ELSEVIER

Journal of Pragmatics 32 (2000) 1067–1073

journal of PRAGMATICS

www.elsevier.nl/locate/pragma

Book review

Andrew Goatly, The language of metaphors. London: Routledge, 1997. 360 pp. $27.99.

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Goatly's book *The language of metaphors* is an extensive description of the linguistic appearances of metaphors and their functions and purposes. New insights into the analysis of metaphorical interpretation are provided. Many corpus examples (from literature and common use) are analyzed, with respect to the different grammatical forms in which Vehicle, Topic, Ground, or marker of metaphorical interpretation each may occur in discourse.

This review will not provide the most pleasant reading experience you ever had. Apart from the capabilities of the reviewer, there are three reasons why encapsulating *The language of metaphors* does not lead to a neat review. The first is that Goatly discusses many different approaches to the subject of metaphor, introducing a lot of terminology. Secondly, his way of analyzing metaphor consists of categorizing many different appearances of metaphors, which leads to mentioning a lot of category names. The last reason is that Goatly uses capital letters to indicate terminology and categorizing terms. Frankly, it does not make the book itself a pleasure to read.

With respect to the use of capital letters, I have chosen to keep a term capitalized (e.g. *Topic*), whenever I cite one. When I use similar terminology myself, explaining aspects of Goatly's work, I do not capitalize (e.g. *topicalize*). So, a capitalized word in this review is always taken from Goatly's book. Terms that are not capitalized in the review, but obviously stem from the book, did not have capitals in the book either. The term 'metaphor', for instance, is not capitalized in *The language of metaphors*.

The chapters of the book can be divided into three groups: the first four chapters are involved with various linguistic approaches to the analysis of metaphorical meaning. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 are dedicated to an analysis of how the linguistic appearance of a metaphor or one of its constituting parts influences its interpretation. Chapters 5 and 10 treat the communicative functions of metaphors.

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PII: S0378-2166(99)00075-2

In the introduction, definitions are given of Vehicle, Topic, and Grounds. Within a metaphorical expression, a Vehicle is a conventional referent, a Topic is the actual unconventional referent, and the Grounds are similarities or analogies bringing the Vehicle and the Topic closer together. In every example in the book, *T(opic)-term*, **V(ehicle)-term** and *G(round)-term* are distinguished typographically (if present in the example). "*The past* is **a foreign country**; *they do things differently there*" (p. 9).

In the first chapter, the difference between metaphorical and literal language is discussed. There is no strict boundary between metaphors and literal expressions: they are only more or less tied to a conventional meaning. In the course of time, the metaphorical use of a word may become its literal meaning. This is called a Dead metaphor. In language use, one can distinguish between Dead, Inactive and Active metaphors. An Inactive metaphor is interpreted in its metaphorical meaning by convention (the metaphorical expression is also one of its dictionary meanings), but there is still a trace of its literal meaning; an Active metaphor is not interpreted in its metaphorical meaning by convention, but literally by default.

Linguistic tests may determine the degree to which a metaphor expresses metaphorical meaning. Active metaphors are not open to agreement or rebuttal, but Inactive metaphors are. Similarly, a yes/no question with an Active metaphor is not accepted ('is the past a foreign country?'), and neither is a negative question ('isn't the past a foreign country?'). By distinguishing several properties that determine the degree of activeness of a metaphor, Goatly defines five scales on which expressions can be judged to be more or less metaphorical: the 'five clines of metaphoricity'. The Similarity between literal and metaphorical meaning (or reference) can be Approximate or Distant; the metaphorical meaning is more or less Conventional; the metaphor can be more or less linguistically Marked; the metaphor is more or less Contradictory in its context; and it can be made more or less Explicit in its context. By determining the value of some occurrence of a metaphor on these five clines, it can be established how active a metaphor is.

In the second chapter, the role of conventional metaphors in the English lexicon is analyzed. A system of Root Analogies is created, based on the way conceptual metaphors were grounded in Lakoff and Johnson (1980). An Inactive metaphor is based on a Root Analogy. For instance, an expression like *making progress* is based on the Root Analogy SUCCESS = MOVEMENT FORWARDS. Inactive metaphors form patterns of intersections of lexical sets or semantic fields in the lexicon. Goatly presents a map containing Root Analogies, each covering between six and fifty Inactive metaphors. These Root Analogies are grouped together by a specification of the kind of equation expressed in the Root Analogy. In general, all Root Analogies are Reifying. This general process is subdivided into five specific processes, turning abstract concepts into different sorts of concrete or more specific concepts. The process of Specific Reifying can be seen as making abstract concepts concrete: ORGANIZATION = MACHINE and SERIOUS = HEAVY, are examples of Root Analogies based on the different ways in which human beings experience the external world. Making abstract things concrete is thus reifying them as things that can be perceived more directly. The second process is Personification (Animization):

