

Perspectives on Metaphor

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Abstract

A number of scholars have delineated metaphor as a complex and multifaceted subject. Bearing this in mind, no single presentation can display an exhaustive catalogue of all the views on this vast phenomenon. This notwithstanding, this paper elucidates the subject of metaphor by capturing the notable perspectives that different scholars have expressed on it. Metaphor was seen as an exclusive possession of the literary artists or an ornamental tool used for rhetorical purposes. But more recent views are emancipatory as they present metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon that is pervasive in our everyday language use. Propping on the cognitivists' perspective, this paper traverses the length and breadth of a good number of the outstanding positions on the theme, and submits that metaphor is not an exclusive possession by a fraction of the human populace but a gift of nature – possessed and used by all, though the level or degree of usage may vary as a result of other variables. It is a tool for solving problems and a means for defining realities- thus a mechanism for human advancement.

Keywords: *cognitivists, metaphor, perspective, phenomenon.*

Introduction

The subject of metaphor has been viewed by many scholars as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Among such scholars are Ching, Haley and Lunsford (1980:6), Omoniwa (1993:5) Mooij (1975:1), and Igoche (2000:17). The picturesque presentations of this subject matter from antiquity by several scholars have been from their professional inclinations. Hence, Ching et al. (1980) posit that a study of a multifaceted subject as metaphor calls for divergent approaches among scholars. Anything short of divergent treatment is considered a failure and a sign of unseriousness, according to this stance. The study of metaphor from Aristotle's time has generated a lot of interests, thereby leading to the expansion of the scope of the views previously upheld by early scholars. As Mooij (1976) opines, many views on the subject existed in a preliminary state - quite sketchy and not fully developed, resulting in implicit implications. Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observe that in the fields of philosophy and linguistics, metaphor was seen as a matter of peripheral interest. This conviction propelled them to come up with a work, which, in their judgment, is a matter of central concern and perhaps the key to giving an adequate account of understanding (meaning).

Several existing views abound on the subject of metaphor. For example, Smith (1983:117) postulates that 'metaphors are the legs of language, on which thought steadily advances or makes its more daring leaps'. He further states that without metaphor, it is hobbled. Thought, as depicted by this view, advances steadily; resulting in multidimensional growth, hence the need to consider various dimensions of thought on the discipline of metaphor.

Theoretical Prop for the Study

This work, despite comprising a conglomerate of views on the subject of metaphor, is predicated on the cognitivist perspective that sees metaphor as a conceptual phenomenon- a gift possessed by all and used for understanding one's self, others and one's world .It is an indispensable tool for solving problems and enhancement of human development.

Different Angles to Scholars' Views on Metaphor

According to Hawkes (1972:1), the word 'metaphor' comes from the Greek word '*Metaphora*', which was derived from *meta* meaning 'Over' and *Pherrin*, 'to carry'. In his view, metaphor refers to a particular set of linguistic processes, which involve the transference or 'carrying over' of aspects of one subject to another, such that the second object is mirrored in the image of the first. As Aristotle clearly shows, 'metaphor is the application to one thing of a name belonging to another thing'. Equally in concordance with Aristotle is Beardsley (1966) who posits that 'Metaphor is a significant attribution that is either indirectly self-contradictory or obviously false in its context, and in which the modifier connotes characteristics that can be attributed, truly or falsely, to the subject. While to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:5), metaphor entails understanding one thing in terms of another.

Mooij (1976) admits that metaphors may contain untenable suggestions, and as a consequence they are in principle misleading. Closely related to this view is Beardsley (1958) who posits that a metaphor is an elliptical simile, that is, a collapsed comparison from which 'like' or 'as' has been omitted for convenience

or for heightened interest. Levinson (1983), on the other hand, sees metaphor as similes with suppressed or deleted predications of similarity. Metaphor as an implicit comparison tasks the mental mode of both writers and readers. Due to the 'suppressed or deleted' nature of metaphor, a reader has to make chains of connections to arrive at the intended meaning. On the part of a literary artist, it is a conscious creation. This is in consonance with Haley (1980) who distinguishes between what he calls the 'creative' and 'expressive' power of metaphor. Like other linguists, he agrees that metaphor appears in works of both ordinary people (even children) and literary artists, but observes that when metaphor is produced by the former (especially children), it may be incidental – expressing the 'expressive power; that is, it is employed to express meanings for which there happens to be no handy words.

