



Key Concepts of the Humanities and Social Sciences

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Wednesday, 30 November 2011, 16:15 – 17:45
Unitobler, University of Bern, Lerchenweg 36
Room F023

Metaphor as Mapping

Dr. Alan Cienki, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU)

The rise of conceptual metaphor theory brought with it great potential for a shift in scholarly reasoning, from thinking about metaphor as an object of study to researching it in terms of cognitive activity. However, a paradox has remained in much metaphor research. If we consider Lakoff and Johnson's wording – "*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*" – there is a juxtaposition of the dynamic and the static: the characterization of metaphor as 'processing' things. Why has this problematic static framing of metaphor persisted? Some possible reasons include: a focus on the analysis of written verbal data (as opposed to language as behavior) and the use of words themselves as the analytical tool for conceptual metaphor analysis (e.g., in formulations such as good is up). However, more recent dynamic approaches offer an alternative view. They have arisen with the increasing use of digital video as a source of data and as a tool for analysis; greater attention to complex, dynamic systems theory; and the influence of research from cognitive psychology and neuroscience concerning the embodied bases of meaning. Recent findings therefore shed light on the temporal contours of metaphor use in real time and how participants in conversation exchange metaphoric framings of concepts in multiple modalities (such as words and gestures). Examples from political and business discourse will explore the potential persuasive impact that such use of multimodal metaphors can have. Ultimately we see that the metaphor of metaphor as 'mapping' from one conceptual domain to another, made popular in conceptual metaphor theory, can be researched more adequately as an experiential process (as argued by Corradi Fiumara), rather than as a thing.

Alan Cienki is associate professor in the English section of the Department of Language and Communication at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) in Amsterdam, Netherlands. His research focusses on the semantic analysis of speech, the underlying principle being that language as spoken variably overlaps with other semiotic systems, such as intonation and gesture. Based in cognitive linguistics (and as Associate Editor of the journal *Cognitive Linguistics*), one of his major research interests is how speech and gesture reflect processes of conceptualization (thus he co-edited the volumes *Conceptual and Discourse Factors in Linguistic Structure and Metaphor and Gesture*). The discourse of academics, politicians, and entrepreneurs are among his recent sources of data. He received his PhD in Slavic linguistics from Brown University and later taught at Emory University in the Dept. of Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures and in the Program in Linguistics, the latter of which he co-founded and later directed. He also served as the Director of the PhD program in Culture, History, and Theory of the interdisciplinary Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts at Emory U. Currently he is Chair of the international Association for Researching and Applying Metaphor (RaAM).

Bild:
Robert Walden, *Ontological Road Map 010911*,
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