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Pensamiento Figurado Complejo: Patrones de Interacción e implicaciones de significado

Autor/es

ALBA REDONDO MIRÓ

Director/es

FRANCISCO JOSÉ RUIZ DE MENDOZA IBÁÑEZ y María Sandra Peña Cervel ,

Facultad

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# TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

## Título

**Complex Figurative Thinking: Interaction Patterns and Meaning Implications/ Pensamiento Figurado Complejo: Patrones de Interacción e Implicaciones de Significado**

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## Autor

Alba Redondo Miró

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## Tutor/es

Francisco J. Ruiz de Mendoza  
Sandra Peña Cervel

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## Grado

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## **Index**

Abstract/Resumen.....	2
I. Introduction.....	3
II. Theoretical Overview.....	5
III. Methodology and Corpus.....	11
IV. Analysis.....	13
V. Conclusion.....	25
VI. References.....	27

## **Abstract**

Cognitive linguists have claimed that figurative language is an integral part of our everyday interaction (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Different figures of thought like metaphor, metonymy, and hyperbole tend to interact rather than to appear in isolation, as claimed by Goossens (1990), Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez (2002), Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera (2014), and Peña and Ruiz de Mendoza (2017). Thus, studying the way different figures of thought interact is the main purpose of this dissertation. Identifying different patterns of interaction and analysing the way they behave has been crucial to this investigation. To accomplish this task, several examples have been retrieved from different and varied sources like the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, the Master Metaphor List, and Google. Our aim is to build an unbiased and representative corpus of analysis with examples belonging to different genres and registers. Most of our examples of metaphors are instances of ontological metaphors or metaphors based on The Great Chain of Being (Lakoff and Turner 1989). Properties of animals are mapped onto people, or people's features are attributed to animals. This study is thus corpus-based and deductive and aims to confirm, refine, or reject previous findings related to different combinations of figures of thought on the basis of a careful examination of corpus data. Additionally, this study is qualitative since attention is paid to a fine-grained study of the data rather than to quantification. A detailed analysis of our data reveals that metonymy supports metaphor, strengthening in this way the meaning implications of metaphorical expressions. Moreover, when metaphor and hyperbole co-occur, the communicative impact on the potential listener is reinforced.

Keywords: interaction patterns, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole.

## **Resumen**

Los lingüistas cognitivos han afirmado que el lenguaje figurado es una parte esencial de nuestra comunicación diaria (Lakoff y Johnson 1980). Diferentes figuras de pensamiento como metáfora, metonimia, e hipérbole tienden a interactuar juntas en vez de aparecer de forma aislada, tal como han afirmado Goossens (1990), Ruiz de Mendoza y Díez (2002), Ruiz de Mendoza y Galera (2014) y Peña y Ruiz de Mendoza (2017). Por lo tanto, estudiar la manera en la que las figuras de pensamiento interactúan es el propósito principal de este ensayo. Identificar los diferentes patrones de interacción y analizar la forma en la que se comportan ha sido crucial para esta investigación. Para lograr esto, varios ejemplos

han sido recogidos de fuentes variadas y diferentes como el *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, la Master Metaphor List y Google. Nuestro objetivo es construir un corpus que sea representativo y objetivo con ejemplos que pertenecen a diferentes géneros y registros. La mayoría de nuestros ejemplos de metáforas son metáforas ontológicas o metáforas basadas en La Gran Cadena del Ser (Lakoff y Turner 1989). En estos casos, algunas propiedades de los animales se aplican a las personas o determinados rasgos de las personas son atribuidos a los animales. Este es un estudio deductivo y basado en corpus, puesto que se pretende confirmar, refinar o rechazar hallazgos previos relacionados con diferentes combinaciones de figuras del pensamiento de acuerdo a un análisis pormenorizado de los datos del corpus. Además, este estudio es cualitativo, ya que se presta atención a un estudio detallado de los datos y no a su cuantificación. El análisis minucioso de los datos revela que la metonimia sirve de sustento a la metáfora, fortaleciendo así las implicaciones de significado de la expresión metafórica. Además, cuando la metáfora y la hipérbole ocurren simultáneamente el impacto comunicativo en el potencial oyente se ve fortalecido.

Palabras clave: patrones de interacción, metáfora, metonimia, hipérbole.

## **I. Introduction**

Cognitive linguists recognise the importance of understanding figures of thought as an integral part of our everyday conversation. Cognitive Linguistics is embedded within Experientialism, a philosophical trend that emerged as a reaction to the objectivist tradition. Mainly, these linguists claim that meaning comes from the use of the language, and that the clear-cut distinction between literal and figurative meaning is to be rejected. Lakoff (1980:63) claimed that *“the ability to use language metaphorically is not a skill of advanced learners, but something that everybody needs from an early stage”* Moreover, figurative language is not only an integral part of our everyday interaction, it is also used in realms such as politics and science. We use metaphor to reason about and understand concepts, especially abstract ones such as emotions.

One of the main concerns within the study of figurative language has been its classification and the way the different figures of thought interact in language and cognition. For instance, Goossens (1990), devoted his attention to the interaction between metaphor and metonymy. He coined the term *metaphtonymy*, which designates cases of interaction between metaphor and metonymy. In this connection, this scholar put forward

different patterns of interaction: metaphor from metonymy, metonymy within metaphor, demetonymization inside a metaphor, and metaphor within metonymy. Later on, Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez (2002) claimed that those types of interaction above were cases of metonymic expansion of the metaphoric source domain. Therefore, Ruiz de Mendoza and Diez (2002) complemented Goossen's (1990) analysis by adding further patterns of interaction between metaphor and metonymy: metonymic reduction of a metaphoric source, metonymic expansion, and reduction of a metaphoric target. Furthermore, Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera (2014) developed the notion of metaphoric amalgams. This topic is in need of further research. This is the reason why I believed it would be very interesting to identify and analyse combinations of figures of thought, especially in contexts where the main purpose is not to use language ornamentally but simply communicate ideas and thoughts.

