

**ARTICULATING THE CONCEPTUAL AND THE  
DISCURSIVE DIMENSIONS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE  
IN ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS**

**(Articulando as dimensões conceitual e discursiva da  
linguagem figurativa em textos argumentativos)**

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**Abstract:** *One of the greatest challenges of recent studies on metaphor in discourse is to articulate, systematically, the discursive with the cognitive dimensions of figurative language. Within this perspective, the aim of this paper is to present and to discuss an analytical approach to the study of metaphor in argumentative texts which aims at observing how metaphoricity might emerge and be explored discursively, through underlying conceptual metaphors and textually dependent mappings. To this end, a unit of analysis is proposed: the metaphor niche.*

**Key-words:** *metaphor; discourse; metaphor niche; argumentation.*

**Resumo:** *Um dos maiores desafios dos estudos mais recentes da metáfora, característicos da nova “virada discursiva”, é articular, sistematicamente, a dimensão linguístico-discursiva à dimensão cognitiva da figuratividade. Nessa perspectiva, o objetivo deste trabalho é apresentar e discutir uma abordagem analítica para o estudo da linguagem metafórica em textos argumentativos que se propõe a verificar como a linguagem figurada pode emergir e ser explorada discursivamente, valendo-se, ao mesmo tempo, de metáforas conceituais subjacentes e mapeamentos textualmente desenvolvidos. Para esse fim, uma unidade analítica, de base discursivo-cognitiva, é proposta: o nicho metafórico.*

**Palavras-chave:** *metáfora; discurso; nicho metafórico; argumentação.*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the discursive role of metaphorical language in argumentative texts. To this end, we will firstly present a brief theoretical discussion on the epistemological nature of metaphor as an object of

systematic inquiry. In particular, we will focus on the shift from approaching metaphor as a figure of speech to metaphor as a figure of thought (the so-called “cognitive turn”) and, more recently, to metaphor as a cognitive and discursive phenomenon.

It is argued that recent discourse-oriented studies on metaphor have contributed significantly to the understanding of both the cognitive, linguistic and social nature of figurative language in discourse (Cameron 2003, 2008; Cameron and Deignan 2006; Charteris-Black 2004, 2005; Zanutto et al 2008, among others). The concept of argumentation adopted in the analysis will also be briefly discussed.

Within this perspective, the analysis described in this article reveals the important role that metaphors play both in the establishment of local and global textual coherence and in the process of persuading the reader of the acceptability of a particular standpoint, thus resolving “a difference of opinion occurring in an argumentative discourse or text” (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004).

The unit of analysis proposed for the research, the metaphor niche (Vereza 2007), which will be defined in more detail later in the text, aims at establishing, theoretically and methodologically, the articulation between the discursive and cognitive dimensions of metaphor in argumentative texts.

## THE LOCUS OF METAPHOR

An overview of the development of systematic reflection on metaphor can be approached from various perspectives. Since the classical Aristotelian tradition up to more recent theories of metaphor, various definitions and conceptualizations of this trope have been proposed. What metaphor actually is, however, is still a highly controversial issue. What seems to be the most relevant aspect of this difficult but rather stimulating and fruitful debate is the question concerning the locus of metaphor as an aspect of meaning construction.

That metaphor is typical of particular uses of language, or, a particular use of language in itself, has, for a long time, characterized it as a linguistic phenomenon. In other words: metaphor would originate from, be based

upon and ultimately be found in language- which, in this case, would be the locus of metaphor. The view of metaphor as a figure of language is still predominant in many academic circles and it also seems to be part of the commonsensical view of metaphor. After all, most people can identify metaphors in written texts and in conversations; metaphors are “deconstructed” in puns and in other metalinguistic activities; literature teachers ask their pupils to explore metaphorical language found in poetry and the layman could even recognize (or believe to be able to recognize) the difference between novel and conventional metaphors (frequently referred to as “clichés”). All these “language games”, to use Wittgenstein’s ([1953] 1989) classical concept, presuppose the idea that metaphor, even without a theoretically informed criteria for metaphor identification, is found and identified in language.

With regard to more formal definitions of metaphor, it is traditionally seen as a “figure of speech”. Moreover, its classifications (creative or novel metaphors; conventional or frozen metaphors; dead metaphors, among others), regardless of the specificities of their definitions, are all based on the belief that metaphor is an element of language: either as a system (conventional metaphors, for example, as part of the lexical system) or as use (Steen 2006).

