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"THE HEART OF IRISH-LANGUAGE PROVERBS": A LINGUO-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF EXPLICIT METAPHOR

Abstract: Metaphor has featured frequently in attempts to define the proverb (see Taylor 1931, Whiting 1932, Mieder 1985, 1996), and since the advent of modern paremiological scholarship, it has been identified as one of the most salient markers of 'proverbiality' (Arora 1984) across a broad spectrum of world languages. Significant language-specific analyses, such as those by Klimenko (1946), Silverman-Weinreich (1981), and Arora (1984) have provided valuable qualitative information on the form and function of metaphor in Russian, Yiddish, and Spanish proverbs respectively. Unfortunately, no academic scholarship has engaged with the subject of metaphor in Irish proverbs. This study builds on international paremiological research on metaphor and provides for the first time a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the form, frequency, and nature of linguistic metaphors in Irish proverbs (1856-1952). Moreover, from the perspective of paremiology, it presents a methodological template and result-set that can be applied cross-linguistically to compare metaphor in the proverbs of other languages.

Keywords: Irish Language; Linguistic Metaphor; Proverbiality; Stylistics; Poetics; Conceptual Metaphor.

1. Introduction

The subject of metaphor is one of the most analysed aspects of modern paremiology due to the vast interdisciplinary interest and the emergence of new theoretical approaches to the subject, particularly advances in cognitive linguistics pioneered by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and more recent work on 'Conceptual Integration Theory' by Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002). The burgeoning interest in the subject is evidenced in Wolfgang Mieder's two-volume *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology* (2010), which contains bibliographic details of over 4,000 scholarly works relating to metaphor in proverbs,

proverbial expressions (or phraseological units), and related forms. A review of this literature shows that interdisciplinary approaches have been used to tackle various questions relating to metaphor, but traditionally they have focused on the following general research areas: (1) *lexicography*– the treatment of metaphorical proverbs and related expressions in dictionaries (e.g., Weinreich 1969, Doyle 1996/2007; Pätzold 1998); (2) *translation studies*– problems and strategies in the translation of metaphorical proverbs (e.g., Hwang 1985, Navarro Salazar 1999, Ersözlü 2000, El-Yasin and Al-Shehebat 2005, Miller 2005; (3) *psycholinguistics*– the processing, comprehension and interpretation of metaphor in proverbs (e.g., Kemper 1981, Resnick 1982, Harnish 1993, Temple and Honeck 1999, Katz and Ferretti 2001, Cieslicka 2002); (4) *pragmatics/ethnology of speaking folklore*– metaphoric proverb performance as a speech act (e.g., Arewa and Dundes 1964, Seitel 1969/1977, Fabian 1990); (5) *cognitive linguistics*– the use of conceptual metaphors in proverbs (e.g., Lakoff and Turner 1989, Honeck 1997, Honeck and Temple 1994, Krikmann 1994, Tóthné Litovkina and Csábi 2002) or in individual metaphoric expressions (e.g. Krikmann 1996); (6) *literary stylistics*– the function of metaphorical proverbs in literary genres or in the works of a particular author (e.g., Abrahams and Babcock 1977, Bradbury 2002); (7) *second-language acquisition*– the problem of metaphoric proverbs in second-language acquisition (e.g., Nuessel and Cicogna 1993, Nuessel 1999, Cieslicka 2002), and (8) *linguo-stylistics*–proverbiality, proverbial markers and formal aspects of proverbs (e.g., Klimenko 1946, Silverman-Weinreich 1981, and Arora 1984).

Of all the approaches, the linguo-stylistic analysis of metaphor as a key tenet of 'proverbiality' is one of the most underexamined in the field, especially when one considers the paucity of language-specific studies that have examined the role of metaphor in different languages. This subject matter has the potential for extensive cross-linguistic comparative analyses that may provide a deeper linguistic understanding of the form and frequency of metaphor in proverbs, both at a stylistic and a pragmatic level. Furthermore, if one considers the absence of any linguistic research on metaphor in Irish-language proverbs in spite of the myriad aforementioned international methodological

approaches, then there is a valid rationale for examining the role of metaphor as a proverbial marker in the Irish language.

2. Metaphor as a Proverbial Marker

Metaphor has featured frequently and consistently in attempts to define the proverb (see Taylor 1931, Whiting 1932, Mieder 1985, 1996), and since the advent of modern paremiological scholarship, scholars examining the aesthetic and formal structure of proverbs have identified metaphor as one of the most salient markers of 'proverbiality'[1] across the broad spectrum of world languages (see Seitel 1969, Barley 1972, Cram 1983, Arora 1984, Dundes 1975). Significant language-specific analyses, such as Klimenko (1946), Silverman-Weinreich (1981), and Arora (1984), have provided valuable qualitative information on the form and function of metaphor in Russian, Yiddish, and Spanish proverbs, respectively. Whilst less substantial analyses have commented on the use of metaphor in the proverbs of Northern Sotho[2] (Grobler 2001), the Tangle language of Gombe (Tadi 2009) and the Ondo culture of Nigeria (Arinola 2009, 124-127), and in English-language anti-proverbs (Valdaeva 2003, 388-9). Recent work by Szpila (2005) has also examined the related subject of metonymic operations in Polish proverbs.

The general consensus emerging from these studies is that metaphor is inherently connected to the proverb irrespective of language. Arora (1984, 11) has shown that metaphor is the most significant indicator of proverbiality in Spanish and that 'the same observation would apply to most if not all languages as well'; Klimenko (1946, 65-73) demonstrates that it is used frequently in Russian proverbs in conjunction with other prominent markers such as antithesis, allegory and hyperbole; Silverman-Weinreich (1981, 76) suggests that 'allegory is one of the clearest semantic markers of a proverb' in Yiddish[3]; and, more recently, Yerima Tadi (2009, 255) has asserted that Tangle proverbs 'abound in metaphors.' In terms of Irish-language proverbs, Ó Bric (1976, 35) is the only scholar to make any comment on the use of metaphor, with the general *a priori* claim that they are 'the heart of the majority of (Irish-language) proverbs'.[4] Needless to say, this supposition has never been examined using empirical data: herein lies the rationale for this study.

At this stage, it should be pointed out that all of these studies suffer from varying degrees of methodological inconsistency, which is problematic and indeed prohibitive for any comparative examination of the data. Firstly, the identificational criteria for metaphor are not outlined, so it is unclear if these scholars are actually examining the same subject matter, a point noted previously by MacKay (1986, 88):

> 'One of the difficulties is that the choice of which metaphors or class of metaphors to study has been largely arbitrary, and different studies have examined different and perhaps fundamentally incomparable types of metaphors… resulting in a diversity of conflicting claims about metaphor in general.'

The second issue is the absence of relative frequencies of metaphor in the respective languages. It is methodologically unsound to draw conclusions about the frequency and relative importance of metaphor in proverbs without explicit statistical evidence to support the assertion. These, of course, are two methodological pre-requisites that must be explicitly outlined before any analysis of the data set may be completed as Cameron (1999a) and others have pointed out. This study will provide information on both identificational criteria and statistical frequencies of metaphor types in the corpus (see *3.3 Identificational Criteria for Linguistic Metaphors*).