A common denominator to these views is 'transference'. In Aristotle's view, the transference may be from the genus to the species or from species to genus. For example, *life is a fleeting shadow* - life being 'Genus' and shadow being, 'Species'. The transient nature of life is seen in the image of a shadow that passes quickly and can never be said to be static. The statement, '*A million thanks*', is an instance of transference from species to genus. 'A million': a specific number used instead of the genus 'many'. The transference can also be from species to species or in the form of analogy. For example, *Ene is a dove*. 'Ene' and 'dove' are both species. The peace-loving and harmless qualities of a dove have been transferred to Ene and the analogy could easily be drawn as Ene's character can be understood in the light of the specified qualities of a dove.

Richards (1936:93), a critic and a linguistic scholar who made very useful contributions to the study of metaphor, employs terms like 'transference' and 'interaction' to delineate his view of metaphor. He advocates that meaning is not fixed or stable, but derives from the interaction that takes place between the language and the experience of the speakers. Each modifies the other and their 'co-presence' generates 'reality' as they know it. He emphasizes that the process is metaphorical, as such, metaphor is not an amusing embellishment or diversion, an escape from the harsh realities of life or of language, but it is the way language works. He concludes that a man's reality is formed by the metaphorical processes that inform his language, and that all languages contain deeply embedded metaphorical structures, which covertly influence overt 'meaning'. His submission is that language cannot be 'cleared' of metaphor.

Richards (1936:93) sees the use of metaphor as depicting 'two thoughts of different things acting together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction'. Hence, his principle of '*tenor*', '*vehicle*' and '*ground*'. In a metaphorical expression, the '*tenor*' is the underlying idea; '*vehicle*' is the means through which the idea is perceived or understood, and '*ground*' being the meeting point of both '*tenor*' and '*vehicle*', allowing the desired interaction to take place. For example,

Ogbole is a serpent when it comes to sharing profit from a joint business.

Ogbole is the '*tenor*'; '*serpent*' is the '*vehicle*', and the '*ground*' (the meeting point) is the syntactic structure, which serves as an umbrella under which 'Ogbole' and 'serpent' are in an intimate interaction to give a picture of the particular qualities that are mirrored in Ogbole.

Eco (1984:88) sees metaphor in terms of violation, which gives birth to creativity. Language is shown to be a rule-governed, conventional machine and metaphor a breakdown in the machine, which allows in a certain amount of creativity. Eco (1984) is in harmony with Grice (1975) and Haley (1975) who demonstrate that the creation of metaphor entails a kind of deviation. Grice specifically shows that deviations from basic pragmatic principles are done on purpose to achieve certain effects. Metaphor is an obvious example of this, as hearers or readers know that the speaker or writer intends something different from the literal meaning of the sentence or at least implies additional meaning(s). In Haley's consideration, a 'non-literal' statement is only an anomaly unless it refers to some discoverable linguistic principle by which Aristotle's well-known dictum can be satisfied: 'A good metaphor implies the intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilar'.

Lecerclé's (1990:178) view on metaphor touches on several aspects of the subject. Like Eco (1984), he sees metaphor as the essential process of creativity in language that occupies a central position in linguistic activity making it mandatory for its analysis to be grounded in language. In his opinion, every metaphor contains a history of its own that can be better comprehended through the process of translation into another language. Seeing metaphor as a process, he describes the circle it undergoes as from 'live' to 'dead' to 'cliché' and back to live. He further demonstrates the process through which a dead metaphor can be revived drawing on the example, 'Richard is a lion'. According to Lecerclé, this expression has been in use for so long that the metaphorical meaning is now included in the dictionary as 'Lion' with the meanings: 1. A large

carnivorous mammal... 2; one like a lion either in courage or ravenous cruelty...' (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1941 edition). Lecerle notes that a dead metaphor can be revived when the metaphoric word is used in another light. For instance, the statement:

This cat of mine is a lion.