When Richards (1936) and, later, Black (1962) highlighted the cognitive dimension of metaphor (which, according to Stern (2000), was already mentioned by Aristotle in *Rhetoric*), they still had under their theoretical lenses the linguistic metaphor. Although, according to the authors, the production and understanding of metaphor would involve some cognitive processing or effect- or even a cognitive gain- as a result of the interaction between the tenor and the vehicle, to use Richard’s terminology to refer to the target and the source terms involved in metaphor, the locus of metaphor would still be language.

This view was only radically transformed when, heavily inspired by Reddy’s (1993, [1979]) notion of “frame”, which was used to explain the conduit metaphor, or a mental representation about the way we conceptualize language and communication, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, [2002]) introduced what has come to be known as “the cognitive turn” in metaphor theory. In this perspective, cognition is not to be approached merely as a dimension of metaphor, but as the very locus of metaphor. Thus,

often regarded as the most striking and relevant member of the taxonomy of “figures of speech”, metaphor acquired a new theoretical status: it was now conceptualized as a figure of thought. Conceptual metaphors, then, would be bright stars in the vast universe of thought, and are believed to be so pervasive in the way human beings make sense of their experiences in the world that they would determine not only the way we think, but also the way we talk and act. These metaphors would emerge as the result of an attempt to understand and legitimize socially, cognitively and linguistically an abstract domain (such as “argument” and “time”) in terms of domains that originate in more concrete experiences (such as “war” and “money”, respectively). This theory has become known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT, hereafter).

Lakoff and Johnson introduced, or formalized more explicitly, what has been considered a “paradigm shift” in metaphor studies (Zanotto, Nardi, Moura and Vereza 2002) by moving metaphor from the language sphere into the sphere of thought. Conceptual metaphor, then, emerged as a new, multidisciplinary and epistemologically consistent research object, and, for this reason, it has a rather promising analytical potential. As a consequence, the concept has become the foundation for substantial research worldwide, within the areas of cognitive linguistics, literary studies, cognitive psychology and, more recently, applied linguistics.

If thought is supposed to be the origin, the realm, the “kingdom” or even the “birthplace” of metaphor, what role would language play in metaphoricity? From a more orthodox perspective within CMT, language would be seen and treated scientifically as an empirical source of evidence for underlying conceptual metaphors: a material terrain with “clues”, which would point to the licensing and primordial mental constructs (conceptual metaphors), which resulted from the mapping of a concrete domain of experience upon a more abstract one. Language, thus, seems to have been downgraded to a secondary position by CMT followers, since, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980:6) have pointed out, “metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person’s conceptual system”.

This view towards the ontological and/or epistemological status of language with regard to metaphor has, more recently, been the object of criticism from various authors. On the one hand, objections to the

“circularity” resulting from this approach to language in CMT have been brought up. This circularity could be described as following: the “existence” of a particular conceptual metaphor is hypothesized on the basis of some evidence found in language, which, in turn, provides the “proofs” (more linguistic evidence, in the form of linguistic metaphorical expressions) which would corroborate that hypothesis. In fact, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, [2002]), as well as many of their followers, have not even tried to find evidence from authentic corpora (naturally occurring language): most of their examples have all been invented (Deignan 2008:151). This, in fact, would be the second objection to CMT: the artificiality of linguistic evidence for the conceptual metaphors proposed by the authors of *Metaphors we live by*.

The problem of the artificiality of linguistic examples, as opposed to the use of evidence of “naturally occurring data”, has, to a large extent, been met by corpus oriented research, such as those studies developed by Deignan (2005), Sardinha (2008a, 2008b), and Vereza (2008), among many other researchers, as the basis of their inquiries into conceptual metaphors.

The use of corpora, however, does not necessarily challenge the primacy of thought over language in CMT. The only immediate consequence of using natural occurring language, instead of invented examples, is the development of more solid evidence for particular conceptual metaphors, strengthening, as a result, the theory itself. If the examples used are authentic samples of language in use, their legitimacy and effectiveness, both as research objects and explanatory evidence, can be rendered reliable. In other words, the analysis of metaphorical expressions found in authentic language does not, in itself, transfer the ontological realm of metaphor: thought, and not language. Thus, metaphor in language use would be thought to be motivated by underlying metaphors, so would metaphors “inscribed” in the language system itself.