This present work will analyse a randomly selected data sample of Irish proverbs for the presence of metaphor using obligatory identificational criteria and based on 'the "purely semantical" (virtual, context-free) mode' (Krikmann 2009, 15). A 'theory level analysis' (Cameron 1999a, 7) will be used to examine metaphor and the related figurative trope of personification from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. Of particular interest will be those metaphors based on the structural forms *x is y* and *xyz*, as well as 'predicative metaphors' (Miller 1979). The correlation of other syntactic (structural parallelism, sub-clausal fronting, parataxis) and phonic (rhyme, alliteration) proverbial markers will also be analysed. The study will be the first comprehensive analysis of the nature, form and frequency of linguistic metaphor in Irish-language proverbs. Moreover, from the perspective of paremiology, it will provide both a methodological template and result-set that can be applied cross-linguistically to

compare the nature of metaphor in the proverbs of other languages.

3. Methodological Framework

3.1 Proverb corpus

A corpus of one thousand randomly chosen Irish proverbs from printed collections spanning the years (1856-1952) was tested for the presence of metaphor using strict identificational criteria (see *3.3*). The corpus has been randomly selected from a sampling frame comprising the three printed dialectal collections of Irish proverbial material,[5] namely (1) *Seanfhocla Uladh* [*The Proverbs of Ulster*] (Ó Muirgheasa 1907; 2nd ed. 1936);[6] (2) *Seanfhocail na Muimhneach* [The Proverbs of the Munstermen] (Ó Siochfhradha 1926; reissued and expanded as *Seanfhocail na Mumhan* [The Proverbs of Munster] (Ua Maoileoin 1984)), and (3) *Sean-fhocla Chonnacht* [The Proverbs of Connaught] (Ó Máille 1948, 1952; reissued and expanded as *Seanfhocla Chonnacht* [The Proverbs of Connaught] (Uí Bhraonáin 2010).[7]

3.2 Metaphor

The analysis and definition of metaphor can be traced back to classical times, particularly to the work of Homer, Isocrates and Plato,[8] but most importantly to Aristotle, who built on their scholarship and composed one of the first recorded definitions of the concept:

> 'Metaphor is the application of a strange term either transferred from the genus and applied to the species or from the species and applied to the genus or from one species to another or else by analogy.' (Levin 1982, 24)

At a basic level, metaphor is a linguistic device that unites two conceptual frameworks or domains so that one may understand or relate to one object in terms of another. There is a multitude of scholarly definitions yet many are faulted for being based on pre-chosen sample sentences or decontextualised sentences (Cameron 1999b, 106). The subdivision of metaphor into a variety of subclasses such as personification, dead metaphor, mixed metaphor, and synthetic metaphor, also prohibits a single theory of metaphor that can account for all the different types (cf. Gibbs 1999, 36). Two essential components are required for a metaphorical transfer: the literal sub-

ject of the metaphor, i.e. that to which the metaphor refers, and an anomalous field from which attributes are taken. These two have been classified by various labels such as 'tenor' and 'vehicle' (Richards 1936, Perrine 1971), 'primary subject' and 'secondary subject' (Black 1979, 28), and in cognitive linguistics through the use of 'source' and 'target' to indicate a unilateral mapping of one domain in another (Lakoff and Johnston 1980, Lakoff and Turner 1989). Black's (1962) 'frame-focus' distinction identifies the specific word or phrase that is responsible for a metaphoric reading: the 'focus' is the anomalous or deviant language within the surrounding 'frame'. At a pragmatic level, Searle's (1993, 103) approach has shown that literal statements that are 'defective' act as a trigger for the hearer to seek out a hidden meaning through a process of metaphoric construal.[9] These general rules may be applied to two examples of Irish proverbs for the purposes of clarification: the first demonstrates metaphor as an implicitly linguistic phenomenon, whilst the second illustrates proverbs as 'a social use of metaphor' (Seitel 1981).

3.2.1 In the Irish proverb Is ait an mac an saol 'Life is a strange son' one may construe the literal subject (tenor/primary-subject/target) of life by transferring elements from the related source term of son (vehicle/secondary-subject/source). The anomalous term son is the 'focus', or what Kittay (1987) terms the 'minimal frame' of the rest of the sentence i.e. the 'frame'. The metaphor derives from the fact that the characteristics of the vehicle domain are incompatible with those of the tenor to which it is transferred. At a processing-level a pre-requisite to decipherment of the metaphor is a recognizable correspondence between the two domains otherwise the metaphor will remain unintelligible (Brown 2004, 135; Lakoff and Turner 1989, 50-51). This may be termed an explicit metaphor (Steen 1989, 84) as both tenor and vehicle are found within the same linguistic utterance. Furthermore, pragmatic information relating to speaker-addressee relationships or social context is not a pre-requisite for the identification of the metaphor.

Is ait an mac an saol
Life is an odd son.

Tenor / Primary subject / Target domain	= life
Vehicle / Secondary subject / Source domain	= (odd) son
Focus	= son
Frame	= Life is an odd

3.2.2. Alternatively, many proverbs that do not contain an *explicit* metaphor may function metaphorically when applied in real-time to a speech situation. An incongruous context may rule out a literal rendering of the proverb and thus facilitate a metaphoric projection from source to target domain. This may be termed an *implicit* (Steen 1989, 82-84) or *applied* metaphor. For example, at a surface level the proverb *Salóidh aon chaora chlamhach tréad* 'One mangy sheep will defile a flock' (SU§899)[10] does not contain any incongruence between tenor and vehicle. It is not an *explicit* metaphor. However, if the context facilitates the application of the proverb to an external referent, e.g. a fraudulent politician guilty of corrupting his colleagues in government, the image schema associated with the source (i.e. a mangy sheep defiling a flock) is aligned with that of the target (i.e. a politician corrupting his colleagues) so that using intuitive and inferential strategies we can understand the source image in human terms by transferring the relevant schema. It is common, of course, for the proverb to present an immediate, recognisable physical image or event– in this instance, a farming dilemma – as a means of interpreting situations that are abstract, complex or unfamiliar (Gibbs and Beitel 1995, 136). In this case, we may apply Seitel's (1981, 127) heuristic model to demonstrate the analogical relationship between the imaginary proverb situation and the social situation to which it refers or [A:B :: C:D] i.e. A is to B as C is to D.

A [mangy sheep]	~	[Relation between substantive terms 'defiles'] ~ B [a flock]
		| | | | |
C [corrupt politician]	~	[Relation between substantive terms 'defiles'] ~ D [a cabinet]

3.3 Identificational criteria for linguistic metaphors

Clear identificational criteria are required to operationalize metaphor in this study. The proverbs in the corpus were collated from printed sources (even though the majority were recorded from the oral sources) with little or no detail regarding their meaning or application and, as a result, they may only be examined as decontextualised linguistic forms. This places limits on the range and depth of criteria that may be applied: the parameters of linguistic analysis only stretch to an examination of the surface structure or, more simply, the presence of metaphors in the proverb. The most effective approach to identification is what Krikmann (2009, 15) has termed 'the "purely semantical" (virtual, context-free) mode' in which the data simply consists of proverb texts without any ancillary information on their meaning or usage. Moreover, the type of analytic framework available is restricted to 'theory level analysis' (Cameron 1999a, 7) in which the primary concerns are the identification of metaphor, the categorisation of metaphor types, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, and an examination of salient patterns.

Context-free identifications of metaphor in proverbs rely on the presence of the tenor and vehicle within the same proverb, or what we have termed an *explicit metaphor*. A semantic 'breaking point' (Krikmann 2007, 8) within the proverb text is also required, in which there is a semantic contradiction or between one or more parts, or, more specifically, an incongruity between the domain of the vehicle and topic domains. This 'metaphorical twist' (Beardsley 1962), which results from literal absurdity, then presents a new semantic meaning. The following identificational criteria for linguistic metaphors (N1-3) suggested by Cameron (1999b, 118) have been used as a template for the identification of metaphors in the corpus:

> N1 it contains reference to a Topic domain by a Vehicle term (or terms) and
> N2 there is potentially an incongruity between the domain of the Vehicle term and the Topic domain and
> N3 it is possible for a receiver (in general, or a particular person), as a member of a particular discourse community to find a coherent interpretation which makes sense of the incongruity in its discourse context, and

> which involves some transfer of meaning from the Vehicle domain.