The word 'lion', which he earlier pointed out has almost lost its metaphorical status by its meaning being included in the dictionary, can be revived by this novel usage. A dead metaphor, according to him, has come alive with irony. The metaphorical lion is seen as a literal feline that is compared with a smaller variety. The question now is what part of the cat's quality is the focus? Is it its bravery when chasing a rat or the mane-like quality of her fur? According to him, through a usage as this, a dead metaphor can be revived.

Metaphor, as Lecerle strongly posits, belongs to language and not primarily to the dictionary and as such it is rhizomatic in form. It has a syntax which proceeds and governs attempts at interpreting it in terms of semantic tropes. In an attempt to develop a theory of production/reception of metaphor, Lecerle outlines four characteristics around which this theory must be centred. He opines that the interpretation of metaphor can take the form of an oscillation between surrender to the power of the words and manipulating them for our purposes. In other words, we can yield ourselves or allow metaphors to take hold of us and at the same time take over them 'to carry us where we want to go' (Lecerle 1991:170). In Lecerle's opinion, the reception of metaphor is 'the mirror-image' of the production of metaphor by the poet. That is, the reader of a literary work 'speaks language' in the same way as the literary artist does; that there is creativity on both sides of the process.

Lecerle shows four inherent characteristics of metaphor as *illumination*, *exaggeration*, *open-endedness* and *indirectness*. His concept of illumination holds that a live metaphor is an occasion for a minor or a mild epiphany. He asserts that the syntactic frame of a metaphor 'naturalizes' a semantically alien sentence, turns it into an assertion that in its unpredictability conveys an insight. Briefly, metaphor under this characteristic conveys an insight that is akin to the release of tension and brings about jubilation that is similar to the effect of a successful joke, as portrayed by Freud. When one is confronted with a good metaphor, the strange combination of words gives a kind of insight. It may result in an aspirated expression as 'Wu! We had never thought of it that way, or in that light, but now we see it'.

Lecerle (1990:171) quotes Davidson's essay to illustrate the second characteristic of exaggeration, where the poet talks about the blushing Hippocrene '*winking at the brim*' with beaded bubbles. Since wine does not 'wink', the lexeme must be taken metaphorically. A dictionary meaning of the verb 'wink', apart from the meaning of 'blink', 'connive at' and 'give a hint by a wink' (the last two are metaphors), creates exaggeration, bringing out the meaning 'to gleam or flash intermittently or fitfully'.

The third characteristic (Open-endedness) is opposed to Searle's view on what he calls 'simple metaphor'. Searle's diagram shows that the paths of metaphor are always with a fixed direction. The analysis must proceed from literary meaning to metaphorical consideration. Lecerle argues that in the case of a dead metaphor, one proceeds directly to the metaphorical meaning, since it is no longer a real metaphor. The metaphor has already been aggrammatized (a process whereby a metaphor becomes absorbed in the lexical structure of a language, thereby losing its metaphorical bearing). He further objects to Searle's one-directional approach, stressing that the path of metaphor does not necessarily go from literary to the metaphoric. To him, the literal must not be given priority over the metaphoric.

The fourth characteristic, which Lecerle terms indirection, shows that he is neither insisting that the metaphoric should be placed over the literal, but he is advocating a situation of flexibility in interpreting metaphor. Hence, interpretation should be 'multi-directional', since a true metaphor is open-ended (there is no fixed end to the process of understanding). This is because the imagination that both creates and perceives metaphor cannot be pigeon-holed.

