ZOLTÁN KÖVECSES' EXTENDED CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

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*Abstract**:** The paper expands upon Zoltán Kövecses' new monograph Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory which offers an approach of a refreshed CMT by explaining in detail many issues that researchers have raised against the previously established CMT theory of George Lakoff and Michael Johnson. Consequently this improved version of CMT which is also the latest theory released in 2020 will bring added value to the field of study in different areas ranging from metaphorical cognition to literary research. The author suggests new ways of thinking in connection to the conceptual metaphors as both online and offline phenomena and definitely requires a close attention of the scholars interested in the metaphor issue.*

Keywords: extended conceptual metaphor theory, metaphorical cognition, levels of conceptual structure, context

The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) was first proposed in 1980 by two great scholars, George Lakoff and Michael Johnson in their masterpiece work *Metaphors We Live By*. It marked the beginning of continuous studies of metaphor in the field of cognitive linguistics. Zoltán Kövecses' new thesis - Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory approaches the updates in connection with CMT by explaining in detail many issues that researchers have raised against the previously established CMT theory of Lakoff and Johnson.

Kövecses' work is organized in a thesis which comprises eight parts. The starting point of this refreshed approach represents the introduction of the 'standard' version (Kövecses, 2020:1) of CMT including the perspectives in the pioneering work of *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). While closely examining the introductory part of the thesis we could easily notice that these validated, added to, and even transformed the original ideas.

In Kövecses' view "CMT is a complex and coherent theory of metaphor" (Kövecses, 2020: 18). He claims that "CMT is a theory of metaphor that is capable of explaining a variety of issues concerning metaphor" (Kövecses, 2020: 18). He also gives a detailed explanation why he believes it. In his vision CMT can explain:

- *"why we use language from one domain of experience systematically to talk about other domain of experience;*
- *why the polysemy of words in the lexicon follows the patterns it does;*
- *why the senses of words are extended in the concrete-to-abstract direction;*
- *why children acquire metaphors in the sequence they do;*
- *why the meanings of words emerge historically in the sequence they do;*
- *why many conceptual metaphors are near-universal or potentially universal;*

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- *why many other conceptual metaphors are variable cross-culturally and intraculturally;*
- *why many conceptual metaphors are shared in different modes of expression (such as verbal and visual);*
- *why many metaphor-based folk and expert theories of a particular subject matter are often based on the same conceptual metaphors;*
- *why so many conceptual metaphors are shared between everyday language and literature (and other forms of non-everyday uses of language);*
- *why and how novel metaphors can, and do, constantly emerge; etc" (Kövecses, 2020: 19)*

Kövecses strongly believes and affirms that no other theory related to the study of metaphors is able to analyze and demonstrate these issues and he admits that CMT is not perfect and has room for improvement (Kövecses, 2020: 19).

We can notice that in Kövecses' vision there are many difficulties and vulnerabilities deeply rooted in CMT such as the following:

a) "It is reasonable to problematize even a basic assumption of CMT: the idea that there is such a thing as literal meaning. Is it indeed the case that we can and do base our understanding of figurative meaning on literal meaning? Even more radically: What is literal meaning? And, in the final analysis, how would the answers to these questions impact CMT as we know it today?

b) If primary metaphors assume a single conceptual unit (a scene) with elements that are correlated (such as anger and body heat). Wouldn't it be justifiable to think of the emergence of primary metaphors through a metonymic stage (in which, for example, anger and body heat are correlated within a tightly organized structure), and not as emerging directly as metaphors from two experiential "domains"?

c) Indeed, what is the appropriate conceptual level at which we can, or should identify conceptual metaphors? Is it that of domain, frame, scene, schema, space, or something else? Most of these have been mentioned in the preceding discussion, but there is no consensus, even within the same author, which one it is.

d) And if we successfully clarify the issue of the appropriate conceptual level for conceptual metaphors, what would be the implications of this? Would there be significant repercussions for CMT at all? For example, would it change the way we think about the methodology of studying metaphor?

e) Several metaphor networks have been noted above. Are all of them equally significant? Does any one of them stand out as especially important for overall description of the metaphorical conceptual system?

f) How can the recently proposed view of deliberate metaphors be incorporated into a CMT framework? Or does it present a challenge to CMT?

g) How can we account for the socio-pragmatic function of metaphorical linguistic expressions in naturally occurring discourse? What would a theory of conceptual metaphors look like that is capable of explaining the conceptual structure of metaphors, as well as the discourse functions of metaphorical expressions realizing them within a unified framework?

h) Indeed, in connection with the previous question, should we think of metaphor as a cognitive process that is happening online or as a

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product that is somehow a part of a more or less stable conceptual system in long-term memory?

