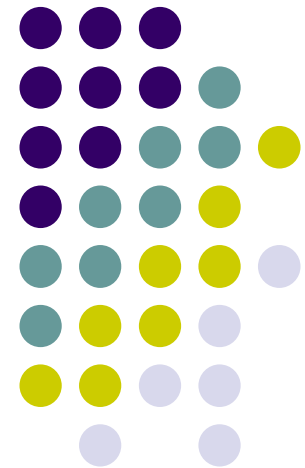


Metaphor analysis and real-life data

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Metaphor analysis

- as tool for social science research
- applied to discourse data: spoken, written (visual)
- to complement other methodologies and techniques: e.g. conversation analysis; attribution analysis;

interview with couple



Faye: How did I get into nursing?

I wanted to go to university

so I could leave home

and I hated sitting in classrooms

and lectures,

so nursing would have been

a get out and about on the wards,

meeting people.

So I thought it would be fun course to do

and did it.



Mike: Certainly for us they are.

I mean not for everyone

but you can't really be

going in the same direction if you're,

you have different beliefs.

That wouldn't really be so good.

Do you have to agree in politics?

I don't think you do.



Why metaphor matters

- Metaphors are often systematic:
 - *go in the same direction*
 - *arrive where we started*
 - *I know where you're coming from*
- Systems of metaphor reflect ways of thinking and feeling, often conventionalised.
- Identifying and grouping metaphors provides evidence of conceptualisations, attitudes and emotions



- Metaphors can be both vivid and conventional
- Metaphors play a range of discourse roles:
 - indirectness - to avoid threats to face
 - *are there some things that, you know, can't rub off in this way and some things that can do you think, getting a bit deep there?*
 - emphasis – of position or attitude
 - *get my teeth into an issue*
 - *he told me if I ever do electronic engineering he'd break my legs*
 - explanation through analogy
 - *it kind of rubbed off on me*
 - *They go on about their lives as though it's just one big tragedy*

Metaphor analysis



transcribe and organise data



identify linguistic metaphors



organise metaphors into systematic groups



find patterns



Metaphor identification

- Underline metaphor Vehicle terms in text or transcript – the ‘alien’ terms

I guess I sort of gravitated towards doing that kind of thing

You're heavily into computers

- may be words or phrases

I can pick them up quite quickly

Organise metaphors into systematic groups



Faye: Yeah, he's called Alan and he's like my grandma.

Mike: Uncle Alien.

Faye: Uncle Alien we call him cos he's so weird.

Interviewer and Mike: (laughter)

Faye: He's joined a strange cult and keeps telling us we're not enlightened. Just once in a while we hear from him telling us we don't have knowledge and what plebs we are because he knows of a higher being and I don't know. Sorry, it's really weird.

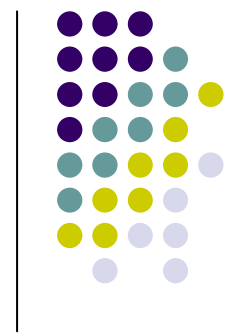
Interviewer: No, it's intriguing. (laughter)

Faye: Alright, he's caught up in some Chinese Cult and we're awful beings and he doesn't speak to us lowly types because we're not enlightened.

Yeah,
he's called Alan
and he's like my grandma.

Uncle Alien.
Uncle Alien we call him
cos he's so weird.

He's joined a strange cult
and keeps telling us we're not enlightened.
Just once in a while we hear from him
telling us we don't have knowledge
and what plebs we are
because he knows of a higher being and



PARANORMAL
PARANORMAL

family member
family member

CONNECT/SEPARATE
SEEING
CONTAINER

religion
religion
time

UP/DOWN

religion



I don't know.

Sorry,

it's really weird.

No,

it's intriguing. (laughter)

Alright,

he's caught up in some Chinese Cult

VIOLENT ACTION

religion

and we're awful beings

and he doesn't speak to us lowly types

UP/DOWN

family member

because we're not enlightened.