As a caveat to these necessary conditions (N 1-3), we must also outline a position relating to grey areas of metaphor that are linguistically and culturally specific, i.e., forms that are theoretically metaphorical yet are not processed as metaphors within the language: *dead metaphors* and *delexicalised metaphors*. We may consider a *dead metaphor* (also 'frozen metaphors' or 'conventional metaphors')[11] to be an expression that was perceived as deviant (i.e. metaphorical) in the language at its inception, but which has evolved to become part of the category of well-formed expressions through a process of 'agrammatization'.[12] Through frequent and widespread use, these expressions have lost their basic metaphorical meaning, and have derived the status of a normal literal meaning in the accepted use of language.[13] The difficulty with such expressions from a diachronic analysis is that it is difficult to decipher when they ceased to be considered metaphorical in the language. We also have to consider *delexicalised verbs* (Sinclair 1991, 113), particularly irregular verbs such as *bí* 'be', *cuir* 'put', *tar* 'come', *déan* 'do', and *téigh* 'go', which in many instances functioned metaphorically with a noun collocation, but are now considered by language users as naturally-occurring. Cameron (1999b, 121) has suggested two methods of treating these forms, either (i) classifying them all as non-metaphorical, which precludes their use as metaphors in other contexts, or (ii) to outline the base literal use of the verbs and then view any use that does not conform to this meaning as metaphorical. The difficulty with this approach is that the core literal meaning is the oldest in terms of etymology, although this may not be the most common meaning in modern language. This notion of 'an independent first-order meaning' (Kittay, 1987) which acts as prerequisite to accessing metaphorical interpretations may also have been lost in a majority of cases (Low 1999, 121). Both these methods have severe limitations, and if we consider that 'metaphoricity is a matter of degree' (Dobrovol´skij and Piiraninen 2005, 6), it has been decided to regard *dead metaphors* and *delexicalised verbs* as non-metaphorical lexical units in this study, except of course when the N1-3 conditions are fulfilled at a surface level.[14]

4. Analysis of Metaphor in Irish-language Proverbs

A statistical analysis of the most salient phonic, syntactic and semantic markers in Irish proverbs shows that metaphor is not, as Ó Bric (1976, 35) claims, 'at the heart of Irish-proverbs'. Linguistic metaphor occurs in approximately 17% of the corpus, which is on a par with sub-clausal fronting and rhyme (each 15%), but it is almost half as common as alliteration (29%), which is the proverbial marker *par excellence* in Irish, and syntactic parallelism which occurs with equally high frequency (27%). If the former two markers are, to use the classification of Silverman-Weinreich (1981), 'primary proverbial markers,' then those markers in the next class, including 'metaphor', may be described as 'secondary primary markers' as it occurs in approximately one in six proverbs. The exact distribution frequencies can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Distribution of proverbial markers in a corpus of 1000 Irish-language proverbs.*

	Distribution					
Proverbial marker	*present*		*absent*		*sum*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Alliteration	288	29	712	71	1000	100
Syntactic Parallelism	265	27	735	73	1000	100
Metaphor	165	17	835	84	1000	100
Sub-clausal fronting	152	15	848	85	1000	100
Rhyme	148	15	852	85	1000	100
Parataxis	56	6	944	94	1000	100

4.1 X is Y Metaphors

In over one-fifth of the proverbs the simple nominal metaphorical structure, i.e. *x is y*, is the basis for the metaphor. In these examples the conceptual domains of the tenor and vehicle display an explicit semantic incongruity[15] that rules out a literal interpretation and indicates a metaphorical transfer from the vehicle domain to the topic.[16] For example in No.1, the proverb 'The summer is the hungry man' contains the NP topic of 'the summer' and the NP + adjectival modifier of 'hungry man.'

1. Sé an samhradh an fear gortach. (SU§1464)
The summer is the hungry man.

In this copulative proverb there is a clear violation of the semantic rules that govern the acceptable relationships between the elements. The violation occurs because the predicate assigns the subject to an improper category (Levin 1993, 118) i.e. an abstract concept such as 'the summer' cannot literally be a member of the superordinate category of which 'man' is a prototypical category member, i.e. *homo sapiens*. The 'class-inclusion assertion'[17] is not true. In short, the sentence violates the constraints of category membership and, as a result, is not an acceptable, conventional literal sentence. Instead, if we examine the underlying simile, the metaphor can be comprehended through a mapping of the shared features of the topic and vehicle (Gentner 1983, Ortony 1979, Wolff and Gentner 1992). Not all shared features are required, however: there are relevant and irrelevant features involved. The number of relevant attributional features will vary from topic to topic, and from vehicle to vehicle (Glucksberg, McGlone and Manfredi 1997, 58). The sentence demands a transfer of the metaphor-relevant features of the vehicle 'hungry man' to the topic 'the summer', and a suppression of irrelevant features that do not readily transfer. The shared feature of 'lack of food' is of high salience in the vehicle and of low salience in the topic (high A 'the hungry man' / low B 'the summer'), as Ortony (1979) has shown to be typical in his 'salience imbalance model'. In this instance, a salient emblematic relevant behavioural feature of the vehicle is the abstract idea of 'a lack of food', whilst the irrelevant features are its physical characteristics, e.g. human and male. Relevant features are key to the processing of the metaphor, whilst the irrelevant features are supressed. The metaphorical mapping of this relevant vehicle feature facilitates a reading of the topic 'the summer' through our conventional understanding of the concept of 'hungry man'. We can therefore interpret summer as a time when food is not available and when, as a result, people suffer the physical effects of deprivation.

From a syntactic perspective, it should be noted that grammatical modification of the vehicle (i.e. the *y*-NP) is common in *x is y* type proverbs, either through the attachment of at least one

predicative adjective (No. 2), adjectival phrase (No. 3) or an adverbial phrase (No. 4) The juxtaposition of two noun phrases through parataxis is also used to indicate an implicit logical linkage, i.e. 'equality or identification' (see Mac Coinnigh 2012, 113). This can be seen in No. 5 below where the term 'a tongue' functions metonymically to represent 'a language'.

2. *Breitheamh ceart cothrom an t-éag*. (SC§321)
COP judge (y) just fair the death (x).
Death is a fair and just judge.

3. *Is namhaid an cheard gan a foghlaim*. (SM§1616)
COP enemy (y) the trade (x) not to learn.
An unlearned trade is an enemy.

4. *Is lia gach othar tar éis a leighis*. (SM§149)
COP surgeon (y) every patient (x) after his/her healing.
Every patient is a surgeon [after he/she is healed.]

5. *Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam*. (SM§1044)
A country without a language, a country without a soul.

Of particular stylistic interest is the fact that the majority of the *x is y* type proverbs do not feature as a basic copulative sentence as in No. 1. Instead they are based on an emphatic identificatory copulative construction (55%), in which adjectival modifier of the vehicle NP is syntactically fronted in post-copulative position for the purposes of emphasis. Some typical examples can be found in No. 6-8.

6. *Is trom an t-ualach an fhalsacht*. (SU§790)
COP heavy the burden the laziness.
Laziness is a HEAVY burden.

7. *Is milis an rud an t-anam*. (SM§133)
COP sweet the thing the soul.
The soul is a SWEET thing.