This study is qualitative, corpus-based and deductive. The main sources of my data are the Master Metaphor List, the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA), and Google. I try to confirm previous theories or hypotheses formulated by authors working on patterns of interaction among figures of thought with the support of different examples. In this essay I will provide some representative examples of each pattern and analyse them in detail.

The main goal of this dissertation is to identify the most frequent interaction patterns used in everyday language. In addition, I pay especial attention to those figures that are more prone than others to be enriched through hyperbole.

This dissertation has been organised in the following way. It begins with a brief overview of the state-of-the-art regarding patterns of interaction of figures of thought. This section takes into account previous studies on the topic and critically reviews them. Section 3 is devoted to the description of the corpus of analysis, the sources used to build my own corpus, and the methodological steps taken in my study. Section 4 is the analytical part of this essay. Different interaction patterns are identified and the examples are analysed in detail. Section 5 provides a summary of the main findings of my study. Some future lines of research are also sketched out.

## II. Theoretical overview

This section includes an overview and a brief critical account of the notion of Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM), a key concept within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics. I will deal with the four existing ICMs. Then the concept of cognitive operation is defined in order to offer a more exhaustive analysis of our data. Since cognitive operations interact fruitfully, I will deal with the notion of conceptual complexes.

Cognitive Linguistics should be understood within the context of experientialism and emerged as a reaction to the pervading objectivist tradition. In sum, cognitive linguists claim that meaning emerges from language use (in other words, meaning is embodied), that the distinction between figurative and literal language is fuzzy, and that figurative language is an integral part of our conceptual makeup and thus should not be avoided in everyday conversation or in realms traditionally considered objective such as science.

The notion of Idealized Cognitive Model or (ICM) was put forward by Lakoff (1987:68). An ICM could be described as the way we build and store our own representation of the world in our minds. Lakoff (1987:68) distinguished four kinds of ICM:

- Frames: according to Fillmore (1982:111), a frame consists of “a system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any of them [we] have to understand the whole structure in which it fits”; frames capture the properties and the relations that are part of a scenario. Frames are based on experience and then put into perspective. We would be unable to understand a word if nothing else about the situation is known. Consider lexical items such as ‘sell’ or ‘buy’; in order to properly describe them, we need to know the elements that take part in the commercial frame, mainly a shop, a seller, a buyer, money, exchange, the products and the basic communication between the buyer and the seller.
- Image schemas: they are recurring patterns of experience which are abstract and topological in nature, for instance notions such as CONTAINER, PATH, PART-WHOLE or LINK (Johnson 1987).
- Metaphor: Lakoff & Johnson (1980:5) define metaphors as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. They consist of a source and a target domain. We use the source domain to reason and talk about the target. For instance, LOVE IS A JOURNEY (e.g. *Look how far we’ve come*) is a conceptual



metaphor which allows us to understand an abstract concept such as love in terms of the concrete domain of journeys.

- Metonymy: Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 35) define metonymy as “using one entity to refer to another related to it.” Metonymies involve a domain-subdomain relationship. For example, in *Tie your shoes*, a linguistic instantiation of the conceptual metonymy WHOLE FOR PART, ‘shoes’ provides conceptual access to a relevant part of the source domain, shoelaces.

ICMs provide the conceptual blueprint for a series of cognitive operations to work upon. Cognitive operations are mental mechanisms that our minds employ to store and retrieve information, as well as to build mental representations (Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera 2014:85). Ruiz de Mendoza in “Figurative language: relations and constraints (fc)” groups cognitive operations into three main categories: concept-building operations, sensory-motor operations and representational operations.

Representational operations are those operations that produce constrained representations. They can be divided into construal and inferential operations. The latter focus on pre-existing knowledge stores, contrary to the former, which focus on the ability to outline some aspects of reality (for instance, focalization and foregrounding). Representational operations can be subdivided into formal and content operations. In turn, content operations are classified into identity or ‘A is B’ operations and stand-for or ‘A FOR B’ operations (Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera 2014:92).

According to Ruiz de Mendoza (Ruiz de Mendoza, F. (fc)6), “formal operations are used to manipulate concepts structurally”, while content operations “are responsible for the production of meaning inferences.” Therefore, formal operations involve structural manipulation, but they do not have any effect in figurative language. The main formal cognitive operations are cueing, selection, abstraction, substitution, and integration. In this essay, I will pay especial attention to content operations.

Regarding content cognitive operations, Ruiz de Mendoza (2017a:140) has grouped them in terms of the figure of thought they are usually involved in.

The main cognitive operations related to metaphor are correlation and resemblance:

- Correlation: sometimes concepts co-occur in our experience very frequently and we tend to understand them as being the same thing. For example, this holds for

goals and destinations. The metaphor GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS (e.g. *We are now in life where we wanted to be*) is based on the conflation between goals and destinations.

- Resemblance: metaphors based on resemblance capture similarities between concepts. For instance, the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS (e.g. *John is a pig*) is based on finding similarities between humans and animals usually in terms of behaviour.

The main content operations associated with metonymy are expansion and reduction:

- Domain expansion: “it broadens the scope of a conceptual characterization” (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017a:145). In *The ham sandwich wants the bill*, ‘ham sandwich’ stands for the person who ordered a ham sandwich in the context of a restaurant.
- Domain reduction reduces the scope of a conceptual characterization. For instance, in *I read a good book last summer*, ‘book’ makes reference to and highlights one of its subdomains, the contents of the book.

Strengthening and mitigation underlie hyperbole:

- Hyperbole can be understood in terms of the cognitive operations of strengthening and mitigation. The former scales up a magnitude and the latter scales it down. For example, in *This luggage weights a ton*, the weight of the suitcase is scaled up through strengthening and the hearer has to adjust such a magnitude to real-world proportions through mitigation. Consider also a situation in which someone is in a house which is ten miles from the village. They might mitigate this by saying *The village is just two minutes away*.