EMOTION = BODY, INFORMATION = QUARRY/PREY. The third process is Materializing Abstract Processes: UNDERSTAND/KNOW = SEE and EMOTION = WEATHER are examples of how abstract processes can be taken as perceivable processes. In the fourth process, two processes can be equated, where the second process may be more specific: SOUND = SIGHT (but also: SIGHT = SOUND). Finally, objects can be turned into other objects: MONEY = FOOD, MACHINE = HUMAN. These Root Analogies (and many others) form the structure on which metaphorical structure and the metaphorical lexicon are built. They are based on interactional physical experiences. Root Analogies are subject to several kinds of interplay: some concepts are determined by other concepts, some may be extended, some may be turned into opposite concepts, and some may be exchanged with other concepts.

In chapter 3, a relationship is established between the word-class of the V-term and kind of interpretation, and between word formation and kind of interpretation. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions are subject to metaphorical interpretation. Because nouns are typically referring expressions, they show the strongest clash between conventional and unconventional reference. The recognition of metaphorical interpretation is therefore easier in the case of nouns, compared to other word classes. Nouns referring to processes refer to a schema or script, and may give rise to richer metaphorical interpretation than nouns referring to (simple) entities. Verbs can be used metaphorically, but they are in need of a subject or object noun that does not refer to the referent that one would expect in the conventional interpretation (i.e. the 'colligate'). In "the sea **breathed** again" (p. 89), the sea is not the conventional colligate of breathing (only animates can be). Likewise, adjectives have a conventional colligate: "refreshment for dry **thirsty** hair" (p. 90; only animates can be conventional colligates here). Prepositions and adverbs in the form of a preposition form a closed word class. Their meaning is underspecified (and so in need of contextual interpretation). There are no conventional colligates of prepositions. Only Root Analogies like CAUSE = UP can have metaphorical force. Adverbs formed by the suffix *-ly* are metaphorical as a result of their derivation: "he clambered after her **sheepishly**" (p. 90).

Word formation, for example, turning adjectives into adverbs by suffixation, may create metaphorical interpretation in two ways. In the process of derivation, metaphorical meaning is incorporated (e.g. in noun compounds like **zebra** *crossing*), or the derived forms are used with an unconventional colligate (e.g. a **musical** *language*). Two effects of word formation from nouns to other word classes are expected: recognition of a metaphorical interpretation becomes more difficult, and its interpretation will less often be analogical. Although metaphorical aspects of the formation processes of conversion, suffixation, phrasal verbs, and prefixes are described, it is unclear to me whether Goatly's expectations are borne out.

In chapter 4, the central claim of Goatly's theory of metaphor is presented. As already appeared from his definitions of Vehicle, Topic and Ground, he assumes 'unconventional reference' or 'colligation' to be the central property of metaphorical interpretation. Unlike the traditional theories of substitution, comparison, and interaction, a theory of unconventional reference allows for different ways of interpreting

metaphors, depending on the type of reference or colligation (nouns refer to entities, verbs to processes; therefore, their metaphorical interpretation will be different). Goatly defines a metaphor as a unit of discourse that has an unconventional reference or colligation, which arises from the analogy or similarity between the unconventional referent and its conventional counterpart (in fact, his definition is more complicated).

Seven different ways of interpreting a discourse are distinguished: (1) Vehicle expresses conventional referent and Topic a conventional referent: "he put his back against **the suitcase**" (p. 112); in reality, the suitcase is a rock. (2) Idem, but the Topic is also actually present: "*the building* was **a barn**" (p. 112); 'the building' refers to a cathedral. (3) As in (2), but the unconventional referent is also an unconventional colligate ("**the sardine tin** of *life*", p. 112). (4) The Topic is actually present, but it refers to something different from what is understood to be the Topic's referent: "*John* is **a pig**" (p. 114); the Topic's referent could be 'greedy'. (5) Topic and Vehicle are actually present and the Vehicle's metaphorical understanding refers to something different from the Topic's referent: in "the **naked** shingles" (of the world; p. 114), the Vehicle is 'naked', and its colligate should be 'body'; instead it is 'shingles', which is the actual referent that triggers the Topic, namely 'uncovered'. (6) There is no conventional referent for the Topic: in "the air was **thick**" (p. 115), the actual referent of the Topic is 'the air', but it is unclear what its referent should be in the metaphorical interpretation induced by the Vehicle – what is the referent of 'thick air'? (7) Vehicle and Topic do not have (un)conventional referents, but only colligates: in "her son has been **damaged** in a crash" (p. 115), 'her son' is the actual colligate Topic, which would conventionally be a thing. Interpretation types (5) and (6) are based on Analogy; the others on Similarity. In the rest of the chapter, traditional theories are discussed: Substitution, Interaction and Comparison theory. The Comparison theory is adopted, and the notions of Similarity and Analogy are worked out with respect to the framework of the seven interpretations. With a discussion of Symbolic, Asymmetric, Subjective, Illusive and Phenomenalistic interpretation, the chapter is concluded.