8. *Is maith an scoil é an saol*. (SC§3618)
COP good the school the life.
Life is a GOOD school.

Once again, in spite of the emphasis the semantic violation is still to be observed. For example in No. 8 the proverb 'Life is a GOOD school' has the abstract topic 'life' and the vehicle 'school'. The

abstract concept such as 'life' cannot literally be a member of the category domain of which 'school' is a typical member, i.e. a building. The sentence demands a transfer of the metaphor-relevant features of the vehicle 'school' to the topic 'life'. In this case the relevant features is the abstract idea of a *process of education* through which individuals, or more specifically humans, incrementally develop and learn, whilst the irrelevant features are its physical characteristics, e.g. a building, classrooms, a playground, a dining-hall, and a gym. The metaphorical mapping of this relevant vehicle feature facilitates a reading of the topic 'life' through our conventional understanding of the concept of 'school', so that we can view it as a process of incremental educational and social development through which lessons are learned.

4.2 The xyz metaphor

Not all metaphors are based on the simple *x is y* structure and often in proverbial material meanings are conveyed through the complex interaction of a multiplicity of terms, or what Turner (1991) has termed the *xyz* metaphor, and what Krikmann (2007: 11) has referred to as 'Aristotelian structures with the "absent fourth"'. In this structure the simple syntactic construction of *x*-NP be *y*-NP of *z*-NP requires a complex semantic and pragmatic interpretation in which '*x* in a target is the counterpart of *y* in a source, and *z* in that target is the counterpart of an unmentioned fourth element *w* in that source' (Turner 1996, 105).

The corpus evidence corpus shows that there are thirteen examples of the *xyz* type metaphor (8.2%). The syntactic structure of these examples follows two distinct patterns: (1) a classificatory copula structure with a simple NP as subject and a Prepositional NP as predicate [COP Predicate PP Sub NP] and (2) a copulative identificatory structure containing a simple NP as subject and a genitive (noun-noun) construction as predicate [COP Sub NP1 Predicate NP2]. An explication of one representative example from each category is sufficient to demonstrate this category.

(1) *COP Predicate PP Sub NP*

9. *Dearthair don bhás an codladh*. (SC§325)
COP Brother to the death the sleep.
Sleep is brother of death.

10. *[Is] Mac_don chat an piscín*. (SM§2125)
COP son to the cat the kitten.
The kitten is son of the cat.

11. *Is máistir ar an saol an bás*. (SU§605)
COP master on the life death.
Death is master of life.

In the proverb, *Dearthair don bhás an codladh* 'Sleep is brother of death' (No. 9) originally of ancient Greek origin and first attested by Virgil in his Aeneid,[18] the *y-z* relationship ('brother of death') is unconventional. Class-inclusion is breached as 'death' is an abstract, inanimate, non-human, concept that is not a member of the basic source domain of which 'brother' is a typical constituent. We can postulate that the most familiar and applicable for the *y*-element ('brother') is that of *Familial Relationships or Kinship*. This is evidence by that fact that if we extend the conventional, literal instances of collocation with the phrase 'brother of [=to]…' we typically find that it refers to human individuals, mentioned by name e.g. *Paul (is) brother of Sarah*, or by category *The President (is) brother of the Mayor*.[19] To view an abstraction in terms of human kinship demonstrates a high level of semantic incongruity and lets us know that expression must be interpreted through the construction of a metaphor.

Determining this relationship metaphorically involves the invocation of unspecified item from the *y* source domain (which may be termed *w*) as a counterpart of *y*, and the mapping of this relationship onto the base conjunction *x* and *z* (Turner 1991).[20] If the metaphorical *y* (brother) ~ (of) ~ *z* (death) is replaced with a conventional literal rendering i.e. *y* (brother) ~ (of) ~ *w* (brother/sister), we can see that what is being suggested is a fratricidal blood linkage between *human* individuals. Our common understanding of 'brother to brother/sister relationships' typically evokes salient qualities such as physical, psychological, biological and behavioural similitude.[21] This image schematic information relating to a typical, literal *y-w* relationship i.e. 'brother-brother/sister' can then be mapped to the *x-z* conjunction 'sleep-death' (see Turner 1991, 200-1). This leads us to the understanding that 'sleep' is physically and psychologically like 'death', i.e. it involves a physical and behavioural similarity of lying motionless with eyes closed, and a psychologically similarity in that

they both involve a break in human consciousness. Of course, in the case of 'sleep' the break in consciousness is a temporary one, whilst with 'death' the break is a permanent one.

(2) *COP Sub NP1 Predicate NP2*

12. *Ola an chroí an t-im*. (SM§432)
Oil of the heart the butter.
Butter is the oil of the heart.

13. *[Is] Lia gach boicht bás*. (SM§195)
COP is healer of every poor person death.
Death is the healer of every poor person.

14. *Is é an dóchas lia gach anró*. (SC§1905)
COP it is the hope healer of every misery
Hope is the healer of every misery.

The second structural category of *xyz* metaphors features a genitive construction linking the *z* and *y* elements as the examples above illustrate. In the proverb *ola an chroí an t-im* 'Butter is the oil of the heart' the association between 'butter' (*x*) and 'heart' (*z*) may be understood by the relationship indicated by the noun phrase 'oil' (*y*) and an unspecified absent counterpart from an associated conceptual domain (*w*) i.e. 'engine'. Possible relevant features associated with 'oil' could be physical (e.g. viscous liquid), behavioural (e.g. fluid), or functional (e.g. lubrication, heat-generating), but if 'engine' is the absent (w) noun phrase then lubrication is the most salient shared feature. When the analogical mapping is deciphered, i.e. OIL IS TO A MACHINE as BUTTER IS TO THE HEART, a metaphorical understanding occurs so that we may comprehend that butter performs the same function to the heart as oil does to an engine i.e. lubrication.

4.3 Predicative Metaphor

Aside from the *x is y* and the *xyz* structures, the most common other type is 'predicative metaphor' (Miller 1979) in which the subject component of the topic domain and the predicative component of the vehicle domain are incompatible. Metaphorical interpretations can be found in the major lexical categories involved in the predicates: nouns, verbs and adjectives (see Glanzberg 2008). In literal sentences, there is a limit to the type of NPs can be used in conjunction with a verb and when the NP

violates the verb restrictions, a metaphorical reading is required. For example, in the paradigm *Cuir do náire faoi do chóta* 'Put your *shame (x)* under your coat', the range of non-figurative applications of the *x*-NP is 'physical object', for example, a typical NP for *x* might be jumper, wallet, phone, or money. Yet, in the proverb reading, an atypical NP 'shame' with the marker 'Abstract concept' is used in conjunction with the verb. This violates selection restrictions of the verb and is semantically incompatible (see Levin 1977): the anomaly triggers readjustment rules, which in turn demands a metaphorical reading of the sentence.[22]

15. *Cuir do náire faoi do chóta*. (SC§3056)
Put your shame under your coat.

Semantic incompatibility is constructed through various attachments of NPs to non-compatible verbs in the proverbs, for example, the abstract noun 'soul' is used as the object of the human taste sense ['soul' 'to taste'] (No. 16), a fixed human body part i.e. 'nose' is treated as if it was a portable object ['nose' 'to put/move'] (No. 17), and a human category member i.e. 'priest' is composed of an inanimate, physical object ['priest' 'to make from wood'] (No. 18).

16. *Is milis an rud an t-anam*. (SM§133)
The soul is a sweet thing.

17. *Cuir do shrón romhat agus déanfaidh sí eolas*. (SC§1507)
Put your nose before you and it will guide.