The main content operation related to irony is echoing:

- Echoing: this notion was postulated by Wilson and Sperber (2012) in order to account for irony. Ruiz de Mendoza (fc:8) defines echoing as “the repetition of what someone has said or thought, which, includes social stereotypes.” For instance, imagine that someone does not know what to read and a friend recommends her to read Shakespeare. She reads it and hates it. She could tell him: *Oh yes, Shakespeare, I really enjoyed it!* This expression is an echo of an attributed thought which clashes with the real state of affairs.

Cognitive operations can be combined in different ways. Metaphtonymy, a notion coined by Goossens (1990) is used to designate cases of interaction between metaphor and metonymy. Goossens postulated the following patterns of interaction between metaphor and metonymy:

- Metaphor from metonymy: here a metonymy turns into a metaphor. For instance, ‘beat one’s breast’ refers to an action of sorrow. However, the expression only makes explicit the breast-beating element of the scenario, which has to be metonymically developed before it can be metaphorically mapped onto situations in which there is an overt indication of sorrow (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b:309).
- Metonymy within metaphor: for instance, ‘bite one’s tongue’ is metaphorical when the speaker refers to avoid talking. The tongue metonymically stands for the ability to speak. Thus, it is claimed that there is a metonymy inside a metaphor (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b:309).
- Demetonymization inside a metaphor: in English slang the word *lip* stands for dishonest talk. However, in the metaphor *pay lip service*, this metonymic meaning is not preserved and ‘lip service’ means ‘service as if with the lips only’. The metaphor *pay lip service* does not mean ‘pay service by using the ability to talk’ but ‘give insincere support’ (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b:309).
- Metaphor within metonymy: a metaphor can be used to add expressiveness to a metonymy. For instance, the expression *be on one’s hind legs* includes the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS into the source domain of the metonymy that maps ‘standing’ on ‘standing to defend views or ideas in an empathic way’ (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b:309).

Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez (2002) claimed that the four ways of interaction proposed by Goossens (1990) were cases of metonymic expansion of the metaphoric source domain. Therefore, Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez (2002) put forward some other patterns of interaction such as metonymic reduction of a metaphoric source, metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target and metonymic reduction of a metaphoric target .

As shown, metonymy and metaphor interact in interesting ways. In this connection, metonymic and metaphoric chains and metaphoric amalgams should be also discussed.

As regards metonymies, they can be combined into metonymic chains. For instance, in *He heads the committee*, ‘head’, which is a part of the body, stands for leader, which, in turn, provides conceptual access to the action of leading.

The process of combining metaphors results in metaphoric chains. In them, the target of a metaphor becomes the source of a metaphoric mapping whose target gives meaning to the whole expression. For instance, in *She got pretty harsh and said some things that yanked my chain*, the source is ‘yanking on a dog leash’ and the target is ‘physically restraining and doing harm to someone’. This target becomes the source of a new metonymy whose target is ‘inflicting emotional distress on someone and keeping them in emotional bondage’ (Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera, 2014:194).

Metaphoric amalgams should be distinguished from metaphoric chains. Metaphoric amalgams result from the combination of two or more non-chained metaphors (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017: 313). By contrast, in metaphoric chains there are two subsequent metaphoric mappings such that the target of the first mapping becomes the source of the second (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera-Masegosa 2012, Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2011). We can distinguish between single-source and double-source amalgams. The former are “created by building the source and target of an initially self-standing metaphor into corresponding structure of another self-standing metaphor” (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b:313). However, the latter involve two source domains being mapped into a single target domain. An example of a single source amalgam is *My boss is a pig*. In this example we have ‘pig’ as the source and we map it onto ‘boss’ which is the target. We attribute some characteristics of the animal to the person, to the boss. That is the first mapping but also there is a second source ‘filth’ whose target is ‘immorality’. When we refer to the ‘boss’ as a ‘pig’ we focus also in the filthiness of the animal and we refer to the boss as someone immoral.

An example of double-source amalgam was put forward by Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera (2014:186), ‘to beat knowledge into’. In this case, we have the first source, motion caused by a physical impact (to beat). The target is change motivated by psychological impact, as we do not understand ‘beat knowledge’ as something literal. And the second source is possession. The idea of gaining knowledge as if it was an object, there is a transfer of possession.

Conceptual complexes have been studied almost exclusively in connection with metaphor and metonymy. However, we can also find frame and image-schematic complexes in combination with metaphor and/or metonymy.

Regarding image-schematic complexes, Peña (2003: 134) identified different patterns of interaction: interaction among image-schemas, interaction between image-schemas and metaphoric and metonymic mappings, and interaction between image-schemas and propositional models. For instance, interaction between image-schemas can be illustrated by means of the example *He fell in love with Jane*, where the VERTICALITY image-schema activated by the verb ‘fell’ interacts with the CONTAINER and PATH schemas triggered by the preposition ‘into’.

Regarding interaction between image-schematic complexes and metonymy, Ruiz de Mendoza points out that Talmy (2000a, 2000b) made a distinction of three different types of motion conceptualization: factive, fictive, and metaphorical. In the first one, there is real motion. In the second one a non-dynamic situation is presented as if there were motion. And in the third one, a non-physical entity is treated as a moving entity (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b: 317). Correlation metaphors are also included in this section, since they “give rise to the mixing up of notions or mental conflation” (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b: 317). For instance, we tend to see quantity and height as if they were the same thing when talking about prices going up. Imaginary motion is needed to interpret this example. Also, when we say that a road ‘runs’ from one place to another, our mental simulation involves imaginary motion. This idea is due to metonymic domain expansion where a linguistic expression stands for the whole mental simulation, and this allows the expression to be possible (Ruiz de Mendoza 2017b: 317).

