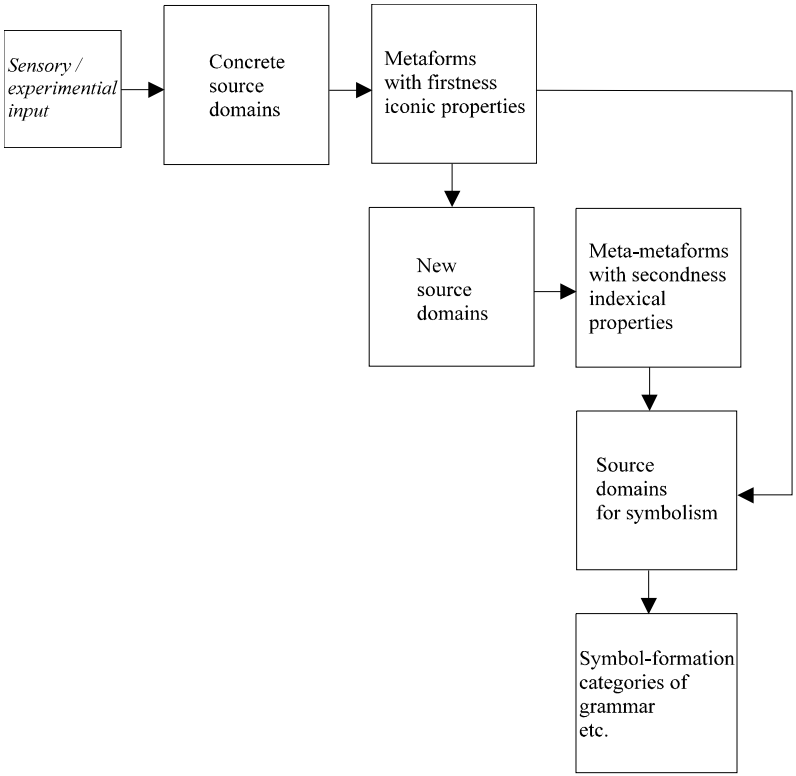
7. Where did you *think up* that idea?
8. I *thought over* carefully your ideas.
9. You should *think out* the whole problem before attempting to solve it.

Even though these phrasal verbs have abstract referents, they nonetheless evoke images of location and movement. The phrase *think up* elicits a mental image of upward movement, thus portraying the abstract referent as an object being extracted physically from a kind of mental terrain; *think over* evokes the image of scanning with the mind's eye; and *think out* elicits an image of extracting something so that it can be held up to the scrutiny of the mind's eye. These constructions allow users to locate and identify abstract ideas in relation to spatiotemporal contexts, although such contexts are purely imaginary. It's as if these imaginary indexes allow us to locate thoughts in the mind, with the mind having the features of a territory and thoughts of objects within it. Meta-metaforms like this one imply indexicality in reference. Secondness meta-metaforms are, as Peircean theory predicts, indexical in their representational focus.

The third dimension of metaphorical reasoning is *symbol formation*. Metaforms and meta-metaforms are frequently the sources of symbols, of grammatical categories, and of the other representational techniques that make up the "signifying order" of a culture. Elsewhere I have referred to this as the *interconnectedness principle* (Danesi forthcoming). In Peircean terms, symbol formation is, of course, a thirdness phenomenon, because in this case the form, the form-user, and the referent are linked to each other by the forces of historical and social convention. For example, a rose is used as a symbol for love in Western culture because it derives ultimately from the metaphorical

association of [love] to a [sweet smell], to the color [red], and to the notion that love grows like a [plant]. These are all metaforms that lead to the formation of the symbol: [rose = love].

In summary, a dimensional model of metaphor posits that abstract signifieds are, first, experienced in terms of concrete ones producing, firstness metaforms with iconic properties. These then become themselves source domains for further metaphorization producing secondness meta-metaforms with indexical properties. Finally, the metaforms and meta-metaforms are themselves the basis of many symbolic processes since they become interconnected within the signifying order of a culture:



Metaforms

In both philosophy and psychology, the term *concept* is used to designate a general strategy for referring to things that are perceived to subsume some general pattern, feature, etc. *Concept-formation* can thus be characterized as a pattern- or feature-inferencing process. A *concrete concept* can now be defined as the process of referring to a pattern, feature, etc. that is demonstrable and observable in a direct way, and an *abstract concept* as the process of referring to something that cannot be demonstrated or observed directly. So, for example, the word *car* refers to a concrete concept because one can always demonstrate or observe the existence of a car in the physical world. The word *love*, on the other hand, refers to an abstract concept because, although love exists as an emotional phenomenon, it cannot be demonstrated or observed directly (i.e. the emotion itself cannot be demonstrated or observed apart from the behaviors, states of mind, etc. that it produces).