18. *Ní de gach adhmad is cóir sagart a dhéanamh*. (SU§77)
It is not of every timber it is right to make a priest.

The proverbial structure *COP Comparative Adjective x*-NP *than y*-NP, or 'value comparison' (Thompson 1974, 40) is one of the most commonly occurring in a large number of languages, and it has a relatively high frequency in the Irish language also (10%) (Mac Coinnigh 2012, 125). Silverman-Weinreich (1981, 78) has shown that Yiddish proverbs often compare abstractions in this manner– usually one generic and one abstract term– and that this form is a common semantic marker (e.g. *gezunt kumt far parnose* 'health is more important than income'). In Irish, this structure often pertains to predicative metaphor as atypical noun phrases are frequently used

in relation to the comparative adjective. For example in No. 19 the *y*-NP 'apron' is an accepted literal object that can be physically close to the subject i.e. 'woman', yet the *x*-NP 'an excuse' is an abstract concept that is semantically incongruent. The two elements are not literally comparable. Whilst in No. 20, the treatment of humans as objects is once again responsible for a metaphorical reading as it is physically impossible to have a 'fistful of men' or a 'witheful of a woman':

19. *Is foisce do bhean leithscéal ná práiscín*. (RA§334)
A excuse is closer to a woman than an apron.

20. *Is fearr lán doirn d'fhear ná lán gaid de mhnaoi*. (SM§30)
Better a fistful of a man than a witheful of a woman.

5. Personification in Irish-language Proverbs

Personification is a trope of pre-classical origin founded upon the concept of 'primitive animism' which scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 33) and MacKay (1986, 87) have described as the prototypical metaphor.[23] At a basic level, it involves the projection of human physical attributes, characteristics, emotions, habits, beliefs and activities, onto a range of non-human entities, events and abstract concepts that feature at lower level of the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING (see Table 2).[24]

Table 2. *Lakoff and Turner's (1989) Great Chain Metaphor*

			Specifically Human Features
		Instincts	*Instincts*
	Biological Features	**Biological Features**	*Biological Features*
Physical features	**Physical features**	**Physical features**	*Physical features*
Things, Substances	Plants	Animals	Human Beings

Key: Bold type = non-human
Italics = shared (non-human + human)
Underlined = only human

This projection facilitates the comprehension of the entities through an innate awareness of our own instincts and behaviour. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 33) have identified personification, or anthropomorphism, as the most obvious ontological metaphor, and numerous other scholars have highlighted its importance in proverbs, as Taylor notes 'Simple metaphors which verge on personification are of course common to proverbs in all lands; abstractions are assigned the powers of human beings' (Taylor 1931, 142).[25] Although no specific analytical work has been completed on personification in Irish language proverbs, Ó Bric (1976, 35) has made the vague comment that abstract concepts *are* personified in Irish language proverbs.[26] Evidence from the corpus is more comprehensive, however, and it shows that personification is the most salient trope in Irish metaphoric proverbs, as it occurs in almost one half of the examples (48%).

Various types of metaphoric projection are responsible for the incongruity and in the case of Irish proverbs these may be classified into seven distinct formulaic sub-categories according to the aspect of human physical, cognitive, emotional or social behaviour that is projected onto inanimate objects and abstract concepts. Of all the projections, the transferal of typical (Cat. 1) *Human physical and social behaviour* to the inanimate or abstract is the commonest, as it occurs in almost one half of the personifications (46.8%). This concurs with Bloomfield's (1963, 165-69) grammatical analysis of personification allegory in English where he states:

> Of all the grammatical signs of personification it seems to me that the use of animate verbs and predicates is the most characteristic and important…Personification allegory combines the non-metaphoric subject with metaphoric predicate and yokes together the concrete and the metaphoric in the presentation of generality.

In Irish proverbs, these animate verbs (verbs typically used of living things, such as humans or animals), are often used with an incompatible NP subject or object. For example in the proverb *Char thacht an fhírinne fear ariamh* 'Truth never ever choked a man' the intransitive verb 'choke'[27] is used with the abstract agent 'truth' and the object 'man'. Of course, truth as an abstraction does not possess the physical properties (i.e. to suffocate by applying physical pres-

sure to the throat) to effect suffocation of a human. Some other examples are provided below to demonstrate the nature of the projection:

21. *Char thacht an fhírinne fear ariamh*. (SU§409)
Truth never ever choked a man.

22. *Is minic a bhris béal duine a shrón*. (SU§1365)
It is often that a person's mouth broke his/her nose.

23. *Beathaíonn an fáltas an leisce*. (SM§1389)
Profits breeds laziness.

(Cat. 2) *Conscious emotional and cognitive functions* associated with humans are also applied to the non-human (13%). For example in the proverb *Is cuma leis an éadach cé a chaitheas é* 'The cloth does not care who wears it', the physical object 'cloth' is furnished with the conscious mental reaction of expressing a lack of interest or concern towards its wearer. 'Cloth' is at the base level of the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR, however, and possesses neither the biological nor the instinctual attributes required to validate this as a literal sentence.

24. *Is cuma leis an éadach cé a chaitheas é*. (SC§3353)
The cloth does not care who wears it.

25. *Aithníonn an fhuil an gaol*. (SC§2490)
The blood recognises the relation.

26. *Nuair a bhíonn an bolg lán is mian leis an gcnámh síneadh*. (SM§139).
When the stomach is full the bone wishes to stretch.

Closely associated with this category is the projection of (Cat. 3) *human sensory attributes* (6.5%) to the inanimate, namely sight '*ophthalmoception*,' hearing '*audioception'*, taste '*gustaoception*,' smell '*olfacoception'*,[28] and touch '*tactioception*'. The faculty of speech has been included also as many linguists have posited it as a sixth 'sense' through which we perceive, and are joined to, our environment (see Owen 1991). We can see these clearly in the examples below in which the abstract concept of 'hatred' has visual abilities (No. 27) whilst birds (No. 28) and indeed abstract concepts such as 'misery' (No. 29) have the faculty of speech and linguistic cognition.

27. *Folaíonn grá gráin agus tchí fuath a lán*. (RA§270)
Love conceals hatred and hatred sees all.

28. *Is searbh gach éan a labhrann leis féin*. (SM§550)
Every bird that speaks to itself is bitter.

29. *Labhair leis an donas nuair a thiocfas sé*. (SU§524)
Speak to misery when it comes.

Other commonly occurring projections are the explicit attachment of (Cat. 4) *human physical features*, such as ears and heads, to inanimate physical objects (10.4%) (No. 30-32) as well as the attribution of (Cat. 5) *predicative behavioural adjectives*, such as loyalty, guilt, and generosity (6.5%), which may be understood as human-specific characteristics (No. 33-35).

30. *Bíonn cluasa ag na ballaí*. (SC§3996)
The walls have ears.[29]

31. *Bíonn cluasa ar na claitheacha agus súile ar an mhachaire*.
The walls have ears and the field (has) eyes (SM§228)

32. *Bíonn ceann caol ar an óige*. (SM§265).
Youth has a narrow head.

33. *Cha raibh bolg mór fial ariamh*. (RA§373)
A large stomach was never generous.

34. *Bíonn an chuimhne i gcónaí dílis*. (SC§697a)
Memory is always loyal.

35. *Bíonn an grá caoch*. (SC§2530)
Love is blind.

The final areas of projection see (Cat. 6) *human relationship structures* (7.8%) (No. 36-37) and (Cat. 7) *human occupations* (9.1%) (No. 38-39) used in conjunction with abstract concepts such as nostalgia, memory, life, hope, misery and time.