In summary, Lecerle links the four characteristics that underlie his theory of production/reception of metaphor to the notion of 'sense' in the following way:

The illumination of metaphor recapitulates the genesis of sense. Suddenly, something new happens, a proposition 'makes sense' in an original manner – a moment that has been long lost in the passage to 'good' or 'common' sense characteristic of dead metaphor or so-called 'Literal' utterance. The exaggeration of metaphor expresses one of the paradoxes of sense...: the paradox of impossible objects and nonsensical propositions. Before good sense is reached, there is no designation or signification: only sense, which is indifferent to truth, semantic well – formedness, and argumentative coherence. Hence its creativity – it is good sense that goes back to accepted truths, which sense ignores. The indirection of metaphor reflects the bi-directionality of sense. On the level of sense,

where assertion and negative have the same value, everything is possible... The open-endedness of metaphor reflects the circulation, or the plasticity, of sense... nothing is fixed, no determinate meaning is assigned to the proposition, for that is the function of designation, signification, and manifestation. (p. 177).

Coleridge (in Hawkes 1972) sees metaphor in terms of its relationship to imagination. In his view, metaphor is imagination in action. He portrays the mind as an active, self-forming, self-realizing system, which is not passive in the face of so-called 'reality', but imposes itself on the world and creatively adapts and shapes it. Imagination, therefore, is the chief actor or instrument in this process. In other words, imagination 'makes up' the world as it goes along. The poet or the literary artist is seen as a replica of this process among human beings. This is because the poet or literary artist brings the whole soul of man into activity by his use of language, drawing upon the power of imagination. As beautifully captured by Wordsworth (1963), the poet (artist) is 'a man speaking to men'. Also, one major tool that he uses in dispensing this role is imagination, which in turn gives birth to metaphor. In Lecercle's (1990:168) observation, 'it takes a world of talent to invent' a metaphor. Furthermore, Lakoff and Turner (1989:214) see metaphor as a reflector, stressing that it is central to our understanding of ourselves, our culture, and the world at large. They add that to study metaphor is 'to be confronted with hidden aspects of one's own mind and one's own culture'.

Coleridge (1972:64) further makes a distinction between two aspects of the imaginative process by labeling them as: 'the *primary* imagination', which perceives and operates within the 'ordinary world' and 'the *secondary* imagination', which re-works this world, and impresses its own shape upon it. Words are the instruments used to achieve this working. According to Hawkes (1972:53), the process whereby words construct a 'reality' from within themselves, and impose this on the world in which we live, is a process of metaphor. Coleridge in another dimension uses the term '*esemplastic*' to describe the function of imagination faculty 'to connect, to fuse, to blend and to reconcile' in a process of unification, which invariably means 'to shape into one'.

He also introduces another faculty to that of imagination, which he calls 'fancy' – which is functionally inferior. While 'Imagination' is seen as a unifying '*esemplastic*' power, 'fancy' is a power of assembly or collocation, which entails the mechanical noting of resemblances. He draws a distinction between the kinds of metaphor produced by fancy and imagination, respectively. Fancy, according to him, is 'the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main, by some one point or more of likeness distinguished'. Such images are connected by the poet on the basis of some accidental coincidence - they have no natural or moral connection. Fancy involves mere noting of factitious 'similarities' between things. For example, he quotes these lines from Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis' to buttress his point.

*Full gently now she takes him by the hand
A lily prison'd in a goal of snow
Or ivory in an alabaster band:
So white a friend engirts so white a foe.*

A careful look at the lines above reveals that the two sorts of 'whiteness', – which are the elements of the metaphors, remain separate entities even though they are placed in the same environment by the lines: Lily, snow, ivory, alabaster; white friend, white foe. There is no blending, no interaction of the elements. They are artificially married together; the boundaries between them remain intact. The passage can be said to lack imagination.

Hawkes (1972:49), referring to Coleridge's metaphors of Fancy and Imagination, admits that Coleridge proposed a better means of analyzing metaphor than his predecessors (Aristotle and others) in that his work took into account the relationship between the metaphor and its audience. The credit given to him is anchored on the premise that his work took into account the consideration of the degree of imaginative response of those to whom the metaphor is addressed as a yardstick for determining its final effect. In other words, the understanding of a particular metaphor by its targeted audience determines its effectiveness. For instance, as Coleridge himself says, while commenting on Shakespeare, 'You feel him to be a poet, in as much as for a time he has made you one – an active creative being.' Until an audience can participate in the world of a writer, the writing is meaningless or of no value.