i) Though it is true that theories of metaphor comprehension make extensive use of the notion of context, theories of metaphor production within CMT have almost completely ignored the notion. Is it possible to propose a theory of conceptual metaphors within the cognitive linguistic paradigm that would integrate the context of metaphor production into CMT?

j) The major idea of CMT is embodiment on which primary metaphors are based. While clearly crucial, one can legitimately raise questions about the exclusivity of embodiment in CMT. Isn't it conceivable that there are additional factors that play an important role in the creation of metaphors – both conceptual and linguistic?

k) Concerning metaphorical creativity, CMT offers sophisticated accounts of the novel metaphors in both every day and literary discourse. However, these accounts of metaphorical creativity have their limitations: they can only explain creativity that is the result of putting together potentially universal primary metaphors in unique ways or as a result of a small number of conceptual devices (extending, elaborating, questioning, combining). However, in many cases we find novel metaphors (both conceptual and linguistic) that require us to take into consideration a variety of contextual factors, and not just universal body-based metaphors or universal cognitive processes.

l) If we think with the help of conceptual metaphors, as we like to claim, it is reasonable to ask why we use mixed metaphors in the actual production of discourse. Wouldn't it be easier and more efficient to use the same conceptual metaphor throughout a given discourse? As a matter of fact, metaphorically homogenous discourse? As a matter of fact, metaphorically homogeneous discourse seems to be much rarer than metaphorically heterogeneous discourse (i.e., mixing metaphors in discourse). Why is this the case? Can we provide a coherent CMT account of mixed metaphor in discourse?

m) Cognitive linguists (including the present author) like to think of metaphors as "conceptual metaphors", ignoring the diversity of phenomena we call metaphor. What other kinds of metaphor are there, how can they be characterized, and what is their relationship to conceptual metaphors?" (Kövecses, 2020: 19-21)

Of course there are many other questions related to CMT but the ones mentioned above are necessary to be raised in order to conceive an extended version of CMT which is more in-depth analyzed, more comprising, revised and upgraded.

The new perspective as "extended CMT" (Kövecses, 2020: xii) is tackled in five parts of the thesis each beginning with a intriguing question that tries to answer to one issue related to the "standard" CMT (Kövecses, 2020: xii). The second part of the thesis entitled "The Abstract Understood Figuratively, the Concrete Understood Literally, but the Concrete Understood Figuratively?" (Kövecses, 2020: 22) deals with the idea that literal meaning really exists by concentrating on the presumption that literal language does not exist at all. Kövecses considers that concrete concepts as well as abstract ones have intergraded content ontology and figurative construal. Consequently he believes that we can outline the ontology part in some circumstances and the part construed in a figurative way in others.

In the third part of his thesis, Kövecses tries to answer to the never ending dispute: "Direct or Indirect Emergence?" (Kövecses, 2020: 34) related to the idea that whether the

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'primary metaphor' (Kövecses, 2020: 34) which represents the basis of CMT arises directly or via a 'metonymic stage' (Kövecses, 2020: 34). The author clarifies the claim that metonymies are to some extent more primary than 'primary metaphors' (Kövecses, 2020: 34). He infers the fact that 'correlation-based metaphors' (Kövecses, 2020: 35) come to light with the help of 'frame-like mental representations through a metonymic stage' (Kövecses, 2020: 35).

The fourth part of the thesis entitled: "Domain, Schema, Frames, or Space?" tackles the difficulty in discovering suitable conceptual structures to engage in the formation of conceptual metaphors. Kövecses suggests the "multilevel view of conceptual metaphor" (Kövecses, 2020: 67-70). He explains that each conceptual metaphor is defined by four levels. The highest level is that of image schemas, while the lowest level is represented by that of mental spaces. Still, there is one level in between which is the level of domains and that of frames.

The title "Conceptual or Contextual?" of the fifth part of his work is linked to the fact that Kövecses discusses the idea that the context is completely neglected within CMT. He explains in detail the assumption that it is not necessary for the conceptual metaphors to be just simply conceptual but it is necessary for them to be contextual by referring to his book "Where Metaphors Come From" released in 2015.

The idea that CMT is not able to clarify meaning in real circumstances of metaphorical language in real discourse is analyzed in the sixth part "Offline or Online?" of Kövecses' work. He manages to do this by clarifying the hypothesis that conceptual metaphor is simultaneously an offline and online phenomenon, as well.

The five parts of Kövecses' thesis are followed by two summary parts. The former expands on the elements of an emerging new theory and outlines its universal framework, while the latter evaluates the feedback to the five questions already presented, as well as with a uneven comparison of this newly suggested paradigm with its sister theory, namely the view of metaphor as dynamic systems suggested by Gibbs (2017).