The relevant psychological research shows that concepts are formed in one of three general ways. The first is by *induction* — i.e. by the extraction of a pattern from *specific* facts or instances. For example, if one were to measure the three angles of, say, 100 *specific* triangles (of varying shapes and sizes), one would get the same total (180°) each time. This would then lead one to *induce* that the sum of the three angles of *any* triangle is the same (180°). Induction reveals a type of conceptualization process whereby a *general* pattern is extractable from its *specific* occurrences. The second way in which humans form concepts is by *deduction*, the opposite of induction — i.e. by the application of a *general* pattern to a *specific* occurrence. For instance, if one were to prove, by the use of Euclidean notions that the sum of the angles of *any* triangle is 180°, then one would *deduce* that the sum of the angles in a given *specific* triangle (no matter what its size or shape as scalene, isosceles, etc.) would add up to 180°. Finally, concepts are formed through *abduction* (Peirce 1931–1958). For the pres??ent purposes, this can be defined simply as the visualization of an abstract concept on the model of an existing concrete, or already known, pattern. Abductive thinking is essentially a "hunch" as to what something means or presupposes. A classic example is the theory of atomic structure originated by the English physicist Ernest Rutherford (1871–1937), who conceptualized the inside of an atom as having the

structure of an infinitesimal solar system, with electrons behaving like little planets orbiting around an atomic nucleus. Rutherford's model of atomic structure was, in effect, an intuition as to what the inside of an atom looked like.

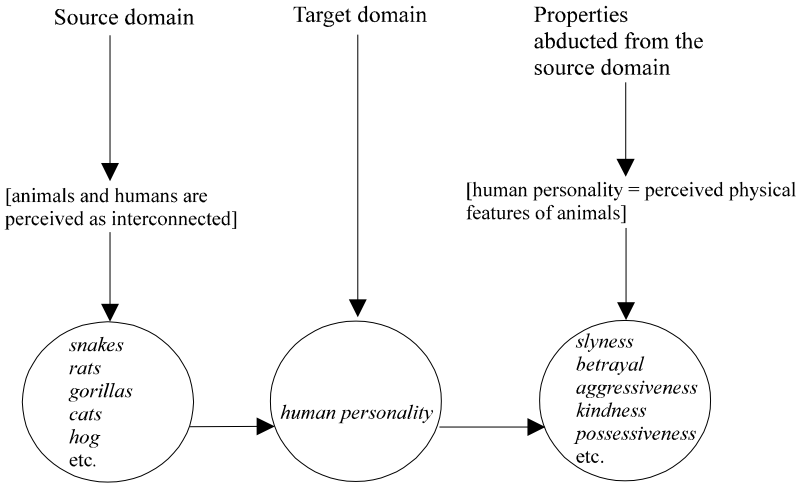
The distinction between concrete and abstract concept-formation is, needless to say, a general one. In actual fact, there are many degrees and layers of concreteness and abstraction in conceptualization that are influenced by connotative, social, affective, and other kinds of factors (Leech 1981: 9–23). But it is beyond the purpose here to investigate the role these factors play in concept-formation. Suffice it to say that most of the raw, unorganized information that comes from seeing, hearing, and the other senses is organized into useful *concepts* by induction, deduction, or abduction. Moreover, it is now evident that the type of conceptualization or representational process enlisted depends on the type of pattern that the human mind seeks from a specific situation. Often, all three processes — induction, deduction, abduction — are involved in a complementary fashion.

Metaforms are produced by abduction. In the [human personality = perceived physical features of animals] metaform it is the externally-demonstrable physical properties of [animals] that are abducted in order to understand human traits ("slipperiness," "aggressiveness," etc.). This form of reasoning has been amply documented by the CMT literature, which gained momentum in 1977 when Howard Pollio and his associates showed that metaphor was hardly a discourse option, but its very backbone (Pollio, Barlow, Fine, and Pollio 1977). This turning point led in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s to the development of two significant trends: (1) conceptual metaphor theory itself (e.g. Ortony 1979; Honeck and Hoffman 1980; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Kövecses 1986, 1988, 1990; Johnson 1987; Indurkhya 1992), and (2) a new branch of linguistics that now comes under the rubric of *cognitive linguistics* (Langacker 1987, 1990; Croft 1991; Deane 1992; Taylor 1995; Fauconnier 1997). The relevant research within CMT strongly suggests that most of our abstract concepts are stored as metaforms by our memory systems.

As discussed above, in CMT a specific *metaphor* is not considered to be an isolated construction, but rather, a specific instantiation of a metaform:

10. The professor is a *snake*.
11. Keep away from her; she's a *rat*.
12. What a *gorilla* he has become!
13. She's a sweetheart, a true *pussycat*!
14. He keeps everything for himself; he's a real *hog*.

As these examples show, the [human personality = perceived physical features of animals] metaform is one of the conceptual strategies used for understanding notions such as *slyness*, *betrayal*, *aggressiveness*, *kindness*, etc. Also as mentioned above, each different selection of a vehicle from the source domain — [snake], [rat], [gorilla], [pussycat], [hog], etc. — provides a different connotative depiction of the specific personality to be evaluated. Needless to say, perceptions of animal behaviors vary according to situation. But the fact remains that people the world over react experientially and affectively to animals in specific ways and that these reactions are encoded into a source domain for evaluating human personality:



Once this concept has been formed, then it becomes itself a source for providing further descriptive detail to our evaluations of human personality, if such a need should arise. Thus, for instance, the specific utilization of [snake] as the vehicle can itself become a sub-domain (made up of types of snakes), allowing one to zero in on specific details of the personality being described:

15. He's a *cobra*.
16. She's a *viper*.
17. Your friend is a *boa constrictor*.

etc.