Hawkes (1972:50) in another development uses the terms '*abstract*' and '*concrete*' to explicate the notions of '*fancy*' and '*imagination*.' The metaphors of fancy, according to him, do not creatively involve their audience in themselves. They are 'abstract', and no matter how ingenious they may be, there is a gulf between them and their audience, which replicates the gap between the separate elements that compose them.

This can be seen from the example earlier given on fancy metaphor – the ‘whiteness’ in Shakespeare’s passage. The language in fancy metaphor is used ‘self-consciously, artificially.’

Metaphors that belong to the class of imagination, as has been described earlier, require the involvement of an audience. They are part of ‘concrete’ experience, and their language is never self-conscious or artificial. As captured by Coleridge, the imagination acts by so carrying on the eye of the reader as to make him almost lose the consciousness of words – to make him see everything and to make everything present by a series of images. And this is done without exciting any painful or laborious attention, without any anatomy of description, but with the sweetness and easy movement of nature.

Imagination, by its nature, is directed towards the ‘inward eye’, as Wordsworth rightly observes in the following lines: *‘Flashed upon that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude’*. Hawkes argues that the kinds of metaphor that Coleridge assigns to imagination are those that exhibit the most obvious characteristics of speech. The ‘esemplastic’ fusing together of the various elements or parts is demonstrative of the sorts of things that happen naturally when we speak, especially when this is done as a result of ‘spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’. Metaphor, as he further says, provides the means by which words are ‘elevated’ into ‘living things’. He explains that for a word to ‘live’, it needs to be uttered or at least to feel utterable; to have the impress of ‘real men’ upon it. The poet or the literary artist awakens in the audience the consciousness that is required to fully comprehend the issues that have been raised in the literary work. Hence, the opening of the ‘inward eye’ is what the artist does. There is something the artist possesses that breathes life into the literary works. For instance, as Hawkes (1972:53) notes, ‘...images, however beautiful, only become ‘proofs of original genius’ when ‘a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet’s own spirit’.

Coleridge (1972:54) believes that language is framed in such a way that it conveys not only the object (its target message) but also ‘the character, mood and intentions of the person who is representing it’. He further argues that language utters ‘the inner reality and, by imagination, imposes this on the world beyond. Imagination is depicted as the ‘shaping spirit’ that projects man’s mind onto the world, making them to interact with each other. ‘Reality’ is said to be the product of imagination and that upon which it plays. Imagination stretches the mind as well as reality by the linguistic means of metaphor. Expressing a similar view, Hawkes (1972:55) submits that ‘a metaphor is a thought in its own right’ and that there is ‘no way in which language can be ‘cleared’ of metaphor’. He captures his own thought more vividly in the following lines:

‘We live in a world of metaphors of the world, out of which we construct myths. We make the world up, in other words, as we go along, and we experience it concretely’. (p.55).

Both Coleridge and Hawkes place metaphor at the centre of human concern, and in the latter’s words it is ‘something far more important than an object of idle speculation for classifying literary critics’.

Adopting a pragmatic approach, Mey (1993:63), borrowing Bolinger’s (1980) expression, delineates metaphors as ‘loaded weapons’, which must be ‘contextualized’ (placed within the proper situation of use), and ‘revitalized’ continuously with respect to their applicability or non-applicability. According to him, the usefulness of a particular metaphor is determined by the context of use. He however envisages danger in uncritical acceptance of metaphor and continued use. He further stresses that the only way to deal with this danger is by making constant reference to metaphor’s root. To determine the worth of a particular metaphor, he observes, one has to investigate the use conditions that hold in the context of that wording by asking salient questions like: ‘what kind of seeing’ is represented by metaphor and in what way this ‘seeing’ affects our thinking - or even, perhaps determine a particular mind - set (for which it was developed in the first place, in all likelihood).