### III. Methodology and corpus

As mentioned in the previous section, the theoretical overview, the main objective of this essay is to identify and analyse combinations of figures of thought in contexts where the main goal is not to make an ornamental use of the language but only the communication of ideas and thoughts. With this aim in mind, we set out to build a corpus in which size was not the most relevant aspect. Our corpus seeks to be as varied as possible in the sense that our main goal was to retrieve examples from actual language use that involve as many patterns of interaction among figures of thought as possible (e.g. metaphoric and metonymic chains, metaphoric amalgams, metaphonymy and discourse co-activation). Consequently, due to the complexity of my search, finding examples to build a representative corpus was not a simple task.

Our corpus has been gathered from a variety of sources:

- The master metaphor list was very useful as a guide when looking for metaphors in the corpus. This list was firstly compiled by George Lakoff, Jane Espenson, and Adele Goldberg August 1989. However, the one I used was a second draft copy compiled by George Lakoff, Jane Espenson, and Alan Schwartz (October 1991). It is a compilation of metaphors taken from published books and papers. It contains a table of contents at the beginning of the catalogue. At the beginning of each section there is a brief description of the metaphors contained within. For instance, within event structure there are different categories or labels, such as **PROPERTIES ARE POSSESSIONS** and an example *She has a pleasant disposition*
- The *Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA)*. This corpus contains more than 560 million words and they are retrieved from different sources such as magazines, newspapers and also academic texts not only written but spoken too. This is the main reason of why I decided to use this corpus. It is important to mention that *COCA* offers an unlimited number of searches if the user contributes economically.
- Another important source of data for creating our corpus was Google. One of its main advantages is its growing size and constant update. There is unlimited access to all type of information and therefore it was useful at times when I needed to find some examples that I could not find in the corpus. As it is in constant update

is very likely to have new and/or different information every time you access to it.

Three different steps were taken to carry out the analysis of my corpus. First of all, the Master Metaphor List was used as a guide. I chose examples of metaphors or of metaphors combined with other figures of thought and looked for similar structures in the *COCA*. For instance, I typed occurrences like *She has a pleasant* and then checked which nouns co-occurred with this pattern. Then, after checking the results I had to choose the ones that were useful for my analysis. For instance, examples like ‘She has a pleasant disposition’, an instantiation of the conceptual metaphor PROPERTIES ARE POSSESSION, was considered, while other examples such as *She has a pleasant, unmade-up face* were discarded. It must be noted that this study has required much manual work since in my search for suitable examples I had to ignore cases that had no figurative load (so-called literal examples) and those that were used only for poetic purposes.

Some other times, I also used my own intuition to identify possible figurative patterns. I typed specific words or expressions in the corpus that I thought could trigger figurative examples on the basis of similar ones that I had already chosen and selected the examples. For instance, when retrieving similes I used key words such as ‘like’ or ‘as...as’.

The second step was to identify the different patterns of interaction. For instance, I checked if it was a case of metaphor, metonymy, simile, hyperbole or if there were combinations of those. More specifically, there was a group combining metaphors and metonymies. There was another group combining metaphors and hyperboles. Those were the main groups, but there were also different examples of metonymic chains, metaphoric chains, amalgams of metaphors and metaphonymies.

When they were identified I started the analysis, with a deeper study of the figure(s) of thought involved in each of the examples. I had to identify the source and target domains, the different mappings across or within domains, and the meaning implications of such mappings.

The approach taken in this analysis was qualitative, it was a fine-grained analysis of my data where importance was given to the detailed analysis of different figures of thought and of some patterns of interaction.

My study is corpus-based. Tognini-Bonelli (2001:10) defines corpus-based analysis as “*a methodology that uses corpus evidence mainly as a repository of examples to expound, test or exemplify given theoretical statements*”. In other words, data collected from corpora help the researcher confirm, refute, or refine a hypothesis that has been previously put forward. In contrast, in corpus-driven studies theories are formulated on the basis of examples retrieved from corpora (Tognini Bonelli, 2001:11).

Corpus based studies are deductive; in deductive approaches, an initial theory or hypothesis is contrasted through observation, for instance with the help of examples.

#### **IV. Analysis**

This part consists of a further analysis of the different interaction patterns regarding metaphor, metonymy, simile, and hyperbole. I will provide several examples with different patterns. The main idea is to identify interaction tendencies and to explain why some figures such as metaphors or similes are more prone than others to be enhanced or enriched through hyperbole. There is also reference to the way metonymy is subsidiary to metaphor and the role it plays when they interact together.

The first kind of interaction will be the combination of metaphor and hyperbole. The COCA and Google have yielded several interesting examples of this type of interaction.

(1) *What they do have is a mountain of circumstantial evidence.*

This is a case of metaphor combined with hyperbole. The metaphor is a variant of the everyday correlation metaphor labelled MORE IS UP. However, this expression is not focused on height correlating with quantity, but it is a case of size which correlates with both quantity and height. Therefore, (1) is grounded in our experience of a greater size mapping onto a greater amount. The label proposed could be AMOUNT IS SIZE.

At the same time the source domain of the metaphor contains a hyperbolic element: a mountain of objects involves a large amount of them. An interesting point is that the hyperbole is used to create an impact. To say *a hill of circumstantial evidence* would not be as shocking as saying *a mountain of circumstantial evidence*. Replacing *mountain* by *hill*, for example, does not create the same impact. Of course, the expression with *hill* will still convey the idea that there is a large amount of evidence, but



communicatively the result will not be the same as with mountain. It is also important to keep in mind when dealing with hyperbole that, besides achieving the effect of impact, this figure has the property of allowing for gradable meaning implications, that is, hyperbole leads the hearer to look for a referent that can be understood up to a point; it is not just about using any concept and exaggerating it. In this connection, excessive exaggeration may not yield the desired meaning effects. For instance, if we use the idea of *galaxy* instead of *mountain*, the result may be poor and confusing, probably because we do not know much about galaxies on the basis of everyday experience, since they are not accessible to common visual inspection. It would be different to compare or to find similarities and therefore it would be difficult to use it to make the audience shocked. We tend to use ideas or objects that are perceptually and experientially manageable to construct communicatively successful expressions. Consider (2) now:

