Book review

Alice Deignan, Jeannette Littlemore, Elena Semino (2013). *Figurative Language, Genre and Register.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 327 pp. Paperback: ISBN 9781107402034 price: £ 25.60 (US$ 43.75). Hardback: ISBN 9781107009431 price: £ 65.80 (US$ 110.00).

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The book *Figurative Language, Genre and Register* is organised in ten chapters. Using a number of earlier corpus studies of metaphor and metonymy, the authors show how forms and functions of figurative language vary from genre to genre and across registers. The aim of the book is to propose a framework for future analyses of this variation.

Chapter 1 emphasises the importance of considering genre and register in the study of figurative language. The theoretical approach taken in this book is different from the classical Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) represented by Lakoff and Kövecses. The authors argue that representatives of CMT regard linguistic metaphor as evidence of mappings at the conceptual level and make claims about the pervasiveness of metaphors but they do not support the claim with the data of the actual frequency. They also criticize CMT for citing decontextualized examples from unspecified sources. The authors of this book rely on CMT definition of metaphor and metonymy, but they study figurative language as it is used in authentic communicative situations in order to perform different functions, taking in consideration the discourse community, genre and register. Their studies are based on large electronic corpora in order to provide empirical evidence for the existing claims about frequency of conceptual metaphors and metonymies.

Chapter 2 offers a new framework for analysing variation of figurative language in different genres and registers. It opens with an exhaustive overview of earlier studies of text-types and metaphors which are categorized according to the approach. Some seek to trace the specialized meanings of metaphors in a particular text-type and a particular specialized discourse community, others take a critical discourse perspective, while the third group combines the two approaches. The authors then offer their definition of the term 'genre', which is determined by elements such as discourse community, purpose and staging and then define 'register' in terms of field, tenor and mode as its key elements. They call for a coherent theoretical framework for corpus analysis which would make existing studies of

metaphor more closely comparable. When compiling the corpora for comparison, each corpus needs to be compiled with reference to the same theoretical description of genre and register.

Chapter 3 shows two examples of the practical application of the proposed method. The authors use two earlier studies to illustrate how their model of genre and register helps to pinpoint the influence of the context of the culture and the situation on the features of figurative language. The first study, Littlemore (2001), is about difficulties overseas students encounter with lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham. She found out that 90% of the difficulties for foreign students arise from lack of understanding of metaphorical expressions. Metaphors are misinterpreted to such extent that it affects their understanding of the text. The genre framework showed that the difficulties were largely a result of the hearers being new to the discourse community. The second study reanalysed in this book is Deignan and Semino's (2010) analysis of metaphors in a speech by Tony Blair. The re-analysis using the register and genre approach gives a better insight into the complex relationship between Tony Blair and two different audiences he addresses in this speech. This approach enables us to see how he chooses metaphors to manipulate his audiences, to win the elections and continue the relationship with them. It enables us to see how figurative language not only expresses relationships but also helps construct them.

Chapter 4 compares figurative language in specialized and popular scientific texts. The authors analyse two research articles written by scientists for their peers and compare them to a popular article written by a journalist for an educated but not specialized readership. All the articles have the same subject: changes of Greenland Ice Sheet caused by global warming. Although the content was very similar, the figurative language varied, reflecting differences in shared knowledge, assumptions, values and aims of discourse communities. In this analysis, the authors divide functions of metaphors depending on a text-type into theory-constitutive, pedagogical and persuasive. Theory-constitutive metaphors help construct a theory by structuring a new domain and do not have a literal equivalent. Pedagogical metaphors, on the other hand, express existing concepts. They are used to help explain an existing theory and they have literal equivalents. While persuasive function is uncommon or non-existent in academic prose, it is the dominant role of metaphor in the popular article. The analysis also shows that figurative language is more frequent and diverse in the popular science magazine than in the two research articles. Metaphors in the two text types also differ in meaning specificity and syntactic and lexical flexibility.

Chapter 5 investigates the use of metaphor and metonymy in spoken academic discourse. Two academic lectures about management models are compared, one delivered to a senior colleague from the same department, and the other to an "outsider", a postgraduate student from a different department of the same university. The authors study the functions of metaphors and metonymies in the two

lectures and the way they are organized in clusters. The main differences are not quantitative, but qualitative. In the lecture given to the "outsider", metaphors and metonymies have primarily pedagogical function, while their function in the lecture given to the colleague is mainly to entertain and strengthen the relationship. Metaphors and metonymies in the spoken language are multimodal, supported by gestures and visual materials such as diagrams. The authors show that the clusters of metaphors and metonymies and the way in which they change and develop largely depend on genre and register features of the discourse.

Chapter 6 studies figurative language used by the staff working in a children's nursery. Three types of conversation were examined here: the conversations of the staff with each other, their conversations with the children and their conversations with the children's parents. In the analysis, special attention was paid to the functions of figurative expressions. The analysis shows that the figurative language of the nursery staff, when talking to each other, consisted mainly of referential metonymies. This is not surprising because metonymy draws on shared knowledge, and is perfect when rapid and effective communication is required. A lot of these metonymies were locally conventionalized in this particular nursery and they are specific to the context. In some cases metonyms have a more specific, narrower meaning in this particular context than in general English. The authors call this function of metonymy 'discourse community specific narrowing'. At the level of register, these metonymic expressions reflect the field. They fill lexical gaps, referring to specific procedures concerning childcare and administration. When the staff addressed the children, figurative language consisted mainly of hyperbole, personification and euphemisms. Personification has long been known to be very common in child-directed speech. It has pedagogical function, since children use their own bodies, behaviours and feelings as a source domain in understanding other animate beings and even inanimate objects. The authors could not find this function of personification in BNC and they conclude that it is specific to child-oriented speech. Euphemisms, which were realised through metonymy, were used to avoid negative language and taboos in addressing children.

