

Conceptual Metaphors in Margaret Ogola's Novel: “The River and the Source.”

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Introduction

- The nexus between the mind and socio-cultural setting begets the concept 'Cognitive Linguistics' which is an appliance exploited to make sense of experiences in contexts where provisions of grammar are too inadequate(Evans, et al., 2007).
- Cognitive linguistics is a school of linguistics that assumes that language is not the product of particular structures in the brain, but of the general cognitive systems that human beings use for conceptualizing all aspects of reality (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).
- In the paradigm of cognitive linguistics, *metaphors* are perceived to be the tools that help make sense of abstract notions through concrete ones.

Introduction - *cont.*

- Etymologically, the word “metaphor” comes from the two Latin roots: “meta” which means “over,” or “across” and “pherein” which means “to transfer” or to “carry beyond” (Glucksberg, 2001, p. 3).
- The conceptualization of metaphors is usually guided by the principle of the Great Chain of Being Metaphor (Henceforth, GCBM) (Kövecses, 2002).
- In this hierarchical organization, the highest level is occupied by GOD, followed by COSMOS / UNIVERSE, SOCIETY, HUMANS, ANIMALS, PLANT, COMPLEX OBJECTS, NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS in that order (Kövecses, 2002, pp.126 -128).
- This paper was conceived from the fact that little attention has hitherto been paid to the study of metaphors in literary text within a cognitive-semantics perspective.

Theoretical Framework

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- This study has immensely relied on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth, CMT) as its theoretical framework.
- The CMT was initially developed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980 in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*.
- The CMT postulates the pervasiveness of metaphor in both everyday and specialized language and argues for a view of metaphor as a conceptual rather than linguistic device (Gibbs, 1994).
- In the CMT, the capitalized mnemonic “TARGET DOMAIN IS / AS SOURCE DOMAIN” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) will be employed.
- In addition, the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor whose main purpose is to assign a place for everything in the universe in a strict hierarchical system will also be taken into account (Kövecses, 2002).

Methodology

- This study adopted a qualitative research design.
- *The River and the Source* was purposively sampled for this study.
- The novel was purposively sampled because it is a primary literature text testable in the current KCSE English syllabus. Besides, the text addresses pertinent gender concerns in the Kenyan setting, a reason that makes it intriguing in a realm of a girl child empowerment.
- The collected metaphors were subjected to inter-rater agreement reliability check where four annotators (two annotators and the researchers) carried out Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU).
- Content analysis, which is within the qualitative research paradigm (Creswell, 2012), guided the analysis of the metaphors in order to identify the parts of the metaphors that are relevant to the achievement of the research objective.

Cont'd - Methodology

- The GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor and the Conceptual Metaphor Theory also helped in the analysis of the metaphors in the text. The metaphors were also tabulated in terms of their reliability measures (see Table 4.1).

FINDINGS

- The study established that ANIMALS, PLANTS, COMPLEX OBJECTS and NATURAL THINGS are stratified source domains richly used to depict the characters in the novel *The River and the Source* as highlighted in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Conceptual Metaphors in *The River and the Source*.

No	Metaphor	The GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor	Reliability Measures				
			Coder 1	Coder 2	Coder 3	Coder 4	Total
1	BECKY IS AN ANGEL	SUPERNATURAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
2	JOHN COURTNEY IS AN OGRE	SUPERNATURAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
3	WANDIA IS AN ELEPHANT	ANIMAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
4	HUMAN BEINGS ARE BIRDS	ANIMAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
5	ODONGO IS A FOWL	ANIMAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
6	ODONGO IS NOT A FISH	ANIMAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
7	AKOKO IS A WOLF	ANIMAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
8	OLOO POLO IS THE SKY	NATURE	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
9	A WOMAN IS A RIVER	NATURE	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
10	A SON IS A ROCK	NATURE	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
11	AKOKO IS A JEWEL	OBJECT	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
12	AKOKO IS THE CENTER POST	OBJECT	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
13	MUGO IS A TOUGH COOKIE	OBJECT	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
14	TOMMY MUHAMBE IS A TREE	PLANT	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00
15	OCHIENG SUNA IS A MOSQUITO	ANIMAL	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00

Cont'd-Findings

4.1 MAN IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING

In the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING, every element in the universe falls in its allotted position in a hierarchy from the barest form of existence to the infinite God (López, 2009). In order to portray a trait that is beyond human explanation even by scientific means, writers have hit on supernatural beings as explicit sources of meaning.