(2) *Sally is a block of ice.*

This example is based on the correlational metaphor AFFECTION IS WARMTH, whose negative counterpart is LACK OF AFFECTION IS COLDNESS. This metaphor is based on our experience of feeling other people's bodily warmth when they express their affection through physical contact. When physically distant, no warmth is felt. Interestingly, the lack of affection-coldness-length of distance correlation leads to naïve (non-scientific) thinking. This is exemplified in (2), where we understand that Sally is extremely unaffectionate since she is extremely cold, but there is not any real grounds for a physical correlation between degrees of coldness (or of absence of warmth) and lack of physical contact. There is a physical distance threshold that, once overcome, makes longer distances irrelevant to measure the amount of physical warmth to be felt. However, the metaphor above works on the basis of the naïve assumption that colder temperature is always directly proportional to a greater emotional distance and therefore to less affection. That is why, Sally is said to be a block of ice, meaning as cold as a block of ice. In addition, this metaphor is again a case of hyperbole, since nobody can be as cold as a block of ice. It is a case of exaggeration whose aim is to create impact. It is in the metaphorical source domain where the hyperbolic activity takes place.

This example links up with Searle's observation on speaker's meaning and utterance meaning, which can sometimes create a clash between what the linguistic expression says and reality. Searle assumed some facts about conversation where

participants cooperate. However, participants might break some rules and when interacting, they might mean more than they say. Searle (1975:168). affirms the following:

[...] in hints, insinuations, irony, and metaphor the speaker's utterance meaning and the sentence meaning come apart in various ways. One important class of such cases is that in which the speaker utters a sentence, means what he says, but also means something more.

Therefore, according to Searle we know that a person cannot really be a block of ice, but the first step is wrong because the metaphoric interpretation is as fast as the non-metaphoric one. It seems that Searle understood metaphor as a deviated used of language. But the opposite is the case, since we do not necessarily go from the literal meaning to the figurative meaning. What is more we can think directly if we are based on the metaphor. Lakoff for instance claims that we think metaphorically. Lakoff and Johnson also affirmed that most of our language is metaphorical and "*the ability to use language metaphorically is not a skill of advanced learners, but something that everybody needs from an early stage*" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 63). Take now:

(3) *She turned into a tower of strength.*

Firstly, this metaphor falls under the label CHANGES OF STATES ARE CHANGES OF LOCATION. However, it is a small variant as it does not use the verb *go*, which is neutral. but the verb *turn* which is more drastic and it has more connotations than simply *go*. The verb *turn* suggests a sharp change of direction so that the end-point of motion is widely separate from what it was initially going to be. Greater physical distance between the starting and end points maps onto a greater difference between the initial and final states. A prototypical (thus more neutral or less marked) example of CHANGES OF STATES ARE CHANGES OF LOCATION is *She went from bad to worse*, where we understand that the experiencer of change simply underwent some unspecified change from one state to another. However, in example (3) the change is more striking to the extent that a sharp change of direction maps onto a more pronounced change.

Besides, (3) is also a case of hyperbole because of the idea of the tower. A tower is something robust, solid, and taller than a person. First, as a tower is strong and solid,

we map it onto the concept of strength. If we think of a tower, we know they are not easy to demolish, they are usually unbreakable and also, they are believed to be unconquerable. A tower is a building hard to assail and that idea is also mapped. Second, this use correlates greater height with greater strength (MORE IS UP). A taller tower provides greater protection than a shorter tower.

Now and through this metaphor we believe that *she* is now a strong person, difficult to hurt, difficult to abuse, someone strong who has changed into the way she is now from the way she was before. The source domain is complex as it has the height, an image based schema, it has the strength which is a physical property (not a part of the image schema) and then it has an entailment of the physical property and the height which is the unassailable feature of the tower. This amalgam of properties maps onto the physical and moral properties of a person in the domain of strength. Let us now take a rather different example of metaphor, since it is not based on the correlation of experiences, but on similarity judgments:

(4) *He is a machine all work and only work.*

This is a case of metaphor combined with hyperbole where the metaphorical source objectifies the target. This phenomenon is the reverse of so-called personification, whereby an object is endowed with human qualities. In terms of conceptual metaphor theory, personification is captured by the metaphor OBJECTS ARE PEOPLE (e.g. *That tasty pie is calling me*), while objectification is a matter of PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS. In example (4), this latter metaphor is further specified into PEOPLE ARE MACHINES, a machine being a type of object. However, the objectification in example (4) is not of the same kind of other cases of PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS. Compare *John darted through the doorway into the house*, meaning that John went into the house very quickly. A person can be seen as a dart if we think of the person's ability to move very fast. Example (4) is more complex since it first attributes human behaviour to machines (the ability to work, understood as the ability to exert oneself physically or mentally to accomplish some aim). Of course, a human being works intentionally while a machine "works" by merely functioning in a pre-programmed manner. But from our human perspective, the machine, when operating, looks like a wilful entity performing the desired function. Once endowed with human behaviour, a machine's attributed behaviour can be mapped onto a person's behaviour. Therefore, we have here two opposite metaphors that are linked or "chained"

to each other by sharing the notion of people, which is both the source of OBJECTS ARE PEOPLE and the target of PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS. This analytical situation is depicted as follows:

TARGET		<u>SOURCE/TARGET</u>		SOURCE
OBJECTS	ARE	<u>PEOPLE/PEOPLE</u>	ARE	OBJECTS

Fig. 1. Metaphorical chain in *He is a machine*.

At the same time, this example is a clear case of hyperbole, since we are referring to someone as a machine. In effect, machines do not stop working until they are unplugged or they simply break. Also, they are built to work or to perform activities that humans are not supposed to do in the same way or at the same speed. Therefore, when we refer to people as machines, we mean they are powerful, tireless, and unstoppable, just something very strong cleverly designed to perform a job that humans cannot equal. The main idea is to create impact once more and hyperbole seems to be the perfect tool for this purpose.