In effect, within each source domain, there are sub-domains that provide the metaform-user with an array of connotations that can be utilized to project subtle detail on to the description of a certain personality. This is perhaps why in 1973 the psychologist Elinor Rosch (1973a, 1973b) came to the conclusion that there are three levels in concept-formation. Some concepts have a highly general referential function. She called these *superordinate*. The metaform [human personality = perceived physical features of animals] itself is, in her scheme, a superordinate concept, because it refers to the general phenomenon of personality. Other concepts have a typological function. Rosch called these *basic*. The choice of specific metaphorical vehicles from the [animal] source domain — [snake], [rat], etc. — produces, in effect, basic concepts because vehicular choices allow for reference to types of personalities. Finally, some concepts have a detailing function. Rosch called these *subordinate*. The selection of subtypes of [snake], [rat], etc. — [cobra], [viper], etc. — are all subordinate concepts that might be needed for specialized purposes, as we saw above.

Metaforms are not generated in an arbitrary fashion, but on the basis of an experience of beings, objects, events, etc. The [human personality = perceived physical features of animals] concept is guided, arguably, by a common experience, namely that animals and humans are interconnected in Nature's scheme of things. What does talking about people in this way imply? It means that we actually perceive humans as behaving like animals, and that our reactions are parallel to those experienced physically when we see certain animals.

Lakoff and Johnson trace the psychological source of metaforms to *image schemas*. These are mental impressions of our sensory experiences of locations, movements, shapes, reactions, feelings, etc. They are the mental links between experiences and abstract concepts. These schemas not only permit us to recognize patterns within certain bodily sensations, but also to anticipate certain consequences and to make inferences. Schemas are mental *Gestalten* that can reduce a large quantity of sensory information into general patterns. Image schema theory suggests that the source domains enlisted in delivering an

abstract concept were not chosen originally in an arbitrary fashion, but rather, that they are derived from the experience of beings, objects, events, etc. The formation of a metaform, therefore, is the result of an experiential abduction. This is why metaphors often produce aesthetic or synesthetic effects, and this explains why metaphorical utterances are more memorable than others.

Lakoff and Johnson identify three basic types of image schemas. The first one involves mental orientation — *up vs. down, back vs. front, near vs. far*, etc. This guides the formation of such abstract concepts as [mood] ("I'm feeling *up* today"), the [economy] ("Inflation is *down*"), [growth] ("My income has gone *up*"), etc. The second type involves ontological thinking. This produces metaforms in which concepts are perceived as entities and substances: e.g. [the mind = a container] as in "I'm *full* of memories," "My mind is *empty*," etc. The third type of schema is an elaboration of these two. This produces metaforms that distend orientational and ontological concepts: e.g. [time = a resource] and [time = a quantity] underlie concepts such as "My *time* is *money,*" "You cannot *buy* my *time*," etc.

As Lakoff and Johnson emphasize throughout their seminal 1980 study, we do not detect the presence of such image schemas in common discourse because of repeated usage. For example, we no longer interpret the word *see* in sentences such as "I don't *see* what you mean," "Do you *see* what I'm saying?" in metaphorical terms, because its use in such expressions has become so familiar to us. But the association between the biological act of seeing outside the body with the imaginary act of seeing within mind-space was originally the source of the conceptual metaform [understanding/believing/thinking = seeing], which now permeates common discourse:

18. There is more to this than *meets the eye*.
19. I have a different *point of view*.
20. It all depends on how you *look* at it.
21. I take a *dim view* of the whole matter.
22. I never *see eye to eye* on things with you.
23. You have a different *worldview* than I do.
24. Your ideas have given me great *insight* into life.

The presence of such metaforms in common everyday discourse challenges the Saussurean (1916) "arbitrariness" view of meaning. It is only after they have become conventionalized through frequent usage and routinization in a cultural context that their original metaphoric

relation to concrete referents is attenuated or lost to awareness. This view of concept-formation is not new. It has been implicit in the work of various semioticians, linguists, and philosophers for quite some time, not just in the work related to CMT (Lucy 1992). It simply has never been identified as such. Studying the link between perception and language was, of course, the goal of von Humboldt (1836), Sapir (1921) and Whorf (1956) — a goal that has never been truly entertained by mainstream linguistics until fairly recently. Many of the findings that are now discussed under the rubric of CMT theory, moreover, can already be discerned in the writings of Bühler (1908), Staehlin (1914), Vygotsky (1931, 1962, 1978), Richards (1936), Asch (1950, 1958), Osgood and Suci (1953), Brown, Leiter, and Hildum (1957), Black (1962), and Arnheim (1969), to mention but a few, well before the great upsurge of interest in metaphor in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Their work showed, cumulatively, that the meaning created by a metaphor was hardly a decorative one. They argued that, like two chemicals mixed together in a test tube, the result of mixing two domains through metaphorization created a dynamic interaction which retained properties of both domains but also unique ones of its own. CMT has added mainly that the resulting "semantic mixture" is the primary ingredient in abstract concept-formation.