This “strong” cognitively based hypothesis (the supremacy of thought -conceptual metaphors- over language -metaphorical linguistic expressions-) seems to explain many cases of metaphor in language, from conventional metaphors to those novel metaphorical expressions which had been previously believed to be products of individual creativity. However, there seem to be numerous cases of metaphorical uses of language which resist explanations based on a priori systematic mental representations. This is the

case of metaphors which seem to be highly dependent on contextual and co-textual variables for their production and understanding. In other words, it might be argued that whether these metaphors are licensed by conceptual metaphors or not appears to be of lesser importance for the investigation of their role in (and dependence on) the overall communicative event in which they are inserted. In short, to study metaphor in natural occurring language does not necessarily reveal possible shortcomings of CMT; on the contrary, it may even provide more evidence for the theory.

Metaphor in language use, or in discourse, on the other hand, requires a broader look into the features of the context (and co-text) of its occurrence. This, again, would seem to dislodge the locus of metaphor: from thought back to language, but now, language seen as discourse.

### INVESTIGATING METAPHOR IN DISCOURSE

In the last decade, metaphor researchers have been developing several approaches to study metaphor in discourse (see, for example, Cameron 2003, Cameron and Deignan 2006; Ritchie 2004; Semino 2008 and Zanutto et al (2008), the latter with an emphasis on metaphor in applied linguistics), a task which is now recognized as both necessary, methodologically challenging and highly complex. It is my belief that the main challenge in this enterprise is to articulate the several realms of metaphor: firstly, the discursive and the cognitive dimension of metaphor; secondly, its conventional/socially shared aspects and individual/context-dependent use; and, finally, what Richie (2004) refers to as the “bottom-up” and “top down” processes involved in both its use and analysis.

Having these different, but complementary levels of metaphoricality in mind seems to be essential in contemporary metaphor research. After all, turning our attention to the universe of metaphor in discourse does not have to mean a neglect of its cognitive nature. Metaphor in language has for millennia been studied in the Western tradition; therefore, the recent trend “back to language” should not neglect the undeniable gains to the understanding of metaphor promoted by CMT. There is a danger of “throwing out the baby with the bathwater” if contemporary research on the cognitive nature of metaphor is not taken into consideration in the recent trends which focus on figurative language in discourse.

After all, as Turner (2003) has so vehemently suggested, there can be no dichotomization between the social and the cognitive aspects of meaning construction: cognition is always socially founded or situated. Moreover, as Widdowson (2007: 21) suggests, “context is not what is perceived in a particular situation, but what is conceived as relevant”. In other words, cognition is always sociocognition, and, by the same token, metaphor in discourse is not merely an individual use of language: this “particularity” or “specificity” is always relative to broader socially shared and cognitively inscribed representations.

Discourse is normally characterized as “language in use”. One of the most recent publications on metaphor in discourse (Semino 2008) proposes the following definition for the concept:

By discourse, as the term is used in the title, I mean naturally occurring language use: real instances of writing or speech which are produced and interpreted in particular circumstances and for particular purposes (Semino 2008: 1).

This definition highlights the notion of discourse as “language in use” mentioned above, or, more specifically, of “language use in particular contexts”. Although the author takes into consideration “the interaction between conventionality and creativity” and “metaphorical uses of language” and “mental representations and thought” (ibid), the more pragmatically oriented definition of discourse she offers does not reflect this concern. The conceptualization of discourse adopted in this paper is one which considers, more explicitly, the inseparability between language use and cognition (situated cognition). Metaphorical uses of language in specific contexts maintain, therefore, a dialectical relationship with mental representations, which, in turn, are not only “conventional”, in the sociological sense, but are essential part, and at the same time constitutive of culture -or cultures- (Kövecses 2006).

The implication of this sociocognitive view of metaphor in discourse for analysis of figurative language is that an attempt must be made to develop units of analysis and methodological procedures which could help the analyst investigate the multidimensionality of metaphor use more systematically.

## THE METAPHOR NICHE

In analyzing metaphors in authentic argumentative texts (editorials and columns), which represented the corpus of the present research, a unit of analysis is proposed: the metaphor niche.

In terms of formal metaphor identification in the corpus, metaphor niches are “figurative chains or networks” present in many argumentative texts, that is, a group of inter-related metaphoric expressions that can be seen as cognitive and discursive entailments of a superordinate metaphoric proposition, usually present (or inferred) in the co-text itself.

As the term (metaphor niche) in itself is a metaphor (a “metametaphor”, to be more precise), explaining the motivation for the choice of the term and, at the same time, the “ground” of the metaphor may throw some light at the nature and analytical potential of what can be seen as a methodological or operational tool.