36. *Níl cara ag cumhaidh ach cuimhne*. (SC§689a)
Nostalgia has no friend except memory.

37. *Is ait an mac an saol*. (SM§1480)
Life is a strange son.

38. *Is é an dochas lia gach anró*. (SC§1905)
Hope is the healer of every misery.

39. *Is maith an scéalaí an aimsir*. (SM§1946)
Time is a good storyteller.

In some of the proverbs, it could be argued that the attributive quality is not human specific and that other lower-class entities in the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR, particularly animals, share some of our biological, physical and instinctual features. For example there is case to argue that dogs, cats and other such animals also possess 'eyes' and 'ears' (Cat. 4), that they also 'breed' and 'jump', or that they can 'see' and 'hear' (Cat. 3). However, the anthropocentric nature of proverbial material means that our understanding of such 'shared' features is governed by our own human awareness and interpretation of their function. Our innate cognizance of these features as humans is universally more developed than our understanding of their role and behavior in animals, and this is the primary motivation for their metaphorical projection to lower-level entities.

> …even though animals do eat up, catch up, give birth to, attack, outwit, and destroy, humans typically and most saliently do these things in everyday experience. These examples therefore seem more likely to involve a figurative person than a figurative animal for producers and perceivers alike. (MacKay 1986, 99)

From a syntactic perspective, there are a variety of sentential forms used in these proverbs, but there are three salient structures peculiar to personification. The first is the basic nominal *x is y* formula, which is produced as an identificatory copulative structure, usually with the qualifying adjective of the *y*-NP fronted in post-copulative position for the purposes of emphasis (No. 40). Secondly, substantive sentence containing an indefinite/definite noun are qualified with a predicative adjective that is semantically non-attributable (No. 41). And finally, a structure based on '*present tense verb x*-NP *y*-NP' in which the verb is semantically incompatible with at least one of the noun phrases (No. 42).

COPAIL X (indefinite/definite NP) Y (indefinite/definite NP)

40. *Is maith an t-eolaí deireadh an lae*. (RA§147)

COP good the guide the end of day.
The end of day is a GOOD guide.

SUBSTANTIVE VERB X (indefinite/definite NP) ADJECTIVE

41. *Cha raibh bolg mór fial ariamh*. (RA§373).
NEG VERB PAST to be a large stomach generous ever.
A large stomach was never generous.

VERB (Present Tense) X (indefinite/definite NP) Y (indefinite/definite NP)

42. *Sceitheann fíon fírinne*. (SM§520)
VERB spreads X wine Y truth.
Wine spreads truth.

6. Cognitive Metaphor

The traditional view that proverbs are linguistically independent entities has been challenged by innovative work in the field of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Turner, 1989, Krikmann 2009, and Kövecses 2000, 2010). Their work has demonstrated that human thinking is conditioned by a relatively small set of extended metaphors, or what they term basic conceptual metaphors, which underlying everyday language, e.g. ARGUMENT IS WAR, and furthermore, that these are instantiated at a specific level e.g. 'your claims are *indefensible*,' 'he *attacked every weak point* in my argument', 'his criticisms were *right on target'* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 4)[30]. Moreover, they assert that idioms and proverbs are not just a matter of language, but instead are connected to our conceptual system (cf. Gibbs and Beitel 1995, Kövecses and Szabó 1996). Many proverbs are systematically attached to an underlying conceptual metaphor that often, as Tóthné Litovkina and Csábi (2002) have shown in the case of the conceptual metaphor of love, transfers linguistic borders. Evidence from Irish proverbs supports the cognitive linguistic thesis that there are systematic patterns relating to underlying conceptual metaphors and, furthermore, in accordance with Kövecses (2000, 26-7), that *love* appears to be the most salient 'metaphorized emotion concept.'

Conceptual metaphors relating to love occur in 4% of metaphoric proverbs. They may be divided into three types: (i) LOVE

IS A DISEASE /AN AILMENT (ii) LOVE IS A JOURNEY (i.e. Love is a moving object), and (iii) LOVE IS FIRE. The most common of the conceptual metaphors is LOVE IS A DISEASE /AN AILMENT[31] – which strangely Lakoff & Turner (1989) do not list in their seminal scholarship on poetic metaphor – but to which Kövecses (2000, 26-7) and Tóthné Litovkina and Csábi (2002, 389)[32] allude in more recent studies. This is a specific-level, structural metaphor in which the target conceptual domain of LOVE is construed by the use of a more experiential source domain of DISEASE/AILMENT. Unobservable internal states like emotions are often understood through more vivid metaphorical images (Ortony and Fainsilber 1989). The physical and physiological symptoms of *love* may be understood through our general knowledge of the symptoms of disease and ailments (or what Miller (1979, 358) has termed our 'apperceptive mass') i.e. physical and mental weakness, enervation and apathy. At a surface level, the linguistic manifestation ('metaphorical linguistic expression') of the conceptual metaphors is achieved, firstly, through the explicit *x is y* formula (No. 43) and, secondly, through the nominal and verbal use of 'cure' in conjunction with the abstract concept of 'love'; thus, signalling a incongruence of tenor and vehicle (No. 44-46). It should be noted that this particular conceptual metaphor is not amongst the most common in everyday language (LOVE IS A NUTRIENT/JOURNEY/UNITY OF PARTS/BOND/FLUID IN CONTAINER, etc.) and owes its origins to classical antiquity, for example, Taylor (1961, 44) mentions that the Latin proverb *Amorius vulnus idem sanat* 'Love carries the wound it makes' as being a translation of an earlier Greek proverb.

LOVE IS A DISEASE/AILMENT

43. *Is cloíte an galar an grá*. (SC§2542)
Love is an enervating disease.

44. *Galar an grá ná leigheasann luibheanna*. (SM§293)
Herbs do not cure the disease of love.

45. *Chan fhuil lia ná leigheas ar an ghrá*. (SU§143)
There is neither healer nor cure for love.

46. *Níl leigheas ar an ngrá ach an pósadh*. (SC§2552)
There is no cure for love only marriage.

The other two common conceptual metaphors for love are outlined below:

LOVE IS A JOURNEY (Love is a moving object)

47. *Ní ghabhann grá le gnás is ní cheileann fuath a locht*. (SM§301)
Love doesn't accompany custom and hate doesn't conceal its fault.

48. *Nuair a dhruideann an radharc ón tsúil druideann an grá ón gcroí*. (SM§305)
When sight moves away from the eye, love moves away from the heart.

49. *Ní raibh grá mór riamh ná go dtiocfadh fuath ina dhiaidh*. (SM§297)
There was never a great love that wasn't followed by hatred.

LOVE IS FIRE

50. *An grá nach bhfuil sa láthair fuaraíonn sé*. (SC§2528)
Love which is not present cools.

7. Correlation of Proverbial Markers in Metaphoric Proverbs

To fully understand the structural and poetic form of the explicit linguistic metaphor in Irish-language proverbs, we may examine frequencies relating to typical sentence structures and also the correlation of other grammatical, phonic and syntactic markers of proverbiality. Table 3 shows the distribution of sentence types in proverbs containing metaphor, whilst Table 4 shows the relative frequencies of phonic and syntactic markers.

Table 3. Distribution of sentence type in proverbs containing metaphor.