Knowledge of human personality entails knowledge of metaforms such as the [human personality = perceived physical features of animals] one discussed here. Clearly, this kind of knowledge is culture-specific. The very same source domain could have been utilized differently; i.e. applied to a different target domains such as [justice], [hope], etc. Or else, a different source domain could have been used, in tandem with this metaform. In Western culture, for instance, the target domain of [human personality] is frequently conceptualized in terms of [mask-wearing]. Indeed, the original meaning of the word *person* reveals this very conceptualization. In ancient Greece, the word *persona* signified a "mask" worn by an actor on stage. Subsequently, it came to have the meaning of "the personality of the mask-wearer." This meaning still exists in the theater term *dramatis personae* "cast of characters" (literally "the persons of the drama"). Eventually, the word came to have its present meaning of "living human being." This diachronic analysis of *person* also explains why we con-

tinue to this day to use "theatrical" expressions such as *to play a role in life*, *to put on a proper face*, etc. in reference to persons.

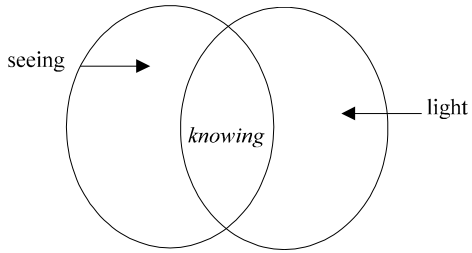
Whatever the case, once a metaform gains currency in a cultural context, it makes representation and communication efficient and convenient, conditioning its users to anticipate or project its occurrence in other domains of reference and knowledge. In effect, any metaform can become a productive resource for further meaning-making activities (see also Levin 1977, 1988 on this point).

Meta-Metaforms

Once firstness metaphorical concepts such as the [thinking = seeing] metaform have entered the language, then they can themselves become new source domains for further metaphorizing. The process that is involved in such cases can be called *layering*. Layering results when different metaforms are interrelated conceptually — as for example, the linkage of the [thinking = seeing] metaform with the [thinking occurs in the light] metaform, resulting in a new metaform [thinking/knowing = seeing in the light]:

25. I finally *saw* what you meant in the *light* of what you had told me previously.
26. I now *see* what you said in a different *light*.
27. They *saw* eye to eye in the clear *light* of all the evidence.

Such conceptual assemblages can be called *meta-metaforms*. Their presence in language and discourse can, clearly, be enlisted to explain: (1) why there are various ways of conceptualizing the same target domains, and (2) why these are not separate from one another. Etiologically, the [knowing = seeing in the light] meta-metaform is derived from two metaforms. This specific example of conceptual layering can be shown graphically as follows:



The layering of metaforms to produce higher abstractions is an unconscious culture-based process. The higher the density of layering, the more abstract and, thus, more culture-specific, the concept (e.g. Dundes 1972; Kövecses 1986, 1988, 1990). Firstness metaforms like the [thinking = seeing] one are relatively understandable across cultures: i.e. people from non-English-speaking cultures could easily figure out what the statements that instantiate this metaform mean if they were translated to them, because they connect concrete source domains — e.g. *seeing* — to abstractions — *thinking* — directly. *Meta-metaforms*, on the other hand, are more likely to be understood primarily in culture-specific ways, and are thus much harder to translate, because they connect already-existing metaforms to abstractions.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refer to the process of layering as *cultural modeling*. The following is an example of how a partial cultural model of [ideas/thinking] results from the layering of firstness metaforms:

[ideas/thoughts = food]
28. What he said left a *bitter taste* in my mouth.
29. I cannot *digest* all that information.
30. He is a *voracious* reader.
31. We do not need to *spoon feed* our students.

[ideas/thoughts = people]
32. Darwin is the *father* of modern biology.
33. Medieval ideas are *alive* and *well*.
34. Artificial Intelligence is still in its *infancy*.
35. She *breathed* new life into that idea.

[ideas/thoughts = clothing/fashion]
36. That idea is not in *vogue* any longer.
37. New York has become a center for *avant garde* thinking.
38. Revolution is *out of style* these days.
39. Studying semiotics has become quite *chic.*
40. That idea is an old *hat*.

[ideas/thoughts = buildings]
41. That is a *well-constructed* theory.
42. His views are on *solid ground*.
43. That theory needs *support*.
44. Their viewpoint *collapsed* under criticism.
45. She put together the *framework* of a theory.

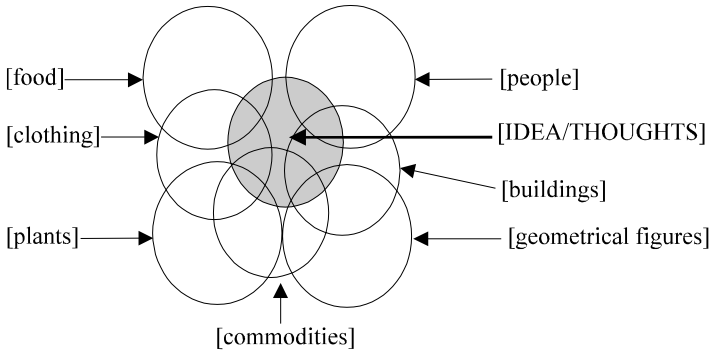
[ideas = plants]
46. Her ideas have come to *fruition*.
47. That's a *budding* theory.
48. His views have contemporary *offshoots*.
49. That is a *branch* of mathematics.