The term “niche” which is proposed here is based on its most canonic use, from the ecological domain. Thus, we can stress the following notions, coming from this domain, which can be mapped onto the metaphoric-discursive one: inter-relationship, functioning and adjustment on the whole (Mattar and Auad 1997). A mapping (the source domain: ecological niche) onto the target domain (the metaphor cluster), using specific elements of the source domain, considered relevant for this particular mapping, highlights the metaphoricity intended:

### SOURCE DOMAIN:

An ecological niche is the mode of existence that a species has within an ecosystem. Essentially it is the sum of all activities and relationships a species has while obtaining and using the resources needed to survive and reproduce (ibid).

A species' niche includes:

- a. Habitat - where it lives in the ecosystem
- b. Relationships - all interactions with other species in the ecosystem
- c. Nutrition - its method of obtaining food

## MAPPING

### TARGET DOMAIN

A metaphor niche is the mode of existence that a linguistic metaphor has within a text/ecosystem (language in use). Essentially, it is the sum of all mental and textual/discursive activities and relationships a “textual metaphor” involves while obtaining and using the resources needed to survive (and reproduce).

A metaphor niche includes:

- a. Habitat - where it “lives” (a living metaphor) in the text (ecosystem)
- b. Relationships - all interactions with other passages/metaphor/lexis in the ecosystem (text)
- c. Nutrition - its method of obtaining food (meaning): from other textual metaphors, idioms; systematic metaphors, conceptual metaphors, cultural presuppositions, textual coherence/cohesion and from the argumentative positioning in the text.

### SOME GROUNDS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF METAPHOR IN ARGUMENTATION

Having defined our unit of analysis, it is important to consider briefly some aspects of argumentation, as this characterizes the genre chosen to form our corpus. As discourse must have a socially recognized purpose (and this is an essential defining characteristic of genres, according to Swales 1990), persuasion is a clear goal in the texts selected for the analysis. Moreover, as it will be seen below, the metaphor niches analyzed are clearly part of the argumentative dimension of the selected texts.

Among the several argumentation and rhetoric theories, including those from classical rhetoric, we adopt the basic perspectives proposed by van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans (2002). These authors base their claim on a pragmatic rather than a linguistic approach, and suggest that argumentation is a social and verbal activity of reason, aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions

intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge (van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans 2002 : xii).

Still according to the authors, argumentation theory would not follow the same principles of an approach based on logic, which treats argumentation as a product of a rational process, but as part of an interaction and communication process inserted in a given context. This process would always take into account “a difference of opinion”, even if, like in the case of many written genres, there is no listener or reader present who explicitly presents his difference of opinion. In this case, the arguer would anticipate those differences when developing his argument and use them as parameters to develop his “constellation”.

Besides the distinction between the linguistic, logic and pragmatic trends to approach argumentation, Amossy (2005) proposes another one that focuses on the scope of this phenomenon, both in language and discourse. According to the author, there would be a “strong” line, of rhetoric nature, such as that of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) and van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henjkemans (2002), that treats argumentation, as previously mentioned, as a type of discourse focused on persuasion, consisting of verbal strategies that aim at “resolving” the differences of opinion. The “weak” line approaches argumentation as a phenomenon that comprises language as a whole (Amossy 2005: 88), as part of the “linguistic system”. It is not restricted to the persuasive use of language and it establishes, in all cases, a certain “orientation”.

Despite sharing with this “weak” line a view of language that rejects the possibility of discourse with no “orientation” (or without subjectivity and/or ideology) and which is not, always, more or less interpersonal, because it is based on alterity, we have opted for the “strong” conceptualization of argumentation, for operational reasons, since we are defending an approach that explicitly stresses the argumentative role of metaphor. In other words, our proposal is that metaphorical language contributes, linguistically, cognitively and pragmatically to the argumentative power of discourse from a chain of textually cohesive entailments. This hypothesis will be briefly explored in the analyses of two excerpts from argumentative texts (one editorial from an American newspaper, *The New York Times*, and a column from a well known Brazilian Magazine, *Veja*) using, as a methodological unit, the metaphor niche.

## METAPHOR IN PERSUASIVE TEXTS

### TEXT ONE

King Canute at the border  
By John Tierney

George Bush is the King Canute of the immigration debate, and I mean that in a nice way.

Canute has an image problem today because so many people think of him as that batty old English king who thought he could command the tide to recede. But that's the wrong spin on his legend.