	Distribution					
Sentence type	*present*		*absent*		*sum*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Simple	119	79	46	21	165	100
Compound	14	6	151	94	165	100
Complex	30	15	135	85	165	100
Compound complex	0	0	165	100	165	100
Phrase	2	0	163	98	165	100

Grammatical. Of the four main sentence structures–simple, compound, complex, compound complex– and the phrase structure (or the 'nominal sentence' with a predicate lacking a finite verb), it is clear that the simple sentence is the most frequently used sentence type for metaphor (79%) as in No. 51. Complex (15%), compound (6%) and nominal sentences (0%) are also found as can be seen in the examples No. 52-54. Compound-complex sentences do not contain metaphor, however.

<u>*Simple*</u>
51. *Ní de gach adhmad is cóir sagart a dhéanamh*. (SU§77)
It is not of every timber it is right to make a priest.

<u>*Compound*</u>
52. *Neart a ritheann agus mire a léimeann*. (SM§233)
Strength runs and madness jumps.

<u>*Complex*</u>
53. *Labhair leis an donas nuair a thiocfas sé*. (SU§524)
Speak to trouble when it arrives.

<u>*Nominal Sentence*</u>
54. *Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam*. (SM§1044)
A country without a tongue ('language'), a country without a soul.

Table 4. *Relative frequencies of syntactic and phonic markers (to nearest %) in proverbs containing a linguistic metaphor.*

	Distribution					
Proverbial marker	*present*		*absent*		*sum*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Alliteration	50	30	115	70	165	100
Syntactic Parallelism	30	18	135	82	165	100
Sub-clausal fronting	13	8	152	92	165	100
Rhyme	11	7	154	93	165	100
Parataxis	3	2	162	98	165	100

Phonic. Phonic markers of proverbiality, such as rhyme and alliteration, often feature in metaphorical proverbs. The use of alliteration is particularly significant as it occurs in almost one third of all the examples (30%), whilst the presence of rhyme is not common (7%). Not only that, of all that proverbial markers that were analyzed, alliteration is the most frequently occurring proverbial marker in metaphors. It be inferred that this rhythmic adornment adds to the aesthetic of the conceptual metaphor and assists with processes of memorization, reproduction and recognition. Below are typical examples of phonic markers.

Rhyme

55. *Nuair a bhíos an deoch istigh, bíonn an chiall amuigh*. (RA§251)
[nuər′ a v′s ən d′ox ə'st′iɣ′, b′i:n ən x′iəl ə'miɣ′]
When drink is inside, sense is outside.

Alliteration

56. *Níl cara ag cumhaidh ach cuimhne*. (SC§689a)
[n′i:l karə eg′ ku:i: ax kiv′n′ə]
Loneliness has no friend except memory.

Syntactic. Syntactic proverbial markers, such as syntactic parallelism (18%), sub-clausal fronting (8%), and parataxis (2%) are also present in metaphoric proverbs. There is no significant deviation between their occurrence in metaphorical proverbs and in non-metaphorical proverbs in the Irish corpus. Examples of these are shown below.

Syntactic Parallelism
57. *Ní ghabhann grá le gnás is ní cheileann fuath a locht*. (SM§301)
Love does not keep company with custom and hatred doesn't conceal its fault.

Subclausal Fronting
58. *Nuair a bhíonn an bolg lán is mian leis an gcnámh síneadh*. (SM§139)
When the stomach is full, the bone desires to stretch.

Parataxis
59. Is milis fíon, is searbh a íoc. (SM§524)
Wine is sweet, its payment is bitter.

Chi-squared tests show that the frequencies of these syntactic and phonic markers are not statistically significant, however (i.e. the p-values are all below 0.05), and that their co-occurrence is a result of chance as opposed to any latent process. It may be concluded that Irish-language proverbs containing linguistic metaphors do not exhibit any preference for other poetic or structural features.

8. Conclusion

This study clearly delineated identificational criteria for linguistic metaphor and sought to analysis the frequency, nature and form of metaphor in Irish-language proverbs. These results of this study demonstrate that linguistic metaphor is not at the heart of Irish-language proverbs, but instead is a secondary proverbial marker that occurs in just one in six proverbs (17%). Of stylistic primacy in Irish are the phonic marker of alliteration (29%)–the proverbial marker *par excellence* in Irish–, and the structural marker of syntactic parallelism (27%). Metaphor is a significant indicator of proverbiality, but it is not the 'heart of the majority of proverbs' as Ó Bric (1976: 35) has claimed. It is, however, the most important semantic marker, which concurs with Arora's (1984) findings in relation to Spanish proverbs.

The semantic incongruence of vehicle and tenor, which is a *sine qua non* of metaphor, is constructed through a range of methods in Irish proverbs. Results show that the commonest method is through the use of what Miller (1979) has termed 'predicative metaphor' in which the subject component of the topic domain and the predica-

tive component of the vehicle domain are incompatible. In these cases, the incongruous predicative element is predominately verbal, but also occurs as an explicit adjectival modifier in a number of proverbs. The 'value comparison' (Thompson 1974, 40) based on the structure *COP comparative adjective x*-NP *than y*-NP is the vehicle for the predicative metaphor in a number of proverbs. The basic nominal copulative structure *x is y* is also found (10%), but Irish proverbs display a preference for an emphatic identificatory copulative construction in which the adjectival modifier of the vehicle is fronted. The emphatic construction occurs in over a half of the *x is y* category. The *xyz* structure, which is one of the oldest classical proverbial formulae, and is often termed 'Aristotelian structures with the 'absent forth', features in one-tenth of Irish linguistic metaphors (8.2%). These involved complex semantic and pragmatic interpretations through which the absent forth element *w* is deciphered from its *z* counterpart, and then the image-schematic relationship projected to the source *x-y*. Evidence shows that familial relationships (e.g. son, brother) and occupations (e.g. master, healer [=surgeon]) are the predominant superordinate categories through which the *z* fourth is related in many of these proverbs.

As the most salient metaphoric trope, personification is extremely common in Irish, occurring in almost half of the proverbs (48.4%). This frequency suggests that personification is an important semantic marker in Irish and supports the work of numerous other scholars, such as Taylor (1962) and Mieder (1993b), who have shown the prevalence of personification in proverbs since classical times. The results show that there are at least seven typical types of projection in Irish proverbs, depending on the aspect of human behaviour, physicality, or social relations that are projected to the inanimate or the non-human. The projection of *human physical and social behaviour* (e.g. choking, breeding, running, jumping) is the most frequent form (46.8%), whilst the other six categories have frequencies ranging from (6.5%-13%). These categories of projection relate to human *emotional and cognitive functions* (13.0%), *physical features* (10.4%), *relationship structures* (9.1%) and *occupations* (9.1%) *predicative behavioural attributes* (6.5%), and *sensory attributes* (6.5%).

At a surface level, proverbs exhibiting linguistic metaphor also contain various phonic and syntactic markers, which en-

hance their 'proverbial' quality. The simple sentence is the choice of most linguistic metaphors (79%), whilst they also occur as complex (15%) and compound sentences (6%). Syntactic parallelism (26%) and alliteration (24%) adorn metaphor at the average rate of one in four, whilst other markers are much less frequent: sub-clausal fronting (9%), rhyme (6%) and parataxis (2%). The examination of probability values using a chi-squared test shows that these frequencies are not statistically significant (i.e. the p-values are all below 0.05). The null-hypothesis that the relationship between metaphor and these other markers is random is not disproven, so essentially, the co-occurrence of these markers is a result of chance as opposed to any latent process. It may be deduced, as a result, that proverbs containing linguistic metaphors do not exhibit any preference for other poetic or structural features.