Knowledge of the source domains — [food], [people], [clothing], [buildings], [plants] — is relatively independent of culture. However, not all concrete source domains are more or less culture-independent. There are some source domains that are dependent upon specific cultural knowledge, such as, for instance, the source domains for [ideas/thoughts] based on Euclidean geometry and on commodities:

[ideas/ thoughts = geometrical figures]
50. I don't see the *point* of your idea.
51. Your ideas are *tangential* to what I'm thinking.
52. Those ideas are logically *circular*.

[ideas = commodities]
53. He certainly knows how to *package* his ideas.
54. That idea just won't *sell*.
55. There's no *market* for that idea.
56. That's a *worthless* idea.

People living in cultures without knowledge of Euclidean geometry would be hardpressed to decipher statements (50)–(52); people living in non-materialist cultures would have a hard time understanding the rationale behind statements (53)–(56). The constant juxtaposition of such conceptual formulas in common discourse produces, cumulatively, a meta-metaform of [ideas/thoughts]:



This is, of course, only a partial model of the target domain; indeed, there are many more that can be added to it. Not only, but other linkages and associations from different and often new source domains can be added to this meta-metaform according to new experiences, new cultural situations, etc. The two points to be made here are: (1) that highly abstract notions are built-up from meta-metaforms (cultural models) which coalesce into a system of abstract meaning that holds together the entire network of associated meanings in the culture, and (2) that since this system is constructed intuitively (abductively) it can be changed at any time to suit new needs.

Thirdness Metaphorization

At a cultural thirdness level, metaforms and meta-forms can be seen to be the sources of symbols, grammatical categories, discourse flow, etc. The [knowing = seeing in the light] meta-metaform crystallizes, for example, in the art of *chiaroscuro* — the technique of using light and shade in painting, invented by the Italian baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1573–1610). It is also the conceptual source for the fact that *illumination* is emphasized by religions (Ong 1977; Wescott 1978; Hausman 1989). So-called "visionary" or "revelatory" experiences are regularly portrayed in terms of dazzling sensations of light. The metaform [justice = blindness], to use another example, crops up not only in conversations, but also in pictorial representations. This is why there are statues of blindfolded women inside and outside courtrooms to symbolize *justice*. The [love = a sweet taste] metaform, to use one further example, finds expression not only in discourse ('She's my *sweetheart*;' 'I love my *honey*;' etc.), but also in rituals of love-making. This is why sweets are given symbolically to a loved one at St. Valentine's day, why matrimonial love is symbolized at a wedding ceremony by the eating of a cake, why lovers sweeten their breaths with candy before kissing, and so on.

A *symbol* is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way. Symbols allow for representation separately from stimulus-response situations. But as examples such as those just cited make saliently obvious, symbolism is more often than not the end result of a metaphorical linkage process, a thirdness form of thinking that is not the result of conventional sense-making, but rather, its very

source. For example, the [human personality = perceived physical features of animals] metaform is the source of such symbolic activities as the use of animals in totemic codes, in heraldric traditions, in the creation of fictional characters for use in story-telling to children, in the naming of sports teams, and in the creation of surnames, to mention but a few.

This view of symbolism would also explain why cultural meaning systems are in a constant state of change. As Vico argued convincingly, the metaphorical capacity is tied to *fantasia*, the imaginative and creative faculty of mind that predisposes human beings to search out and forge new meanings constantly. This is why novel metaphors are being created all the time. If someone were to say "Those ideas are a cup of coffee," it is unlikely that one would have heard this expression before. But its novelty forces one to reflect upon its meaning. The vehicle used, a [cup of coffee], is a common object of everyday life and therefore easily perceivable as a source for thinking about [ideas]. The metaphor compels one, in effect, to start thinking of ideas in terms of the kinds of physical, gustatory, social, and other attributes that are associated with a [cup of coffee]. For this metaphor to gain currency, however, it must capture the fancy of many other people for a period of time. Then and only then will its novelty have become worn out and will it become the basis for a new conceptual metaform: [ideas = drinking substances]. After that, expressions such as "Your idea is a cup of tea," "That theory is a bottle of fine wine," etc. and the like will become similarly understandable as offering different perspectives on *ideas*.

More often than not, metaforms are also traces to a culture's historical past. A common expression like "He has fallen from grace" would have been recognized instantly in a previous era as referring to the Adam and Eve story in the Bible. Today we continue to use it with only a dim awareness (if any) of its Biblical origins. Expressions that portray life as a journey — "I'm still a long way from my goal," "There is no end in sight," etc. — are similarly rooted in Biblical narrative. As the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye (1981) aptly pointed out, one cannot penetrate such expressions, and indeed most of Western literature or art, without having been exposed, directly or indirectly, to the original Biblical stories. These are the source domains for many of the metaforms we use today for talking about and judging human actions, bestowing a kind of implicit metaphysical

meaning and value to everyday life. All *mythical* stories are, in effect, extended thirdness metaforms. These allow people to depict supernatural, mythical entities in terms of human images, with human bodily forms and emotions. It is extremely difficult to think of a god in any other way. The God of the Bible, for example, is described as having physical characteristics and human emotions, but at the same time is understood to be a transcendent Being.

The metaphorical link to the past is also evident in proverbial language. Proverbs, like myths, are extended metaphors that provide sound practical advice when it is required in certain situations:

57. You've got too many fires burning (= advice to not do so many things at once).
58. Rome wasn't built in a day (= advice to have patience).
59. Don't count your chickens before they're hatched (= advice to be cautious).
60. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (= equal treatment is required in love and war).

