

Discourse Historical Approach to metaphor or the socio-political and historical ecology of metaphor

Małgorzata Fabiszak

Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) stresses the importance of socio-political and historical context for meaning making. Similarly, Bernárdez (2007) advocates synergic cognition as a combination of embodied, situated, distributed cognition in a socio-cultural historical context. This is similar to the 4-E model of cognition (cf. Jensen – Pedersen 2016). In the present paper I build on these two proposals to address the issue of the ecology of metaphor.

The original version of CMT (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999) focuses on the individual cognitive dimension of meaning making, but investigating the function of metaphors in discourse has always emphasized the importance of the socio-historical context which influences their interpretation. Zinken et al. (2008) stress that the embodied and the generic levels of metaphor are of little use to discourse analysts, because the power of metaphor in discourse or discourse metaphor is realized at a more specific level of meaning making. Similarly, Cameron et al. (2009) propose a metaphor-led-discourse-analysis, which focuses on how linguistic metaphors emerge from the discourse dynamics and show how recontextualizing them in the speakers' turns changes the implications that they produce. Such recontextualizations may also influence our perception of the degree of metaphoricity of meaning making processes (Mueller 2008, Jensen 2016).

Jensen (2016) sees written language bias as responsible for the reification of the concept of metaphor. In the study of dynamic embodied interaction the processual approach dominates in which metaphoricity is activated and deactivated to various degrees in the negotiation and re-negotiation of meaning making. I would like to argue that even in the written discourse, which is devoid of the natural affordances of spontaneous interaction, the mental simulation of the various potentialities of meaning is necessary for the critical evaluation of discursive implications as conducted within Critical Discourse Studies.

Selected References

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