SEEING

religion



Finding patterns

- Metaphors of FAMILY TRAITS as VALUABLE OBJECTS THAT ONE GENERATION CAN GIVE TO ANOTHER

that people have; a gift; picked up; passed on

PASSED THROUGH CONTACT

rubbed off

MOVING FROM ONE PERSON INTO ANOTHER

runs through, coming from, passed down

it's just not within me to draw



Metaphors of families

- FAMILY AS CONTAINER
 - *in our family; out of the four*
- FAMILY AS LOCATION, VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL
 - *on his side; from a very poor background; where that comes from; a genetic weakness there*
 - family breakdowns as landscape damage: *rift; cut off*

Metaphors in dialogic construction of self and others



- Faye as adventurous spirit; MOVING OUTWARDS

- nursing in order to *leave home*
- nursing valued as get out and about
- exemplar
 - Faye's parents...

*they go camping a lot, they drive they drive abroad with the caravan every month and so every year I'd do that as well and I think yeah they'd just encourage me to **go off and do things, go off** on my bike, mix a lot with foreign children, try out new languages and yes they just really encouraged **getting out and about** and doing new things.*



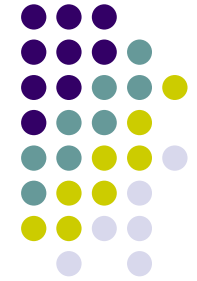
contrasting metaphors

- Metaphorical lack of movement
 - *I was very, very bitter as a teenager and I would have thought anything would have set me off and get my teeth into an issue.*
 - (without Christianity, I would have been) *clinging on to things for years and years.*
- Metaphorical reaction to possibility of family illness being passed down
 - *not going to sit and worry about it*



- her grandmother became a teacher:
 - *otherwise she would just be **scrubbing steps** for the rest of her life. And yeah, she became a headmistress in the end*
- the metonymy of *scrubbing steps* stands for a life without adventure

Construction of narrative of self



- through interaction or weaving of
 - metaphor
 - literal exemplars and scenarios
 - metonymy

Mike as problem solver and worrier



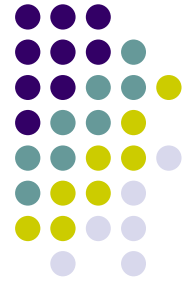
- accounting for career choice:

*engineering is **problem solving** and people is also **problem solving** in some respects in a different way. So perhaps that's a similarity.*

- describing his youth:

*I'm quite laid back really, I used to do whatever and I do things and I wasn't particularly a **problem**.*

co-constructing Mike as problems solver



- Mike is *practical...and sensible thinking*
- Mike and gardening:
you can't see the point of it
- Mike agrees with Faye that he's like his grandfather, constructing problems that can be solved:



Mike: ...*he was the kind of person who would always be on the phone about something, trying to find the cheapest gadget or complaining about this and he was...*

Faye: *Writing letters of complaint, that's very like you.*

Mike: *It is indeed.*

Faye: *And you always have a hunt for the cheapest gadget.*

Mike: *Absolutely*

Mike's role in the couple as worrier



Faye: *Not gonna sit and **worry** about it no. I leave that to, he's negative, he can **worry** about it.*

It runs in the family

Mike on his mother: *she does **worry** about things*

Mike on his brother: *it **worries** him a bit*



Worrying about illness

- 19 metaphors about illness – 13 from Mike, 4 from Faye
- mental illness as mechanical problem
an imbalance, stress, if they were put in stress, wound up
- eczema –
*that's a **worry***
the eczema just appeared from nowhere

Illness as a problem without a solution?



Is there anything you can do about things run in families such as cancer?

No I don't think you can really, it's just one of those things isn't it



Conclusion

- The metaphors that people use can reveal something of their ideas, beliefs and emotions.
- Metaphor offers a thread to follow through discourse data, leading the researcher to notice other ways language is used in the dialogic construction of self and others, e.g. contrasts, exemplars, scenarios, symbols.



References

Metaphor analysis web site:

<http://creet.open.ac.uk/projects/metaphor-analysis/index.cfm>

Cameron, L. (2007) Patterns of metaphor use in re-conciliation talk. *Discourse & Society*, 18(2), 197-222.