In chapter 5, functions of metaphor are discussed. In general, Sperber and Wilson's (1986) theory of Relevance is applied to explain why metaphors are used in language. Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 (especially: "Upon those boughs which shake against the cold, **bare ruined choirs** where late the sweet birds sang") is interpreted by spelling out contextual implications. Sperber and Wilson's (1986) notion of (irony and) metaphor is considered to be too narrow, in that it does not leave enough room for defining typical purposes for metaphor: filling lexical gaps, explaining and modelling, reconceptualizing, expressing argumentation, conveying ideology, expressing emotional attitude, making decorations and disguises, cultivating intimacy, expressing humor and playing games, calling to action or problem-solving, textual structuring, expressing fiction and enhancing memorability, foregrounding and creating informativeness.

In chapters 6 to 9, the marking of metaphorical interpretation is discussed. Chapter 6 is an inventory of explicit markers of metaphorical interpretation. Vehicles are marked by a 'V-term', Topics may be marked by a 'T-term', and Grounds may be

marked by 'G-terms'. Markers can signal the domain of the Topic: in 'intellectual **stagnation**' (p. 171), the unconventional referent is indicated by "intellectual", which is not a conventional specification of "stagnation". An explicit marker of metaphorical interpretation as a whole, for instance, is a modifier like "metaphorically", but also "literally" may invoke metaphorical interpretation. Goatly subdivides explicit markers into eleven types, and characterizes them according to the properties (In)active, Precision, Symbolism, Approximative, Subjective, Mimetic, and Phenomenalistic, and Effect on metaphor (reduce, enhance, ambiguate, and other effects). Besides the two kinds of markers already mentioned, Goatly distinguishes hedges ("nearly"), metalanguage ("in every sense"), mimetic markers ('artificial **flowers**', p. 178), symbolism terms ("prototype"), superordinate terms ("a kind of"), similes ("is like") and subjectivity markers like foregrounding markers ("look like"), quotation marks, italics, modals ("possibly"), and conditionals ("as it were"). Some remarks on factivity and subjective interpretation conclude this chapter.

Chapter 7 deals with the specification of Topics, by making distinctions in the syntactic form of the metaphorical construction. Syntactic construction gives rise to different semantic functions: equation or qualification; the latter involves a distinction in ascription and association. By examining the syntactic construction of the (actual referent of the) Topic, different semantic functions can be described, which control the metaphorical interpretation. A Topic is found in Copula constructions ("*the eye* was **a raindrop**", p. 202), Appositions ("*the eye*, **a raindrop**", p. 202), Genitives ("**the raindrop** of *an eye*", p. 202), Noun premodifier ("the **raindrop** *eye*", p. 202), Compounds ("the *eye*-**raindrop**", p. 202), and Blends ("the r*eye*n**drop**", p. 202). Copula constructions are interpreted as equations or ascriptions. Appositions are understood by Identification, Designation, Reformulation, Attribution, and Inclusion. Genitives can be interpreted as Equation or Ascription, and also as Partitive, as Analogical, as Subject or Object, and as Indicating origin. Premodifiers are Ascriptive or Associative. Compounds are Equative, and refer to one entity.

The Grounds that specify the Analogy or Similarity between the unconventional and conventional referent (Vehicle and Topic) are another instrument to mark metaphorical interpretation. In chapter 8, syntactic occurrences of the Grounds are classified, next to the degree of association of the Grounds with the Vehicle or the Topic. This association may be Necessary, Expected, or Possible for Topic and Vehicle, so that there are nine combinations of associations. Within each group of appearances the kinds of associations are indicated. Grounds may be preposed to the Vehicle in, e.g. "the *faint* **whisper** of *rain*" (p. 231). Since **whispers** must be thin, the association of the Grounds with the Topic is Necessary. Association of "faint" with 'rain' is possible, but not Necessary or Expected. As a consequence, this metaphor is hardly Interactive (but more a Substitution). Adjectival phrases can also be Expected specifications of the Grounds, or merely Possible. Similes with *like* or *as* typically do not specify Necessary Grounds for Topic or Vehicle, but only Expected or Possible. Subjective markers like *might* are, within a subjective interpretation, Necessary specifications, or at least Expected. In *Of*-genitives like "They had in *their bodies the bending grace* of **a young bough**" (p. 240), the association of Grounds with Topic or Vehicle is Expected or Possible. There are also postposed