According to Pepitone et, al. (1997), supernatural beings exist close to the heavenly realms and act as intermediaries between divinity and humanity.

The following supernatural metaphors are used to portray human characters in the novel:

- BECKY IS AN ANGEL
- JOHN COURTNEY IS AN OGRE

Cont'd-Findings

4.2 A HUMAN BEING AS AN ANIMAL

- As part of the cosmos, it is probable that people are portrayed and conceptualized as animals.
- This means they reveal the various dispositions a community holds towards certain species of animals. As such, meaning is culture dependent since attitudes vary regionally (Deignan, 2003). For example,
 - WANDIA IS AN ELEPHANT
 - HUMAN BEINGS ARE BIRDS
 - ODONGO IS A FOWL
 - ODONGO IS NOT A FISH
 - AKOKO IS A WOLF
 - OCHIENG SUNA IS A MOSQUITO

Cont'd-Findings

4.3 A HUMAN BEING IS A PLANT.

- Plants fall immediately below animals due to lack of mental attributes and sensory organs. They are usually used to visualize human beings mentally (Kleparski, 2008). He adds that the process of transference of plant names to human qualities is referred to as a plantosemy. In this case, Margaret Ogolla has used plantosemy to conceptualize human beings. For example,
- **TOMMY MUHAMBE IS A TREE**

Cont'd-Findings

- **4.4 A HUMAN BEING IS AN OBJECT**

- The use of objects as the source domain for human beings is employed in the novel *The River and the Source*. These metaphors communicate various messages depending on the strength and nature of the item used to depict humans. The object metaphors in the novel are:
 - AKOKO IS A JEWEL
 - AKOKO IS THE CENTER POST
 - MUGO IS A TOUGH COOKIE
 - OLOO POLO IS THE SKY
 - A WOMAN IS A RIVER
 - A SON IS A ROCK

Discussion of Findings

- First, metaphor is a common instrument of conceptualising people in literary texts. This finding is corroborated by past studies which have found that metaphor is a basic and indispensable linguistic feature of human understanding (Kövecses, 2002; Cienki, 2005).
- The metaphors identified in the text are also well accounted for in terms of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).
- The use of the ANIMAL, PLANT, HUMAN, SUPER NATURAL BEINGS and OBJECT metaphors in the novel can be explained by taking into account the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor whose primary objective is to assign a place for everything in the universe in a strict hierarchical system (López, 2009).

Recommendations

- The study recommends that for a better understanding of conceptual metaphors, it is important to consider the cultural, historical and geographical contexts expressed in language. This is because some metaphors not only have a cognitive basis, but they are also culturally motivated reflecting the attitudes and beliefs held by a particular community (Deignan 2003).
- In addition, this study recommends the use of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor in the comprehension of World's phenomena.

Conclusions

- First, conceptual metaphors are conduits of communication and should be explained using a cognitive linguistics approach.
- Second, the author has used metaphors in almost all the hierarchical cosmos thus a human being has been conceptualized either with negative or positive connotations according to the generic GREAT CHAIN OF BEING which helps us understand the human, animal, plant and object metaphors
- Third, the MIPVU is an indispensable framework of conceptualizing metaphors in written texts.
- Lastly, Metaphors are always related to context and their interpretation, and underlying assumptions motivate the mapping of human, animals, plant, and object metaphors used in the conceptualization of characters in the text. This provides a good insight into the role attributed to human beings society.

THANK YOU.