In the original tale, he was a sensible ruler who was tired of hearing flattery from his courtiers about his great powers. When they told him that even the tides would obey his command, he went down to the sea to teach them a lesson in limits.

Today's courtiers are the Republicans in Congress and the others demanding that America "secure the border." They're furious at Bush for suggesting that a crackdown at the border will not stop the tide of illegal immigrants.  
(.....)

Railing at them for breaking the law is not going to make them go home or stop others from following them here. Immigrants will cross the border one way or another. The more of them we let in legally, the better off everyone will be. Whether you welcome more immigrants, as I do, or whether you'd rather see fewer, there's no point in commanding the tide to ebb.  
(Excerpt from New York Times April 1, 2006)

The metaphor niche here identified refers to one single metaphor introduced in the opening sentence: "George Bush is the King Canute of the immigration". It is a novel metaphor, used not only to introduce an idea/ an argumentative thesis, but to structure the whole text, as we can see in the following paragraphs and at the very last sentence.

As not many people are familiar with the tale of the King Canute, the author dialogically, presents, in the third paragraph, a summary of the story, highlighting those aspects which represent the ground of the metaphor, from which the mapping will be established.

What is worth noting is that the author guides the reader to a particular interpretation of the story: the one, which he terms as “original” has a positive connotation (“original” is truer, more legitimate and faithful to the “roots” of the story).

By doing this, a particular mapping is favored: the mapping which will be aligned to the argument put forward and argumentatively elaborated in the text. The author rejects the view of King Canute as “that batty old English king who thought he could command the tide to recede”.

Instead, he portrays the king as “a sensible ruler”. In other words, if novel metaphors have to be processed by the reader, the processing is, somehow, conducted by the writer. The source domain will provide elements of a type “X” and not “Y” for his metaphor to work in the direction of his argumentation. In fact, Aristotle had already pointed to this “effective use” of metaphor. For those who knew King Canute’s story, the author “re-interprets” it for the reader; for those who did not know it, he offers his version.

The mapping is also elaborated by the author: Bush is the king; the courtiers are the Republicans in Congress and the sea tide, the tide of illegal immigrants.

The elaboration of the mapping structures the text and the argument itself. At the end, the author returns to the original metaphor: the tide (“whether you welcome more immigrants, as I do, or whether you’d rather see fewer, there’s no point in commanding the tide to ebb”).

This discursive use of metaphor shows very clearly that similarity in metaphor is created, and not presupposed; a view which was already defended by Richards (1936), Black (1962) and, later, by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, [2002]) themselves.

The use of a metaphor referring to a well known tale (in the North American culture, presumably) seems to reinforce the argument: giving it a cognitive and emotional strength difficult to be surpassed by more “literal” arguments, particularly in this case, in which a socially and ideologically issue is at stake.

The metaphor niches in this text are not independent: they are argumentative and linguistically connected, as they serve as support to

one single standpoint developed argumentatively, and, at the same time, establish local and global textual coherence.

We believe that metaphorical language in this text and other persuasive texts serve the overall purpose of “resolving differences of opinion”, which illustrates how metaphor cannot be seen merely as an “ornament” to embellish the text; even when it does that, it is also convincing by the images it creates, by the emotions it brings about and by the cognitive force it may have. This force lies in the possibility of establishing connections between domains which seemed unconnected before. This movement allows the reader a participation in the construction of meaning, making him a kind of accomplice of the argument put forward. It is in this respect that cognition goes hand in hand with discourse.

## TEXT TWO

A vast land  
By Lya Luft

Mato Grosso used to be, for me, a Brazilian state which I had not visited. [...] In my trip, I realized how much we are victims of the carelessness, lack of interest and mismanagement with regard to transport, output distribution and, more importantly, to our safety and the safety of those we love.

As I was writing this column, it occurred to me that we need a serious review of the traffic of goods in our personal and inner lives, i.e., an investment into our souls. Paths which have been blocked by lack of interest and ignorance produce frustrated affections as well as tortuous or endlessly postponed choices. We have fallen into the pothole of our silent anguishes, isolated by precarious bridges which keep us from establishing meaningful relationships. We live in a state of waste: not just of farm products or goods, but a waste of life, of dreams, of fulfillment, of solidarity and joy.