(5) *Surgeons are God*.

We understand God is omnipresent and all-powerful, whereas a surgeon is not. However, surgeons are believed to have a great knowledge, to be people who perform their job perfectly and carefully, without mistakes as they work with people's lives and consequences of a bad performance can be very harmful. In this case we see surgeons as people that are extraordinarily powerful and with a great ability. People who believe in God place him at the top of everything, God is everywhere, and he has control over us; then, when this metaphor is used, we tend to see surgeons as God. They are the ones in charge, they control what is happening during surgery and it is very likely that they have control over people's lives. We can also see surgeons as saviours, as if they were capable of performing miracles. However, although there might exist similarities between these two concepts, the example is a clear case of hyperbole because no one can be as powerful and knowledgeable as God or can play any of God's attributed roles.

We use metaphor to reason about things and it is the best way to express abstract concepts or ideas, specially emotions as they are out of our physical apprehension. In this case, God has and receives great respect from many people, so if the idea was to create an impact it was achieved with this example.

The next pattern I will deal with is that created by the combination of simile and hyperbole. Take example (6):

(6) *I lost all my earthly faculties and fought like an angel.*

It is a simile as we are comparing ourselves with an angel. We see ourselves fighting in the same way an angel would do. However, this is a bit of a controversial example as we do not normally see angels as fighters. We see them as pure entities, full of kindness and goodness. However, in this case, the idea is one of being supernatural or perhaps having supernatural powers. It is a case of hyperbole as we know that people have no special powers which can be used to fight. It is simply a way to maximize the impact on the hearers. Once more, similar to the example about God, using supreme entities is a way to make audience shocked as usually God and angels, as sacred entities, are placed at an extremely unreachable position distant from human beings. In a different light, consider the following example:

(7) *Friedman's sounds like a killer argument.*

In this example we have A (Friedman's argument) with the properties of B (killer argument), that is, an argument that has the impact of a killer, a person that inflict the worst possible defeat on anyone. We have a metaphor and hyperbole but there is also a high-level metonymy: CAUSE (killer) for EFFECT. Part of the expression is based on a simile of the form SOUNDS LIKE X, where X is metaphorical (killer), metonymic (killer as the causer of an effect for which it stands), and hyperbolic (an argument cannot be as devastating as a killer). The expression is highly impacting because it is clear that there is not a possible argument that kills anybody. It means that it is a strong argument, almost impossible to counteract. This simile puts into relation a high-level concept with a high-level concept; argument with argument. This is possible only because the source of the comparison (killer argument) is actually more specific by the addition of the specifier killer. This specifier is itself metaphoric and hyperbolic. Another case of simile is supplied by (8):

(8) *She is as bony as a fish and slightly cross-eyed.*

Here we have a simile, where the speaker compares a woman with a fish based on some physical features; more specifically the speaker compares the thinness of the woman with the thinness of a fish. These types of comparisons are based on what is called folk models.

Usually, metaphors or similes based on animals are hyperbolic. English speakers tend to use them when talking about conceptual features more than physical features. However, in this case, the focus is on the appearance. It is true that nobody can be as thin as a fish, so the speaker is trying to create an impact through exaggeration. For instance, almost any metaphor or simile we can find in English regarding animals is accompanied by a hyperbole. If I say *My lawyer is like a shark* or *Achilles is like a lion*, the idea is to compare people's behaviour with animals' behaviour. In the case of the shark, we want to transmit the idea that the lawyer is scary, aggressive, fearless, he will attack to whoever he has to, and people are scared of him. In the case of Achilles, the idea given is that he is brave, strong, and ferocious. All these examples are supported by hyperboles.

The next part of this analysis includes some patterns where metaphor, metonymy and hyperbole interact together in a single expression. Besides, there is an example of metaphonymy and also some examples of discursive co-activation. Let us take (9):

(9) *Google is God.*

Three literary figures are present in this example. Google represents the information to which people have access. Google is the means or the tool we use to get to all kinds of information. So, in this example, it invokes the means to make it stand for the action performed through it. This metonymy is labelled MEANS FOR ACTION. The knowledge we achieve is also the action. Therefore, Google helps the users to know as much as God knows. It is the means that allows people to investigate, to look for information; it is an open window to knowledge. The instrument, Google, takes us to the action and at the same time the action gives us a result, which is the search. This is then a case of metonymic chain.

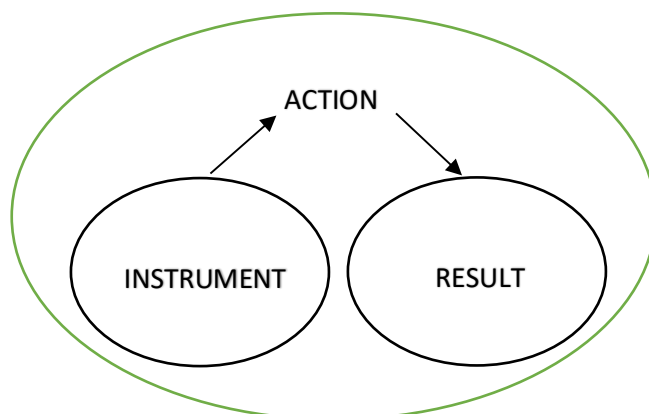


Fig.2. Metonymic chain INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION FOR RESULT

We have God, which is the source and then Google, which is the target, so basically, we use God to talk about Google. The hyperbole is on the metaphor, and Google gives me access to the double metonymy; at the same time, God gives me the hyperbole as nothing can be as serious, as important, and as perfect as God, not even Google. The concept of omniscience is an absolute concept therefore comparing it to Google is a case of hyperbole, it is an exaggeration. God is an extreme case formulation comparable to these examples: *He knows everything, You always say this*. These are examples of extreme case formulations where absolute expressions such as *always, never, everything, nothing, etc.* are used to shock or just to create an impact.

