



Introduction to the On-Demand Lecture

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Outline of the Cyber Lecture

1. Explore the rhetorical dimension of meaning
2. Role of figures of speech in the communication of meaning
3. Metaphors in everyday language: Lakoff and Johnson
4. The metaphorical nature of our everyday activities
5. Example: The “Axis of Evil” Metaphor used by President Bush



The Referential Theory of Meaning

1. The referential theory of meaning: radical distinction
literal and figurative language
2. Distinguishes between *literal* utterances and the *figurative*
 - >> Statements about “real” things vs.
 - >> Statements that simply enhance the imagery
3. Figures of speech are adornments: dress up statements and
make them more pleasing or rhetorically effective
4. They contribute nothing to the cognitive dimension of
meaning.



The Referential Theory of Meaning



Example: Address by President Bush on 11 September 2001

“Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America.”

>> Note the use of the physical metaphor: “foundation”

The literal meaning: “Terrorists can not harm America”



The *Rhetorical* Dimension of Meaning

*Growing acceptance of the **rhetorical** component of knowledge*

1. Empiricist forms of social science are less dependent on the referential theory of meaning.
2. Alternative philosophies of social science (phenomenology and constructivism) construe knowing as “**active meaning.**”
 - >> Encourage a genre of analysis that is sensitive to the speech practices of the objects of analysis.
 - >> Focus on the grammatical, rhetorical, and narrative structures that create value, bestow meaning and “constitute” the objects that emerge in the analysis.



Figures of Speech: **Metaphor**

A term that is transferred from the object it ordinarily designates to an object it may designate only by implicit comparison or analogy.

Example: “Evening of life”

Example: “He barks commands”



Figures of Speech: **Metonymy**

An attribute or feature is used to name or designate something else.

Example: “The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Figurative Language



Explicit Figures of Speech

- >> Are familiar and easily recognized.
- >> Evoke the recognition of equivalences to which we are committed, e.g., “the war on terror,” or
- >> Suggest new more challenging equivalences, e.g., the “Axis of Evil.”





Explicit Figures of Speech

Derrida's analysis shows us that inherent in figures of speech are philosophical commitments and theories of value

- >> These figures of speech are venerable and thus familiar.
- >> They do their partisan work under the guise of “neutrality.”
- >> They usually pass for the literal.

Jacques Derrida's
Photo is here

Figurative Language



Metaphors in Everyday Language

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

1. Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life.
2. Our language, thought and action is fundamentally metaphorical.
3. Metaphors define our reality: the way we think and what we experience.

George Lakoff's
Photo is here.

Figurative Language



Example: Argument is War

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

1. Argument is a conceptual metaphor

Your claims are **undefensible**

I've never **won** an argument.

You disagree? OK, **shoot!**

He **shot down** all of my arguments.

His criticisms are **right on target**.

2. We **win or lose** arguments.

3. The person we are arguing with is our **opponent**.

4. We **attack** his/her position and **defend** our own.

5. We gain and lose **ground**.

Figurative Language



Example: Argument is War

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

We conceptualize arguments in terms of battle.
This systematically influences the shape arguments take.

>> The way we talk about them and what we do

Suppose that conceptualized arguments as dance, instead of war?

Figurative Language



Example: Time is Money

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

Time in Western cultures is a valuable commodity.
It is a limited resource. We need to accomplish our goals.

You are **wasting** my time.
This gadget will **save** you hours.
I've **invested** a lot of time in her.
You need to **budget** your time.
You don't use your time **profitably**.
I **lost** a lot of time.

Figurative Language



Example: Time is Money

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

Other Examples:

Telephone message units

Hotel room rates

Yearly budgets

Interest on loans

Paying a “debt” to society by

“serving time” in prison



Example: Time is Money

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- >> These practices are relatively new in the history of the human race and don't exist in all cultures.
- >> Modern Industrial Societies: the metaphor, itself, structures our activities in a profound way.
- >> We act as if time were a valuable commodity, so we conceive of time in that way



Example: Time is Money

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Why “Time Is Money” Is a Metaphor

1. The metaphor uses our everyday experience with money to conceptualize time.
2. It is not necessary to conceptualize time as money.
 - >> It is tied to our culture.
 - >> There are other cultures where time is none of these things.



Highlighting and Hiding

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

Metaphors allow us to view an aspect of a concept in terms of another one.

>> This necessarily “hides” other aspects of the concept that are not coherent with the metaphor, e.g.,
Time is not really money. You can’t get your time back.



Figurative Language



Highlighting and Hiding (continued)

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

We say that “terrorists are a cancer.”

We refer to “surgical strikes.”

We use the term “fascist pigs.”

However, our enemies are not cancer, war is not surgery, and people are not animals, no matter how much we disagree with them.

Figurative Language



The Metaphorical Structure of Our Conceptual System

*This discussion is based on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, **Metaphors We Live By**. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980.*

Most of our normal conceptual system is metaphorically structured.

Most concepts are partially understood in terms of others.

This point of view challenges the idea that metaphor is a matter of **language** and not **thought**.



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