Every culture has similar proverbs, aphorisms, and sayings. They constitute a remarkable code of ethics and of practical knowledge that anthropologists call "folk wisdom." Indeed, the very concept of *wisdom* implies the ability to apply proverbial language insightfully to a situation. Homilies and sermons, too, dispense their own kind of advice and counsel through metaphor. Rarely does a preacher not use metaphorical discourse in a cohesive and persuasive way. The art of preaching lies in the ability to link metaforms effectively to a topic — [sex = dirt]; [sin = punishable by fire]; etc.

The use of metaphor extends to scientific reasoning. Science often involves things that cannot be seen — atoms, waves, gravitational forces, magnetic fields, etc. So, scientists use their metaphorical know-how to get a look, so to speak, at this hidden matter. That is why waves are said to *undulate* through empty space like water waves ripple through a still pond; atoms to *leap* from one quantum state to another; electrons to *travel in circles* around an atomic nucleus; and so on. The poet and the scientist alike use metaphor to extrapolate a suspected inner connection among things. Metaphors are slices of truth; they are evidence of the human ability to see the universe as a coherent organism. When a metaform is accepted as fact, it enters human life, taking on an independent conceptual existence in the real world, and thus can suggest ways in which to bring about changes in

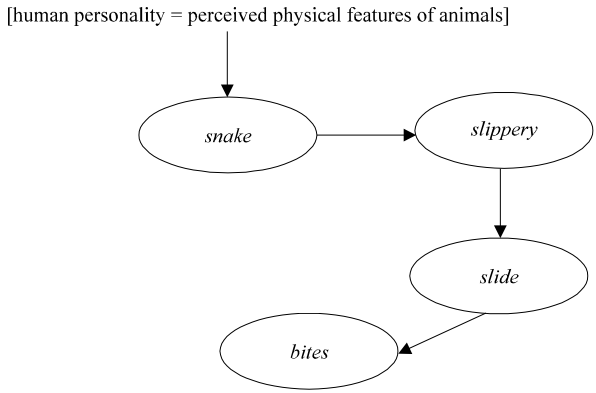
and to the world. Euclidean geometry, for instance, gave the world a certain kind of visual metaphorical structure for millennia — a world of relations among points, lines, circles, etc. But this structure can be changed to suit new conditions and ideas. This is precisely what happened when Nicholas Lobachevski (1793–1856) literally imagined that Euclid's parallel lines would "meet" in some context, such as at the poles of a globe, thus giving the visual world a different structure. As physicist Robert Jones (1982: 4) aptly puts it, for the scientist metaphor serves as "an evocation of the inner connection among things." Experimentation is a search for connections, linkages, associations of some sort or other. As Rom Harré (1981: 23) has pointed out, most experiments involve "the attempt to relate the structure of things, discovered in an exploratory study, to the organization this imposes on the processes going on in that structure."

Metaforms can also be seen in the "meaning flow" that shapes most discourse situations. Over a seven-year period I tape-recorded everyday conversations as they unfold spontaneously in various social situations (from 1992 to 1999). The conversations caught on these tapes are typical instances of everyday social interactions. Most of the taping was done on the campus of the University of Toronto. It is certainly beyond the scope of the present study to provide a detailed breakdown and analysis of the data that these tapes contain. That is the objective of a future study. Here, the aim is simply to present an initial picture of how "meaning flow" in discourse is shaped by a syntagmatic chain of metaforms, a finding which suggests that discourse unfolds primarily through a "circuitry" of source domains through which interlocutors "navigate mentally," so to speak.

Take, once again, the expression "The professor is a snake." The following brief stretch of conversation between two students (captured on one of the tapes) shows how this instantiation of this source domain shaped the pathways of one of the circuits of their conversation:

Student 1: You know, that prof is a real *snake*.
Student 2: Ya', I know, he's a real *slippery* guy.
Student 1: He somehow always knows how to *slide* around a tough thing.
Student 2: Keep away from his courses; he *bites*!

The circuit that this metaphorical concept triggered in that conversation can be represented as follows:

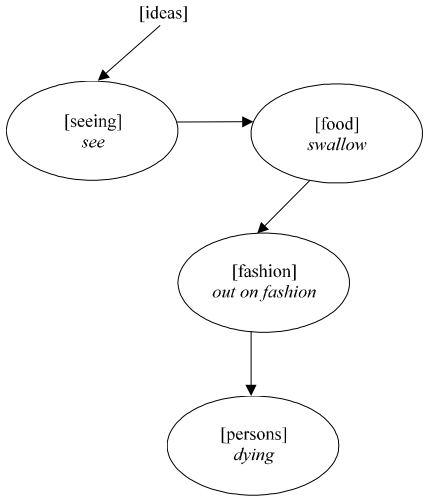


An analysis of most conversation shows that verbal communication consists of arrays of such mini-circuits that are somehow seen as leading to an overall meaning source or purpose to a specific conversation.