Chapter 7 discusses figurative language in the context of children's football. The authors compare the language of supporters during the match with the language of reporting after the match. In both situations the adults address the children, and they all belong to the same discourse community, but the channel is different: spoken in supporting and written in reporting. Numerous metonymies were found, which was expected, since metonymy has long been known to be a key mechanism in football commentaries. The authors quote Levin's (2008) three reasons for this productivity: filling lexical gaps, the speed at which the commentators produce language and metonymies serving as register markers: to include those who belong to the discourse community and to exclude those who do not. As far as metaphor is concerned, the most frequent source domain is WAR. Comparing the use of figurative language in the two discourse types, they found

greater variety of metaphors in reports than in the supporters' discourse, probably due to the fact that the writers of the reports have more time to think about their use of language. On the other hand, metonymy was more frequent in the supporters' discourse because of the need for rapid communication. The authors here also compared metaphor and metonymy use in relation to parts of speech differences. The supporters' discourse had more verbal and adverbial metaphors, while nominal and adjectival metaphors were characteristic of the reports. The analysis of the way children understand figurative language shows a surprisingly low level of understanding, especially with established, field-specific expressions. This analysis is somewhat different from the usual analysis of football commentaries because the adult writers in the analysed commentaries address children under nine years of age. The figurative language used in the reports has the function of positively evaluating the players in order to encourage them and to entertain.

Chapter 8 discusses the use of figurative language in the 'simplification' of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and the original play. Special attention is paid to aesthetic effects of metaphor and metonymy. This analysis is also different in two aspects: first, it is concerned with two versions of the same text, and secondly diachronic changes in the use of figurative language are also considered. The process of simplification has significant implications for genre and register, involving changes in communicative purpose, target audience and the configuration of field, tenor and mode. While Shakespeare wrote the original text for theatre audience, simplified texts are aimed mainly at secondary school pupils for educational purposes and for non-native speakers whose competence in English is not sufficient to understand the original play. Figurative language is considered an important aspect of literary texts. The analysis shows that many uses of figurative language are very closely reproduced in the simplified version. However, a number of metaphorical and metonymic expressions were changed or omitted in the simplified version in order to make it more accessible to its readers. Most instances of personification and body part metonymies were omitted, as well as metaphors drawing from source domains unfamiliar to modern readers. Many novel metaphors were replaced by more conventional ones.

In Chapter 9 the authors compare the use of metaphor and metonymy in description of chronic pain in a diagnostic multiple-choice questionnaire and artworks produced by and artist in collaboration with chronic pain sufferers. The focus is on the contrast between conventional and creative uses of metaphor and metonymy and the role of creativity in helping patients express their sensitive subjective experiences. Very much like emotions, pain is very difficult to describe because it rarely has visible, physical manifestation. Yet, its precise description is very important for medical practitioners in order to reach a diagnosis. In this chapter, the authors show how the manifestations and functions of metaphors vary depending on the genre and communicative purpose. While the information from the questionnaire is useful because it can be turned into quantitative data, the par-

ticipants have constraints regarding the terms they can use and their creativity is limited. On the other hand, visual art enables them to apply multi-modal, creative metaphors in expressing their experiences, but these cannot be used for quantitative analysis. The authors suggest that this creative use of metaphor and metonymy can contribute to a more effective doctor-patient communication when combined with the conventional uses of figurative language in a diagnostic questionnaire.

The book ends with the chapter entitled Conclusion, in which the authors give a brief overview of their proposed methods and findings. They conclude that figurative language largely depends on the participants, the role and goals in the particular context of communication, and that this variation needs to be taken into account in the theoretical and empirical study of figurative language.

The authors succeeded in offering a systematic approach to the study of variation of metaphor and metonymy in relation to genre and register, which was the main aim of the book. The approach is supported by examples of contrasted datasets from diverse settings ranging from very formal, such as academic writing to very informal, such as the touchline at a children's football match. In their search for a new methodology for the analysis of metaphor and metonymy, the authors rely on the data obtained in their earlier studies. For those who want to study figurative language in different registers and genres, they provide a number of tools in the form of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, depending on the type of data analysed. The book shows the full complexity of the authors' endeavour to offer a framework for register and genre analysis of figurative language. These include variation in metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses of the same expression and different metaphorical uses of the same expression in different discourse communities, variation in frequency, linguistic expression and communicative functions of metaphors and metonymies in different genres and registers. Their empirical analyses also show the way in which the use of metaphors and metonymies is influenced by the purpose of communication, speed of production of speech, the relationship between the writers and readers and shared (specialized) knowledge of the participants in the communication. They also point out to some major difficulties that the 'outsiders' to a certain discourse community have in understanding metaphorical and metonymic expressions and grasping their full evaluative and connotative values. Hence, in addition to complementing the traditional CMT with information about variation of figurative language between different text-types, the authors show how the findings of register and genre oriented studies can have practical applications, such as predicting the problems that outsiders and newcomers to discourse community are likely to encounter and proposing some new directions for improving communication and relationships.

To conclude, the authors succeeded in providing an innovative framework for the analysis of metaphor and metonymy in context, based on sound theoretical foundations. I consider this book a valuable and useful tool for metaphor scholars,

and I believe that researchers interested in corpus analysis of figurative language in different registers and genres will find *Figurative Language, Genre and Register* an inspiring starting point for further studies.

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