In terms of deep structure, Irish proverbs attest to the presence of systematic patterns of underlying conceptual metaphors, such as been identified by Lakoff and Turner 1989, Kövecses 2000, 2010, and others. Using the work of Tóthné Litovkina and Csábi (2002) in paremiology as a template, it was shown that conceptual metaphors relating to the concept of love are also found in Irish. This is further evidence of the cross-linguistic nature of the conceptual metaphor in proverbs in general, and of the particular prevalence of the base concepts metaphors (i) LOVE IS A DISEASE/AN AILMENT, (ii) LOVE IS A JOURNEY, and (iii) LOVE IS FIRE. These are only tentative results, however, and further work is required to determine the exact nature of conceptual metaphors in Irish-language proverbs.

Notes:

[1] See Arora (1984)

[2] The language is known as *Sesotho sa Leboa*.

[3] Silverman-Weinreich (1981) makes a dual distinction between proverbs that refer allegorically to a rule i.e. that are set off from the subject of discourse because they are not literally relevant, and direct proverbs in which a rule of behaviour is outlined in a literal manner, but which may contain metaphor. What she terms 'allegorical proverbs' and 'direct proverbs' can be more accurately described as proverbs functioning as 'applied metaphors' and 'linguistic metaphors', respectively.

[4] The original text reads 'Fiú más meafair croí furmhór seanfhocal, tá seanfhocail nach bhfuil brí mheafarach leo.' (Ó Bric 1976, 35)

[5] The sampling frame was created by numerically tagging proverbial entries in the dialectal collections. Using simple random sampling methods, one thousand proverbs were selected as a sample using an electronic true random number generator. Sampling with replacement (from an infinite population) was used to so that each item would have the same probability of selection and, thus, the covariance between the two items would be zero. Quantitative statistics were used to calculate the frequency of a range of proverbial markers and these results were entered into tabular form and analysed. See Mac Coinnigh (2012, 96-96) for a detailed description of methodology, including specification of sampling frame, sample size and selection, and sampling process.

[6] Robert MacAdam originally published six hundred proverbs in the *Ulster Journal of Ulster Archaeology*, series 1, in 1856-62 (6: 172-83, 250-67; 7: 278-87; 9: 223-36), and these were subsequently included in *Seanfhocla Uladh*.

[7] The abbreviations SU, SM, and SC, will be used to refer to these collections when citing proverbial material. The editions used are: Ó Muirgheasa (1936), Ua Maoileoin (1984), and Uí Bhraonáin (2010), respectively.

[8] See Kirby (1997, 521-531) for a discussion of the work of Homer, Isocrates and Plato on metaphor.

[9] Alternatively, scholars such as Davidson (1978, 42) have argued that only the 'truth/falsity' element is applicable. The notion of 'semantic nonsense' is covered by the 'truth/falsity' criterion i.e. if an utterance is semantically nonsensical then is must be *patently* false. Levin (1993, 117) refers to the example of 'the ship ploughs the sea' and 'Sally is a block of ice' to demonstrate how both violate truth conditions yet do not require empirical investigation to prove that they are patently false.

[10] Gibbs and Beitel (1995, 136) argue that in terms of the 'conceptual metaphor thesis' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) most proverbs are motivated by an underlying conceptual metaphor. English and German equivalents of this Irish example [namely, 'one rotten apple spoils the whole bag' *Eng*.; 'one bad potato ruins the whole bag' *Deu*.], they assert, have the underlying conceptual metaphor of PEOPLE ARE INANIMATE OBJECTS in spite of its instantiation in different linguistic terms. Our evidence shows, however, that the base conceptual metaphor varies according to language, as in the case of Irish, the base conceptual metaphor is PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS.

[11] See Dobrovol´skij and Piiraninen (2005, 6)

[12] See Levin (1977, 30-32) for a discussion of the process of 'agrammatization'.

[13] 'Many linguistic metaphors occur in ordinary language, although they are no longer classified as metaphors because they are now the most accepted method of encoding those contexts. The linguistic community do not perceive any disparity between the two conceptual fields on account of their high frequency of usage.' (Cameron 1999b, 114).

[14] This approach is consistent with Low (1999, 49) 'The idea that the researcher examines the text and unilaterally decides what is and is not metaphorical is perhaps the commonest approach to identification.'

[15] '...regular (literal) interpretations are blocked by semantic violation.' (Leech 1969, 89)

[16] Pragmatic (e.g. Levin 1977, Searle 1979, Altwerger and Strauss 1987), psychological (e.g. Dascal 1987, 1989) and formal theoretical approaches (e.g. Chomsky 1971) generally assume that literal interpretation has primacy over the figurative, i.e. a figurative interpretation is only considered after some semantic anomaly, or 'trigger', has been observed at the literal level. Studies by Gibbs (1984), Keysar (1989), Keyser and Glucksberg (1992) on the psychological theory of metaphor have challenged this assumption, however. They argue that similar methods of processing underlie both literal and metaphorical language, and that a literal meaning must be first rejected to 'trigger' metaphor understanding.

[17] Glucksberg and Keysar (1990).

[18] Virgil has the following line in book 6 of his Aeneid: 'Suffering and Death the threshold keep, And with them Death's blood-brother, Sleep...' (Collington 1903, 185). In Greek mythology, sleep (*Hypnos*) and death (*Thanatos*) are twin brothers as de Purucker (1930, 45-46) has noted: '*...Hypnos kai thanatos adelphoi* said the ancient Greeks: Sleep and Death are brothers."... What happens in sleep takes place in death– but perfectly so. What happens in death and after death, takes place when we sleep– but imperfectly so.'

[19] For example, a frequency search of the term 'brother of…' on Google has 'Jude, brother of Jesus' as the first return. Accessed 17 August 2012.

[20] 'In particular, we are to find some *w* in our conceptual knowledge that stands in a relation to *y* which we can refer to conventionally by the expression "*y* of *w*," and we are to map the relation between *y* and *w* onto the conjunction of *x* and *z*' (Turner, 1991).

[21] On occasion, the relationship between two brothers may appear contrariwise to describe opponents or rivals (see Revez 2003, 127).

[22] Levin's theory is not without it's limitations, as Keysar and Gluksberg (1992, 636-637) have demonstrated with counterexamples.

[23] The trope was originally transferred into Western literary tradition by Greek and Roman scholars such as Predentius, Boethius, and Martianus Capella (see Bloomfield 1963, 162).

[24] Table taken and adapted from Krikmann (2007, 35).

[25] Personification is found in Yiddish, but Silverman-Weinreich (1981, 77) shows that they are a 'rare device'.

[26] Translated from original 'cuirtear leis tré phearsantú a dhéanamh ar an rud teibí.' (Ó Bric 1976: 35)

[27] OED defines as 'to suffocate by external compression of the throat; to throttle, strangle; to produce a sensation of strangling; said of the action of anything which sticks in the throat and blocks up the windpipe or its orifices; of disease or emotion which stops the action of the respiratory organs; of an un-

breathable medium, such as water, gas, fumes, smoke, dust, or the like, when it fills the lungs and produces suffocation.'

[28] Also know as *olfacception*

[29] This classical proverb belongs to the International Medieval category of proverbial expressions (Taylor 1961) has owes its provenance to the classical period in which Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse (431-368 BC) had an ear-shaped underground cave cut in a rock so that he could overhear the conversations of his prisoners in an adjacent chamber (Room, 1996: 312).

[30] The metaphoric element in each sentence is italicised.

[31] Taylor (1962, 61) mentions that examples of this conceptual metaphor in classical literature, and explains that it is to be found in many international languages through translations

[32] 'As can be readily seen [I am heart-sick], the concept of love is probably the most highly 'metaphorized' emotion concept…this is possibly due to the fact that it is not only an emotion, but a relationship as well.'

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