(10) *Your brain is a peanut*

In this example we the word *brain* stands for intelligence. It seems that intelligence increases and decreases with bigger or smaller size. There is a correlation as when we use bigger brain, we tend to connect it to the more intelligence. This is also based on our experience. In this case we have a metaphor as we talk about people's intelligence as if it were a peanut and it is supported by the hyperbole as we are exaggerating. It is just not possible to have the size of the brain as small as a peanut. Another similar example, which is conventionalized, is the following: *Your brain is the size of a pea*. This is another case of a combination of metaphor, metonymy, and hyperbole. The hyperbole is in the target domain of the metaphor. This example can be compared with the following one *Your brain is like a bb rolling down a ten-lane highway* (Ruiz de Mendoza, personal communication): the difference here is that instead of a metaphor what we have is a simile. In this case, the speaker goes to the relative perspective; the bb (a small ball of metal like a bullet used in guns to shot) is profiled against the base domain of the ten-lane highway, which makes the exaggeration even more impacting. The size of the bb is seen from a different perspective as the common one. It is seen in relative terms not in absolute terms. Usually, if we refer to these metal balls they are seen in the box or perhaps in the hands of whoever is holding a gun; but if you put it in the context of a ten lane highway, which is rather unusual, we are profiling the bb against a disproportionately large base, thus taking the hyperbolic impact to an extreme.

The next three examples follow a slightly different pattern from the previous ones. There is a case of metaphonymy and a metaphorical sequence together with two cases of discursive co-activation.

(11) *She ended up with a broken heart.*

Two metaphors are present in this expression; CHANGE IS MOTION (cued by *ended up*). There is an object moving from the beginning to the end. And then the second metaphor is in *broken heart*. The right label for this one would be EMOTIONAL HARM IS PHYSICAL DAMAGE. These two metaphors are co-activated, so this is not a case of amalgam. An example of amalgam is the following *She got the idea cross to me*, where we have the metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS IN MOTION and within that frame we integrate the idea that owning an object is knowing an idea (possession of an object maps onto knowing the object) (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza 2008). In this case the source is breaking, and we map physical damage onto emotional harm. However, we understand it as literal on the basis of the folk model according to which our feelings reside in our heart. Regarding A CHANGE OF STATE IS A CHANGE OF LOCATION, the final state is a broken heart. In this case we have a metaphonymy and a metaphorical sequence.

First, the metaphor A CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF LOCATION leads us to integrate the second one, EMOTIONAL HARM IS PHYSICAL DAMAGE, inside the first one. Therefore, STATES ARE LOCATIONS develops into FINAL STATES ARE FINAL LOCATIONS. A different handling of STATES ARE LOCATIONS, which is enriched with up to three other mappings, is provided by example (12):

(12) *I am in a toxic relationship, she said very seriously.*

First, the central mapping here is STATES ARE LOCATIONS (“in a ... relationship”). Second, the metaphorical target (the relationship) incorporates the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE: a toxic relationship is one that poisons one or more of those that take part in it. Being poisoned is the effect that stands for the cause (the negative ability of the relationship as the cause of toxicity). Third, the property of being toxic is a material one, which here is applied to non-material properties (being unpleasant and abusive), through another common metaphor: NON-MATERIAL ENTITIES ARE OBJECTS (AND THEIR PROPERTIES). Finally, the relationship itself is not “toxic” or abusive but rather the actions or behaviour of one of the people involved in the relationship towards the others. Thus, the relationship stands for (i.e. is metonymic for) the person in the



relationship that abuses others (A COLLECTION FOR A MEMBER OF THE COLLECTION). In this way, being “in a toxic relationship” is being affected by the actions of one of the parties involved in the relationship in a way that is considered abusive. Note that the basic mapping STATES ARE LOCATIONS amalgams with A COLLECTION FOR A MEMBER OF THE COLLECTION, but does not amalgam with the other two mappings, that is, EFFECT FOR CAUSE and NON-MATERIAL ENTITIES ARE OBJECTS. The reason for this is that the latter two mappings are co-activated by mere structural attributive adposition: the adjective toxic is an optional element of the sentence added to specify the nature of the relationship in question. However, the former two mappings are a matter of conceptual embedding once a relationship is understood as toxic. The relationship itself is not toxic (or harmful) but only the behaviour of one of the partners in the relationship. In terms of cognitive operations (Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera 2014, Ruiz de Mendoza 2017), the adjective “toxic” cues for the creation of this conceptual complex. At the same time, the metonymic use of “toxic” based on EFFECT FOR CAUSE makes this example a case of hypallage, usually defined as a transferred epithet. A typical example of this figure of speech is found in the sentence *This is a sad novel*. In this sentence what we really mean is that the novel makes readers feel sad, so the effect stands for the cause. Another example could be *You are so sweet* where sweet is the effect that stands for the addressee’s qualities as the cause of such an effect. Let us now discuss our last example, which again involves, like (11), the coactivation, but not the conceptual integration, of figures of speech:

(12) *My mind is always racing full speed*

The idea of racing is metaphorical because the mind cannot literally run. We see the high “speed” (or activity rate) of mental processes in terms of a race at maximum speed. At the same time, the adverb always is used hyperbolically. Let us recall that absolute frequency expressions (*never, always*) can give rise to Extreme Case Formulations (Norrick 2004), which are a form of extreme hyperbole where the scalar concept at work has been fully maximized to intensify its communicative impact (see also Peña and Ruiz de Mendoza 2017). It is important to note that *always* here does not amalgamate with the metaphor. It is simply a matter of predicational coactivation. Since racing involves moving at top speed, the use of this verb in the expression also endows it with another hyperbolic ingredient. Top-speed motion further suggests self-exertion, which maps onto a target domain where the person thinking is making an effort to think at his or her highest

possible capacity. The speaker's intention is probably to shock the hearer and to make him understand that he is constantly thinking and never stops doing it as people do in races. The mind is always active. This hyperbole is independent, but it is coactivated in the same sentence.