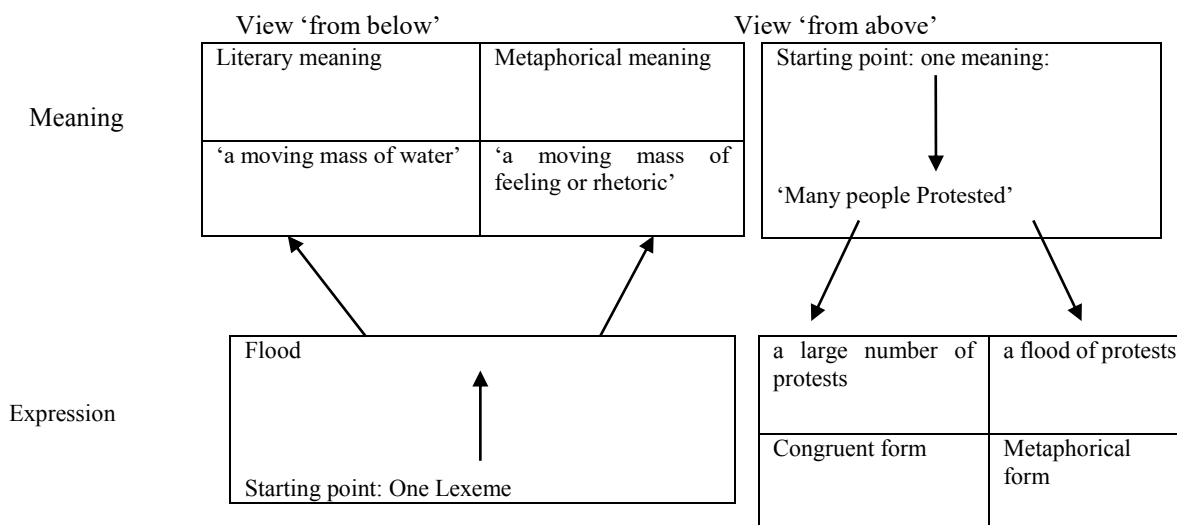
Halliday (1985), even though like many other linguists agrees that the phenomenon of metaphor is a natural feature of language and that metaphorical expressions naturally occur within everyday language use, his views on the subject, however, are shaped by the systematic functional approach. Halliday introduces the concept of ‘grammatical metaphor’. He therefore sees metaphor as variation in the expression of a given meaning, rather than variation in the meaning of a given expression. He further explains that in the traditional perspective, the focus is on the meaning of a single lexeme. For example, in *Ameh is a cat*, the focus is on the meaning(s) of ‘cat’. He therefore proposes the use of different types of configurations, which can be compared as expressions of the same meaning, resulting to what is described as a ‘scale of congruency’. Such expressions are a typical realization of the given meaning, and are defined as congruent. For instance, his example, ‘*Protests flooded in*’, can be rendered as:

Protests came in large quantities.
 Protests were received in large quantities.
 Or
 Very many people protested.

These examples clearly show that the variations are not purely lexical – there is difference in grammatical configuration. According to Tavernier (2003), the example above is the basis on which Halliday introduced the concept of grammatical metaphor, as can be seen in this excerpt:

There is a strong grammatical element in rhetorical transference, and once we have recognized this we find that there is also such a thing as grammatical metaphor, where the variation is essentially in the grammatical forms although often entailing some lexical variation as well. (Halliday 1985:320)

Halliday (1985) demonstrates that metaphorical variation is lexico-grammatical, rather than simply lexical. His concept of grammatical metaphor is an off-shoot of his expansion on the traditional view of metaphor. For example, metaphor is viewed as a word used with a transferred meaning. A lexeme with a certain literal meaning can have metaphorical, transferred uses or meanings. He outlines some perspectives from which metaphor should be viewed, as shown in the figure below:



(Halliday 1994/1985:342)

The view 'from below' takes the words as starting point, and then says something about the meanings these words realize, while the view 'from above' shows that the starting point is a particular meaning and the relevant question is: which are the different ways in which this meaning can be expressed? From this perspective emerges the definition of metaphor as 'variation in the expression of meanings' (Halliday 1985). In another dimension, Ravelli (1999:77) uses the term 'unpacking' to describe the process of the rewording of a metaphorical expression into a (more) congruent one. In other words, she sees it as 'unpacking' the grammatical metaphor. The process of 'unpacking' of metaphorical expression necessitates a consideration of the theories that underlie the process.

Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual approach to the study of metaphor is a strong negation of the traditional view that sees metaphor as an ornamental device in the hands of literary artists used in rhetorical style. Contemporary studies have shown that literary artists do not have monopoly of this indispensable tool that is so entrenched in our way of life (Okpe, 2009). Several cognitive linguists like Turner, Kovecses and Fungerer and Schmid strongly posit this view in their works. For example, Fungerer and Schmid (1996:114) observe that 'even very young children are very apt at using figurative language'.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work on the conceptual metaphor was a revolution that gave metaphor a new focus since its publication in the linguistic academic milieu. According to these linguists, metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action. That is to say, our ordinary conceptual system, which determines our thinking and acting, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Cognitivists believe that the concepts that control or determine our thought are not just matters of the intellect. By extension, metaphors are not just a way of expressing ideas through language, but a way of thinking about

things. Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate this fact with the metaphor Time is money. In their view, we do not just exploit this metaphor linguistically, but in real sense, we think of, or conceptualize 'Time' in terms of 'money'. With the following examples, they buttress their stance that we think of 'time' as a valuable asset or a limited resource that can be spent.

You're wasting my time.

Can you give me a few minutes?

How do you spend your time?

We are running out of time.

Is that worth your while?

(Culled from Lakoff and Johnson 1980:7, but slightly modified by Okpe 2012).

Okpe (2009) concludes that these phrases are typical utterances that we make from time to time without realizing that the power of metaphor is being evoked. These utterances show that conceptual metaphors are entrenched in our cognitive system. Also, Lakoff and Turner (1989:38) note that general conceptual metaphors are not 'the unique creation of individual poets but are rather part of the way members of a culture have of conceptualizing their experience.' According to Bromelow (2008:89), conceptual metaphors are the umbrella ideas, which are rarely explicitly expressed, but nonetheless are accepted and shared by the whole community of language users. They are shared and shareable thought processes, which we use so unconsciously, automatically, typically unnoticed, freely or effortlessly and conventionally. Fungerer and Schmid (1996), however, observe that, although metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon, we access the metaphors that structure our way of thinking through the instrument of language.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) tie the understanding of metaphor to experience. For example, they say, 'a metaphor can serve as a vehicle for understanding a concept only by virtue of its experiential basis. (p.18). Their experientialist approach to metaphor came full blown in subsequent works in 1987 and 1992. This approach emphasizes the connection between language, thought and experience. Concerning the experientialists, Ruiz (2009:69) observes:

For these scholars, experience is understood in an ample way as it includes perception, sensorimotor aspects, emotional, historical, social and linguistic dimensions, and above all, the inner structure of the human body – genetically and experientially acquired -, and the nature of its interactions in both the physical, socio-cultural, political and economical environments...

As Ruiz (in Medubi 2009) further notes, in the perception of experientialism, knowledge is not objective but dependent on and influenced by the ability to manipulate and move objects, on the mind, the culture and one's interaction with the environment. On this premise we can conclude that the creation and perception of metaphor are possible because of the shared conceptual system and experience between the 'creator' and 'perceiver' (of metaphor).

Metaphor is rooted in thought, not just in language, as Lakoff opines, but human thoughts, according to Medubi (2009:3), 'are conceived based on bodily experience and imagination, among other things'. Experience, in turn, forms the basis for the construction of concepts. This means that conceptualization is a mental process that is knit to bodily experience. This accounts for why Lakoff and Johnson (1980) insist that parts of a metaphor are linked through an experiential basis and that it is only by means of these experiential bases that the metaphor can serve the purpose of understanding. Metaphor also plays a central role in constructing realities; that is, charting new paths. The essence of metaphor, according to these linguists, is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. To do this, they propose the theory of conceptual mapping.