Often the circuit is made up of a series of metaforms, which are interconnected to each other in the discourse pathway. In one conversation about *ideas*, an interlocutor made use of the following sequence of metaforms: [ideas = seeing] ñ [ideas = food] – [ideas = persons] ñ [ideas = fashion]:

"I do not *see* how anyone can *swallow* his ideas, especially since most of them have gone o*ut of fashion*, and thus are *dying*."

The circuit that his statement entails can be represented as follows:



The presence of metaforms can be found, moreover, in grammatical phenomena. The linguist Ronald Langacker (e.g. 1987, 1990) has formulated a theory of grammar suggesting that certain aspects of sentence grammar are, in effect, generated by what can be designated a *metaformal reflex system*, built from source domain thinking. Nouns, for instance, trace a "region" in mind-space — e.g. a count noun is imagined as referring to a bounded region, whereas a mass noun is visualized as referring to a non-bounded region. Thus, for example, the noun *water* elicits an image of a non-bounded referent; whereas, a noun like *leaf* evokes a picture of bounded referent. This entails a *grammatical reflexivization* in the forms and functions of these nouns — *leaves* can be counted, *water* cannot; *leaf* has a plural form (*leaves*), *water* does not (unless the referential domain is metaphorical); *leaf* can be preceded by an indefinite article (*a leaf*), *water* cannot; and so on. Similar reflex patterns can be found in other representational systems — in painting, for instance, *water* is represented either with no boundaries or else as bounded by other figures (land masses, the horizon, etc.); *leaves*, on the other hand, can be depicted as separate figures with circumscribable boundaries. As this suggests, the parts of speech are end-products of experiential factors and, more significantly, are interconnected with other representational forms and activities.

Grammar is really a metaformal code, "summarizing," so to speak, at the level of thirdness our direct perception of things in the world as they stand in relation to one another. It probably originated in the human species as a system of organizing the perceptual experiences encoded by metaformal thinking. This is perhaps why we can understand stories in virtually the same ways that we understand music or paintings. In the same way that a painting is much more than an assemblage of lines, shapes, colors, and melodies a combination of notes and harmonies, a sentence in language is much more than an assemblage of words and phrases built from some rule system in the brain. We use the grammatical elements at our disposal to model the world in ways that parallel how musicians use melodic elements and painters visual elements to model it.

As a concrete example of how grammar and metaforms are interrelated, consider the use of the prepositions *since* and *for* in sentences such as the following in English (Danesi 1995):

61. I have been living here *since* 1990.
62. I have known Lucy *since* September.
63. I have not been able to sleep *since* Monday.
64. I have been living here *for* fifteen years.
65. I have known Lucy *for* nine months.
66. I have not been able to sleep *for* five days.

An analysis of the grammatical forms that follow *since* or *for* reveals: (1) those that follow *since* stand for "points in time," i.e. they are complements that reflect a conception of [time] as a [point] on a "timeline" which shows specific years, months, etc. ("1990," "September," "Monday"); (2) those that follow *for*, on the other hand, reflect a conception of [time] as a [quantity] ("fifteen years," "nine months," "five days"). In effect, complements introduced by *since* are reflexes of the metaform [time = a point]; those introduced by *for* are reflexes of the metaform [time = a quantity]. This is, in fact, the kind of rule of grammar that interconnects concepts and parts of speech.

Take, as one last example, the selection of certain verbs in particular types of sentences in Italian. The verb *fare* "to make" is used to refer to the presence of [heat] and [cold] in Nature:

67. *Fa caldo* (literally) "It makes hot" ("It is hot ")
68. *Fa freddo* (literally) "It makes cold" ("It is cold")

If the [heat] and [cold] are in objects (such as cups of coffee), then the verb *essere* "to be" is used instead:

69. *È caldo* "It is hot"
70. *È freddo* "It is cold"

Finally, if the [heat] and [cold] are in people, then the verb *avere* "to have" is used:

71. *Ha caldo* "He/she is hot"
72. *Ha freddo* "He/she is cold"

The use of one verb or the other — *fare, essere,* or *avere* — is clearly motivated by an underlying metaphorical conceptualization of bodies, objects, and the environment as containers. So, the "container" in which [heat] or [cold] is located determines the verbal category to be employed. If it is in the environment, it is "made" by Nature (*Fa freddo; Fa caldo*); if it is in a human being, then the body "has" it (*Ha freddo*; *Ha caldo*); and if it is in an object, then the object "is" its container (*È freddo*; *È caldo*).

Concluding Remarks

The main purpose of this paper has been to show that DT can be used to provide a synthetic framework for relating what would appear to be disparate and heterogeneous findings on metaphor to each other. Symbols, grammar, discourse, and various forms of nonverbal representation are, by and large, products of metaphorical reasoning.

DT is not new. It has been identified in various ways, and with differing terminological guises, in the relevant literature. I have offered it here as a target to make it testable for use in further research on metaphorical discourse. As Henry Schogt (1988: 38) perceptively remarked, all languages "have meaningful units that articulate human experience into discrete elements." The domain of concrete concepts comprises the "discrete elements" of all human thinking. In this domain, concept-formation is "pattern-inferencing" based on concrete sensory perception. As argued in this paper, many common abstract concepts are based on such concrete source domains; they are the result of a firstness form of metaphorizing that produces what has been called *metaforms*. These in turn constitute source domains on their own that produce higher and higher (secondness) orders of abstraction (*meta-metaforms*). Metaforms and meta-metaforms surface not only in discourse but also in most thirdness representational systems.