From my point of view, Kövecses' thesis is a powerful attempt to extend CMT and its value lies in the way of designing the process model for conceptual metaphor. First of all, the author ingeniously suggests that both concrete and abstract concepts consist of embodied content ontology and figurative construction but they are distinct in proportion.

Moreover, Kövecses admits the schematic hierarchy of conceptual structures. He also creatively completes the hierarchy with the mental space level which is situated at the lowest level of the hierarchy. This perspective efficiently illustrates the nature of conceptual metaphor as being simultaneously offline and online. This fact fixes the main limitation of CMT that it takes metaphor as static cognition to some extent.

Another asset is represented by the systemization of the Kövecses' earlier idea of context on metaphor (Kövecses, 2015) along with its comparison with other well-known views, particularly Gibbs' viewpoint related to the dynamic systems model, in explaining context sensitivity as well as metaphorical creativity.

However, there are some aspects left for the author's further investigation. For instance, even if the dynamic nature of metaphor represents the focal point in extended CMT, it is not clearly presented in the model (Kövecses, 2020: 167).

From my point of view I consider that the dynamicity of metaphor conceptualization may be more precisely described in the model provided that the temporal sequence of metaphor comprehension is taken into consideration along with the logical sequence.

Moreover, we can easily notice that there is an absence of communication among different disciplines. Despite the fact that the extended CMT mirrors mental processes as element of a psychological authentic model of metaphor, there is little proof as a consequence of psychological or psycholinguistic investigations.

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Furthermore, Kövecses intends to offer a theory of metaphor which can be expressed by language in general. Nevertheless, on the contrary, the only language used to demonstrate the way the model functions is English. It could also predict interesting facts regarding what typologically different languages have in common, as well as the way in which they are different.

It is also important to observe the way in which the extended CMT is related to other theories of metaphor. As far as the conceptual integration theory is concerned which represents an extended version of the CMT itself, Kövecses' extended view refers to "metaphorical blending (the construction of metaphor blends) as a process that is happening at the level of mental spaces in working memory and simultaneously as a process in the course of which all the higher level metaphorical structures in the long-term memory are utilized" (Kövecses, 2020: 180).

The same is the relationship of the extended theory and "deliberate metaphor theory" (Kövecses, 2020: 180). These kinds of metaphors rely on "correlation metaphors". They accept the complete "schematicity hierarchies" (Kövecses, 2020: 180) and "the former type of deliberate metaphors are embodied and their comprehension activates the relevant hierarchy" (Kövecses, 2020: 180).

In addition, Kövecses' extended view has an idea in common with "structure-mapping theories" (Gentner 1983 qtd. in Kövecses, 2020: 180)" and that is the fact that "metaphors are sets of systematic mappings between two domains or frames (Gentner 1983 qtd. in Kövecses, 2020: 180)" and the extended view analyzes "correlation metaphor that involve schematicity hierarchies" (Kövecses, 2020: 180).

What we can notice as well is the fact that the extended CMT shares also something with the relevance theory regarding metaphor that is "the inferential processes employed in relevance theory in metaphorical meaning construction build on the notion of mutual cognitive environment" (Kövecses, 2020: 180). Therefore it is about context. Both the "production and comprehension of metaphor" (Kövecses, 2020: 180) is closely related to context.

The "dynamic systems view of metaphor" (Kövecses, 2020: 181) proposed by Gibbs in many research papers has many things in common with the extended CMT especially the "assumption that the totality of the information the system takes in about the body, about the conceptualizers who take part in a communicative situation, the discourse itself, the goals of the participants, the objects and events present in the situation , and the broader environment together with all of our experiences can contribute to metaphor production and comprehension" (Kövecses, 2020: 181). The situational, discourse, conceptual-cognitive and bodily contexts are used by the extended CMT in order to involve all of the above. It also accepts that "any of this information and experience can prime the use of metaphors as discourse progresses" (Kövecses, 2020: 181). Both perspectives are supposed "to do well in connection with metaphorical creativity and context-sensitivity" (Kövecses, 2020: 181).

Overall Kövecses' thesis is a powerful and remarkable attempt in its comprehensiveness, profoundness, and awareness that readers will perceive as a valid and approved source on many aspects of CMT. This improved version of CMT will add value to the field of study in areas ranging from metaphorical cognition to literary research. For instance, researchers can find proof from other methods besides the linguistic evidence to defend the schematicity hierarchy. In addition they can include an "interactional turn" (Kövecses, 2020: 185) in the study of metaphor.

There is current progress and improvement in these areas which are starting to expand the aspects connected to these issues.

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