Saeed (2003: 348), from a semantic posture, refutes the traditional view of metaphor as many other contemporary linguists, arguing that metaphor is 'far from being idiosyncratic anomalies'. He enumerates the characteristics and systematic features of metaphor as conventionality, systematicity, asymmetry and abstraction. The subject of conventionality has to do with the novelty of the metaphor and the question of dead metaphors. It is believed that some metaphors are fossilized or 'dead' and do no longer retain their metaphorical effect when used. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989:55), conventionalization is the extent to which a metaphor underlies a range of everyday linguistic expression. That is to say, it is conventional to the extent that it is automatic, effortless, and generally established as a mode of thought among the members of a linguistic community. Cognitivists believe that 'even familiar metaphors can be given new life, thus showing that they retain their metaphorical status' (Saeed 2003:348). The idea of 'dead' metaphor is completely rejected by this view.

Systematicity of metaphor shows that metaphor does not just set up a single point of comparison: In comparison, features of the source domain and the target domain are married to create an extension, thereby establishing an internal logic for the metaphor under consideration. Chains of connections are made or shown in the mapping process. For example, life is a journey (Lakoff's example) involves several slots in the schema such as:-

- The person leading a life is a traveller.
- His purposes are destinations.
- The means for achieving purposes are routes.
- Difficulties in life are impediments to travel.
- Counsellors are guides.
- Progress is the distance travelled.
- Things you gauge your progress by are landmarks.
- Material resources and talents are provisions (for the journey).

The point is, the idea of seeing life as a journey with the mapping shown above, underlies other expressions we make every day; for example, 'I must give my child a good start in life', 'He has come to a dead end in his career', and so on. This concept of 'life is a journey' works as system that gives birth to other expressions that are tailored along that thought pattern. Also when new vocabulary is created, it is the systematicity of metaphor at work. For example; 'computer virus' is a term created from the biological virus that infects animate beings. It is the extension of meaning that gave birth to that word.

The third feature, asymmetry, refers to the directional nature of metaphors. Metaphors do not set up a symmetrical comparison between two concepts, thereby establishing points of similarity. Rather they stimulate the listener to transfer features from the source to the target domain. The transfer of feature is from source to target domain and not - vice-versa. For example, Life is a Journey or Health is Wealth cannot be Journey is life or Wealth is health.

The last feature in this category is abstraction. According to Giannoni (2009), metaphorization entails an invaluable resource for expressing abstract concepts by analogy with everyday experience. It is observed that a typical metaphor uses a more concrete source domain to describe a more abstract domain. We understand abstract concepts through the concrete and, as Alm-Arvius (2008) also affirms, through metaphorical extension we understand more abstract matters or new phenomena by identifying them in some respects with parts of another, usually concrete, source domain.

Conclusion

The paper has succinctly mirrored the various views on metaphor as posited by different scholars. They include: metaphor as a phenomenon that entails transference of attributes from one thing to another; a tool for interaction between tenor and vehicle, allowing the desired interaction to take place. Metaphor is equally presented as a violation (which results to creativity) of the rule-governed conventional machine called language – and metaphor a breakdown in the machine, which allows in a certain amount of creativity. The views also extend to the relationship between metaphor and imagination/experience, metaphor as a variation in the expression of a given meaning (Halliday's Grammatical metaphor) and metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon.

All these give credence to the statement that metaphor is a multifaceted subject. Among the different perspectives, the study emphasizes the fact that metaphor is an invaluable gift of nature to man for understanding himself, others and his world (Okpe 2014). It is not just a singular gift of the poet (artist) as Aristotle opines, but a gift possessed by all and used by all. It is a tool for creating and defining realities – a means by which values can be given to debased linguistic currency by extending the boundary of what can be expressed through language. Hence it is a tool for solving problems and enhancement of human development.

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