Grounds, like 's-genitives and premodifying nouns: "the **fish 'n' chips** *smell* of *the engine oil*" (p. 241). With postposed Grounds, the association is more often Expected or even Necessary, because the Vehicle term has already been introduced, so the Grounds can only support an interpretation that is already established. Other postposed constructions are formed by verbless clauses, non-finite clauses, relative clauses, predicates, prepositional phrases, and modifiers of verb V-terms. Other types of Grounds are Pseudo-Grounds, in which the G-term is itself ambiguous and associated ambiguously with the V-term, and Grounds that are formed on greater distances than within a clause complex. The syntactic description of the terms involved in metaphorical interpretation is concluded with an overview of the syntactic configuration of metaphors (from the distinctions made in the last three chapters) and a discussion of their effects on the prominence of the metaphorical interpretation.

Expressions containing a metaphor may recur several times in a discourse segment. In chapter 9, different kinds of effects are described when identical or different metaphors are used in the same discourse segment. Metaphors may occur in Repetition, i.e. they repeat a V-term that refers to the same Topic. In Multivalency, the V-term is repeated, but its unconventional reference (its Topic) differs on each occasion. Different V-terms may refer to the same Topic too: this is called Diversification. By Modification, the Topic can be changed by several V-terms. This may occur in three ways: by exploiting lexical relations between lexical items, by V-terms that belong to a lexical set (defining meaning correspondence), and by changing the scale of the Topic (zooming in or out). Modification often ends up in Extension. In an Allegory, Extension is worked out in the whole discourse for both Vehicle and Topic (and in Quasi-Allegory, the Topic is not taken to be present on the literal level of the discourse). Mixing occurs when different Topics are evoked by several V-terms. Mixing is usually a sign of bad writing, but it may be used for literary effects too. Compounding of metaphors occurs when the V-term of an already established Topic is used again with its unconventional reference in a new metaphorical interpretation. "She seemed to snuggle like a ***kitten*** within his warmth while ... suggesting the fine **steel** of her ***claws***" (p. 271): the metaphorical claws of the kitten are used again in another metaphorical interpretation, namely 'steel claws'.

Another effect of using V-terms several times in a row, is the Literalization of that piece of discourse. Overdescription may be the result of sustained Literalization. It may create a Symbolic level of interpretation in a text.

In the tenth chapter, a model of situation and social context is introduced to analyze metaphor. The effects of different text genres on the interpretation of metaphor are demonstrated. The purpose of a metaphor is dependent of the choice of the Field (a characterization of the social context) and the Tenor (a definition of the relation between writer and reader). A corpus analysis of metaphor of six text genres is reported, analyzing metaphor in terms of the properties from the previous chapters. The clines of metaphor are related to text genres, and fragments of each genre are presented.

For an evaluation of this book, Goatly can be cited when he writes: "One criticism I have had on my approach to metaphor is that I have defined it too broadly,

especially when straying into areas of non-central varieties like the Mimetic and the Subjective" (pp. 196–197). Goatly was not only straying in non-central varieties like the Mimetic and the Subjective. In fact, it is not very clear what certain parts of the book contribute to Goatly's approach. The notion of Root Analogy is not used in the rest of the book. In chapter 4, the highly interesting hypothesis regarding unconventional reference is introduced, but the chapter continues with an overview of traditional views and theories. In chapter 5, Relevance Theory is introduced only to argue that it does not cover the remainder of the chapter, which describes all the functions of metaphor. In chapter 10, loose ends are tied together. The most critical remark on this book is that it is not well composed. A criticism that stems from my personal preferences is that the large number of classifications and lists does not make the book very pleasant to read.

The language of metaphors, according to the back cover text, is a textbook which "presumes no prior knowledge of linguistics". This is certainly not true. It is an interesting book for specialists on metaphor, and students in linguistics or philosophy may read and understand it. Readers without prior knowledge of linguistics will discover that they lack the necessary background for a thorough understanding of the book.

As far as the content of the book is concerned, the evaluation is positive. The numerous analyses, classifications, and distinctions of different types of metaphorical interpretation and function are impressive. Also, the insights gained from some of these analyses are new and exciting. Particularly, the analysis of metaphorical interpretation as unconventional reference is quite valuable, requiring more research with regards to the interpretation of metaphor and theories of meaning that do not allow for these shifts in reference. I fully agree with Goatly that linguistic description and analysis of the forms and functions of metaphor has been neglected, and I am very pleased to read a book that does pay attention to the syntax of metaphor. In future research, I will not hesitate to consult my Goatly when I come across a particular linguistic occurrence of a metaphor.

References

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