One of the more fundamental questions that this line of investigation begs is: Are all abstractions and symbols based on metaphorical reasoning? As Levin (1988: 10) has aptly remarked, there appear to be many kinds of concepts and modes of knowing: "innate knowledge, personal knowledge, tacit knowledge, spiritual knowledge, declarative and procedural knowledge, knowing that and knowing how, certitude (as well as certainty), and many other varieties." The more appropriate goal for metaphor research should be, therefore, to determine to what extent metaforms populate the world of abstraction and what other types of abstractions, if any, are possible. Phylogenetically speaking, the universality of metaforms begs the question of the relation of metaphor to the emergence of conceptual thinking in the human species. In evolutionary terms, the crystallization of metaforms in human thought suggests that sensory perception was originally at the root of many of our abstract notions. If this is so, then as Howes (1999: 153) cogently suggests, future work in all areas of linguistics,

psychology, anthropology, and even semiotics should involve three paradigm shifts, which can be paraphrased as follows:

1. Theories and analytical frameworks within these sciences should be based on the relation that exists between perception and conceptualization, sense impressions and ideas.
2. A culture can be characterized, as a thirdness phenomenon, as the system of interconnections among metaphorical forms of reasoning, and it should be studied primarily in these terms.
3. Discovering how different cultures may select different properties of the senses for symbolic elaboration should be a central task of all the human sciences.

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Дименсиональность метафоры

В лингвистических и семиотических науках существует мнение, что абстрактные мысли можно знать, осознавать в основном или только как метафорические идеи, т.е. означаемые, когнитивно создаваемые в процессе метафорического хода мышления. Целью статьи является выявление фрейма, называемого теорией дименсиональности (ТД) и формулированного на основе теории Пирса. ТД, предложенная в предыдущей публикации для возможного обсуждения, предназначена для исследования метафоры во всех ее вербальных и невербальных проявлениях.

Исследование показывает, что метафорический ход мышления имеет три измерения: метафоры первичности называются метаформами, метафоры вторичности метаметаформами и метафорическое мышление третичности рассматривается как основание и для образования символов, грамматической формализации и дискурсивного потока. Подобный подход к метафоре нельзя назвать новым, но в данной работе он применяется для установления его пригодности в дальнейшей работе над метафорическим дискурсом.

В ДТ утверждается, что дискретные элементы всего человеческого мышления содержатся в области конретных понятий. Тут понятия образуются путем модельного заключения, в основе которого лежит все конкретно осязаемое чувствами. Многие общие абстрактные понятия происходят из этих конкретных сфер, они родом из формы первичности метафоризации, результатом которой является метаформы. Те, в свою очередь, оказываются источниковыми сферами, образующими все более высокие (вторичность) уровни абстракций (метаметаформы). Метаформы и метаметаформы встречаются не

только на внешней поверхности дискурса, но и в большинстве систем, презентирующих третичность.

Metafoori dimensionaalsus

Semiootilistes ja lingvistilistes teadustes on laiemalt levinud mõte, et abstraktseid mõisteid saab teada, teadvustada, peamiselt (või isegi ainult) kui metaforiseeritud ideid, s.o. tähistatavaid, mis luuakse kognitiivselt läbi metafoorilise mõttekäigu. Selle artikli eesmärk on tuua esile raamistik, mida nimetatakse dimensionaalsuse teooriaks (dimensionality theory, DT) ja mis on loodud Peirce'i teooria alusel. DT, mille autor oma eelmises uurimuses pakkus välja võimaliku mõttevahetuse teemaks, on mõeldud metafoori uurimiseks kõigis tema avaldumisvormides, nii verbaalsetes kui mitteverbaalsetes.

Uurimus näitab, et metafoorilisel mõttekäigul on kolm mõõdet (dimensiooni): esmasuse metafoore nimetatakse metavormideks, teisesuse metafoore meta-metavormideks ja kolmasuse metafoorilist mõtlemist vaadeldakse kui lähtekohta muu hulgas ka sümbolite moodustamisele, grammatilisele formaliseerimisele ja diskursuse voole. Selline vaatenurk metafoorile pole uus. Asjakohases kirjanduses on seda leitud mitmel erineval moel ning erinevate terminite varjus. Siin pakutakse seda metafoorikäsitlust kui sihtmärki järgiproovimiseks, katsetades seda kasutamise jaoks edasises uurimistöös metafoori-diskursusest.

Lühidalt öelduna väidab DT, et kogu inimmõtlemise "diskreetsed elemendid" sisalduvad konkreetsete mõistete vallas. Sellel alal moodustatakse mõisteid "mudel-järeldamise" teel, mille aluseks on konkreetne meeltega tajutav. Paljud üldised abstraktsed mõisted tulenevad nendelt konkreetse päritoluga aladelt; nad on pärit metaforiseerimise esmasuse vormist, mille tulemuseks on metavormid. Need omakorda kujutavad endast allikalasid, mis tekitavad järjest kõrgemaid ja kõrgemaid (teisesus) abstraktsiooni tasemeid (meta-metavormid). Metavormid ja meta-metavormid ei esine mitte ainult diskursuse, vaid ka enamike "kolmasuse" esindamissüsteemide väljenduses.