If life is a journey, with an unclear departure point and misty destinations, lack of vision, of interest and of emotional and rational investments in the passageways ahead may jeopardize the quality of this adventure, which is to live in this vast territory with often surprising and awesome landscape... Life is a land much wider than the wide regions of Brazil, where so much is wasted. We are throwing away the goods of our soul, but like Brazil, this soul has not, as yet, turned into a desert.  
(Excerpt from Column Ponto de Vista; Revista Veja, May 27, 2006, my translation)

The author develops an overall analogy which is explored throughout the text, particularly in specific metaphorical niches: what happens in Mato Grosso- Brazil is like what happens in our personal lives.

To the general reader, the typical characteristics of the state of Mato Grosso (and which could be used as elements of the source domain to be mapped upon the target domain) might be, on an intuitive basis, thought to be the following: It is a big state in the Central West of Brazil, not densely populated, with large rural areas, where cattle is commonly raised, with a large area of marshland with attractive and rich fauna, called Pantanal. However, these are not the elements that the author wishes to highlight or bring to argumentation in her “discursively constructed” mapping. To explore and explain the metaphor, Lya Luft describes her experience in that state of Brazil, specifying and describing for the reader the elements of the textually relevant source domain (Mato Grosso). In other words, in her argumentation, the mapping she chooses has to be made explicit and elaborated discursively. In the metaphor niche, the explicitation of the mapping coincides with the argumentative construction of the text. By describing her (non metaphorical) experience in Mato Grosso, Lya Luft is narrowing down the possibilities of the mapping. Her experience in Mato Grosso, described in the text, highlights the following non-default aspects of the source domain, making it key into the metaphorical frame to be developed: governmental carelessness, lack of interest, corruption with regard to transport, output distribution and lack of safety.

Now she has offered the readers the elements to introduce the “text-based metaphor”: What affects ourselves/our inner lives (metonymically) is like Mato Grosso; we need a review of our inner goods.

This overall metaphor is further elaborated through the development of explicit element-to-element mappings:

a. blocked paths/roads, potholes, precarious bridges, waste of resources - vehicle elements mapped onto the target domain: problems to be found in life;

b. waste of farm products or goods - vehicle elements mapped onto target domain: waste of life, of dreams, of fulfillment, of solidarity and joy.

The kind of sociocognition involved here is essentially context- (co-text) dependent and relies more directly on online discourse processing,

evidencing how metaphor can be discursively constructed, participating in the overall cohesion of the niche.

The second niche draws more heavily on more abstract instances of cognition. We can see clearly how the authors use the following conceptual metaphors to construct her argumentation.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

DIFFICULTIES ARE OBSTACLES

LIFE IS A TERRITORY /LAND/ PLACE

THE SOUL IS SOIL

These conceptual metaphors are much more conventionalized and do not, thus, require a previous construction of the mapping in order to be used in the author's argumentative construction. However, some of their entailments are explored discursively in the niche:

"If life is a journey (this to be taken as given), with an unclear departure point and misty destinations, lack of vision, of interest and of emotional and rational investments (elements of target domain) in the passageways ahead (element of source domain) may jeopardize the quality of this adventure, which is to live in this vast territory (vehicle used as co-reference to life) with often surprising and awesome landscape..."

The development of the metaphor niches, then, may be regarded as evidence of the way discourse and cognition go hand in hand. In the text above, we can see how metaphors, both novel and conventional, text-constructed (requiring bottom-up (Ritchie 2004) interpretation) and more conceptually situated (requiring more top down (Ritchie 2004) resources), may be used sociocognitively in the development of argumentation in text. This brief analysis, thus, was intended to illustrate how metaphor in discourse is a complex phenomenon, whose functioning can be better explored within a sociocognitive approach which aims at articulating its different dimensions.

### CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The brief analyses presented above revealed the important role that metaphors play both in the establishment of local and global textual

coherence and in the process of persuading the reader of the acceptability of a particular standpoint, thus resolving “a difference of opinion occurring in an argumentative discourse or text” (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004).

The analyses have also indicated that the specific contribution of metaphorical language to argumentation seems to be founded on an articulation between the semantic-pragmatic features of particular texts and the more abstract, socio-cognitive and culturally determined domain of meaning. The frequently found associations between particular metaphorical niches, characterized by either/both novel or conventional metaphors, and conceptual metaphors seem to evidence the close connection between socio-cognition and language in use. Investigating figurative language in argumentation has, therefore, shown that a multi-disciplinary analytical perspective, combining elements of a pragmatic-based theory with a discursive-cognitive approach, may contribute to the understanding of the complex nature of metaphor in discourse.

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