Taking into consideration these different patterns and combinations of literary figures, some conclusions can be derived.

Most of the selected metaphors are based on The Great Chain of being (Lakoff and Turner 1989) where one entity somehow resembles another entity; for instance, PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS or PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS. The Great Chain of being is a western cultural model born in the Middle ages and it hierarchies the different entities of the world.

At the top of the world we have the human being and the property assigned to humans is the ability to reason. This is a highly noticeable feature marking off the difference between humans and animals. After human beings there is place down the Great Chain hierarchy for all the animals; the property assigned to animals is physical appearance and animal behaviour (e.g. animals are instinctual, big or small, strong or weak, fast or slow). Then there come the plants, which are assigned physical properties and plant behaviour (e.g. plants grow, blossom, wither and die). After plants there are natural objects which do not have any type of behaviour, but they show distinct physical properties (in terms of shape, size, hardness, etc.). And at the bottom of this Great Chain there are artefacts which have physical and functional properties (like machines in one of our previous examples).

Therefore, it is interesting to see what metaphors based on this Great Chain do, the way they behave. They take the properties of an animal for instance and map them onto people or the other way around, they take people's attributes and map them onto animals. Doing this, we can elevate animals to the category of human beings, attribute to animals the human qualities. The same happens in the opposite direction: we can lower humans to the category of animals in the case of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS.

Metaphors based on The Great Chain of being tend to have a strong tendency to use source domains that are hyperbolic. If we consider the examples in our analysis, every time something is said about animals, the properties are maximized (they are stronger, more agile, for example nobody is as astute as a fox, nobody reproduces in the same way

as a rabbit, bulls are extremely strong, elephants are huge, sharks are aggressive, etc.). We take the properties to the limit, and make them stand for all the lower-level properties.

As Lakoff and Turner claimed: “The Great Chain is a cultural model which defines attributes and behaviour applying to humans, animals, plants, complex objects and natural physical things” (Lakoff and Turner 1989:170-171). Basically, when we connect the Great Chain to some metaphors, it helps us to understand human character in terms of non-human attributes and the same happens the other way around.

Another recurrent pattern is that when the hyperbole is combined with metaphor, it always does so by co-acting with the source domain of the metaphor. The reason for this might be that with that phenomenon, the impact of the meaning created in the metaphor is magnified. Therefore, everything that is in the source domain is projected onto the target and consequently it strengthens the target too.

Another conclusion of our analysis is the observation that the metonymy is subsidiary to metaphor. It supports and/or strengthens the metaphor. What metonymy does is to put the focus on those aspects of the source domain or target domain which the hearer has to reconsider, or at least notice, in order to calculate the impact of the meaning involved in the metaphor. With the help of the metonymy we stop focusing somewhere else or taking a different idea as it adjusts us and tells us where we have to put the focus exactly, so that there is no room for confusion.

When a metonymy acts within the source or the target domain of a metaphor, it has focalising function. At the same time it constrains the range of possibilities for different interpretations of the metaphor. It tends to do so at a high level of conceptualization. This is due to the fact that metonymy is ancillary to metaphorical conceptualization.

Metonymy therefore has a supporting role which can only be operational at a high level of conceptualization; i.e. it has a structural role. This use of metonymy contrasts with its use at the low level. For instance, the expression *ham sandwich* can be used to refer to the customer who has ordered a ham sandwich; this referential function is not structural.

## V. Conclusion

The present dissertation has discussed an important selection of examples of different combinations of figures of thought; all of them have been retrieved from diverse sources (the Master Metaphor List, COCA, and Google) and genres. The examples under study were not meant to make an ornamental use of language but to communicate everyday ideas.

This study provides evidence idea that we can think metaphorically straight away, we do not need first to figure out the literal meaning of an expression and then derive figurative meaning. Cognitive linguists claim that the boundary between literal and figurative language is not clear-cut but fuzzy. Therefore, importance should be given to figurative language as it is essential and pervasive in our everyday communication. As Lakoff states, “ordinary everyday English is largely metaphorical [...] the locus of metaphor is thought, not language” (Lakoff, 1993: 204).

The analysis of my data reveals that there are some figures of thought that are more prone to be enriched through hyperbole, especially metaphor and simile. It was proved that metaphors based on The Great Chain are usually enhanced by hyperbole. This complements Peña and Ruiz de Mendoza’s (2017) analysis of the ‘X is not Y but Z’ hyperbolic construction. Some properties of the behaviour of an animal are picked out and mapped onto people, and also the other way around. In the English language, it is behavioural traits rather than physical features that are compared in this kind of examples. Another pattern of interaction results from the combination of hyperbole with metaphor; the hyperbole acts with the source domain of the metaphor. Everything that is in the source domain is projected onto the target, which consequently becomes stronger and the impact is bigger. In the case of simile combined with hyperbole, most of the examples retrieved are based on comparisons between animals and people. In this case, almost any metaphor or simile regarding animals is accompanied by a hyperbole. The focus was also put on the combination of metaphor and metonymy, a very frequent pattern where metonymy is subsidiary to metaphor to support it or strengthen it. What metonymy does exactly is to guide the speaker to place emphasis on those aspects of the source domain or target domain which the speaker has to reconsider. In these cases, metonymy has a focalising function. Therefore, metonymy guides the right interpretation of the purported metaphor.

Further research could also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of these combinations of figures of thought and the patterns that are recurrent. Perhaps other possible patterns of interaction among them could be also studied. A natural development of this work is to analyse why figures of thought behave this way and why they seem to be stronger together and more powerful than individually. Finally, a cross-linguistic study of these patterns could shed light on the embodiment and/or universality of these combinations of figures of thought and of their meaning implications.

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