

METAPHOR AND SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION

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1. INTRODUCTION: DISCUSSING MOTIVATION IN RELATION TO METAPHOR

In this chapter I consider a range of uses of metaphor where the choice of metaphorical expressions appears to be motivated by a nonmetaphorical connection between the source domain and an aspect of the relevant situational context, or of the topic under discussion. Consider, for example, the headline ‘The honeymoon is over’, which was used to introduce a newspaper article on a scam involving an online company for the purchase of wedding gifts (*The Guardian*, 18th October 2004). The noun ‘honeymoon’ is conventionally used metaphorically to refer to a trouble-free period occurring at the beginning of a new activity or relationship. More specifically, the whole expression ‘the honeymoon is over’ can be used to refer to the end of such a trouble-free period in a wide range of target domains, as in the case of the economy in following example from the *British National Corpus*: ‘Merchant bank Morgan Grenfell says the honeymoon is over and the implications for building societies could be serious’. This conventional metaphorical sense applies to the article from *The Guardian*, which details the problems a couple had with a particular online company after initially thinking that they would provide the service it needed. However, the topic of the article is the organization of wedding lists, and the problems experienced by the protagonists occurred after they returned from their honeymoon. As a consequence, the literal sense of ‘honeymoon’ also applies to the headline (NB: The origin of the word ‘honeymoon’ itself as a compound of ‘honey’ and ‘moon’ involves metaphor, of course. Here, however, I regard as literal the use of ‘honeymoon’ to refer to the holiday that is traditionally taken by the bride and groom after their wedding.) In other words, the choice of the metaphorical expression ‘honeymoon’ in the headline seems to be motivated by the relevance of its nonmetaphorical sense (and of the HONEYMOON source domain) to the topic of the article itself. As a result,

both the literal and metaphorical meanings of the expression are relevant to the interpretation of the headline, resulting in a potentially humorous pun. This phenomenon is particularly characteristic of newspaper headlines, as has been noted in other studies (e.g. Kövecses, 2002: 96ff., 236ff.).

In Semino (2008), I have followed Koller (2002) in describing examples such as the 'honeymoon' headline as 'topic-triggered' metaphors. I have used the term 'situationally triggered' metaphors for those cases where a nonmetaphorical link can be established between a metaphor's source domain and some aspect of the situational context of communication, broadly conceived. This is consistent with Kövecses's (2005: 236ff.) observation that the 'communicative situation' can be a cause of variation in metaphor use. In this chapter I consider examples where the choice of metaphor appears to be motivated by the physical setting in which communication takes place, the time of year, the identity of the speaker and the identity of the addressee. I also consider further examples of topic-triggered metaphors.

I should clarify that I am using the term 'motivation' rather differently from the way in which it is normally used in Cognitive Metaphor Theory (hereafter CMT) (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Grady, 1999; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Kövecses, 2002). CMT is primarily concerned with the relationship between conventional metaphorical expressions in language (e.g. 'I'm at a crossroads in my life') and conventional patterns of thought known as 'conceptual metaphors' (e.g. LIFE IS A JOURNEY). Conceptual metaphors involve systematic correspondences, or 'mappings' across conceptual domains. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, for example, involves systematic mappings from the conceptual domain of LIFE (which functions as 'source' domain) to the conceptual domain of JOURNEYS (which functions as 'target' domain). One such mapping is a correspondence between crossroads and the possibility of making different life choices, which is linguistically realised in expressions such as 'I'm at a crossroads in my life'.

Broadly speaking, the pervasiveness of metaphor in language is claimed to be motivated by the tendency to talk and think about relatively abstract, complex, subjective, and poorly delineated areas of experience (e.g. life, time, emotions, etc.) in terms of more concrete, simple, embodied, well-delineated, image-rich experiences (e.g. moving in space or manipulating physical objects). More specifically, CMT aims to explain why some metaphors appear to be conventional in a particular language or languages, while others do not. In order to achieve this aim, Grady (1999) proposes two main types of motivation: correlations in experience and resemblance. The former type of motivation applies to those conventional metaphors that can be traced back to basic, physical situations (known as 'primary' scenes) which involve a close

correlation between two different dimensions of experience. The metaphor MORE IS UP, for example (e.g. 'Drunk driving arrests are up this year'), can be explained in terms of 'a straightforward correlation between the two concepts: as objects or substances accumulate in greater quantities, their level often rises' (Grady, 1999: 81). The latter type of motivation (resemblance) applies to those metaphors that can be explained in terms of a perceived similarity between the source and target domains. For example, Grady argues, the metaphorical statement 'Achilles is a lion' cannot be traced back to an experiential correlation, but is motivated by the perception that Achilles shares some of the characteristics that are typically associated with lions, such as physical strength and courage.

In other words, in CMT the notion of motivation is discussed in relation to general questions such as: *Why do particular metaphorical patterns occur in a particular language or languages?* In contrast, I am concerned with more specific questions, which relate to specific, individual uses of metaphor in context, and which can be formulated as follows: *Why has this particular metaphorical expression been chosen in this particular context rather than other possible metaphorical or nonmetaphorical expressions? What are the possible rhetorical effects of this choice?* In the case of my example from *The Guardian*, a wide range of expressions could have been used in the headline (e.g. 'Wedding gift nightmare'), so one can reflect on the reasons and possible effects of the choice of the 'honeymoon' metaphor in particular. On the one hand, the concept of honeymoon was particularly salient, or cognitively accessible, as a result of the topic of the article. On the other hand, I would also argue that reporter or sub-editor has deliberately chosen the 'honeymoon' metaphor in order to create humour, make the article more noticeable and appealing, signal that the topic and tone are relatively light-hearted, etc. In the rest of this chapter I will discuss a range of further examples where it can be argued that the choice of metaphor is motivated by a connection of the source domain with the situation or topic, and where this connection appears to be strategically exploited to achieve particular rhetorical goals.

2. SITUATIONAL TRIGGERING 1: PLACE AND TIME

Kövecses (2005: 232-33) has suggested that the physical environment in which people live may be a contributing factor to variation in the use of conventional metaphors, for example as a result of differences in what flora or fauna are available as potential source domains. Boers (1999) has found evidence of the influence on metaphor use of prevalent physical conditions in a particular area at a particular time of year. In a study of a corpus of articles

on the economy published in *The Economist* over a 10-year period, he found that metaphorical expressions drawing from the HEALTH source domain were significantly more frequent in the period that corresponds to winter in the Northern hemisphere, i.e. between December and March. Other metaphorical source domains, in contrast, did not display a similar fluctuation. Since a variety of health conditions such as colds and flu are more frequent in winter, these results suggest that the physical environment influences metaphor use by increasing the salience and accessibility of particular source domains.

Kövecses and Boers are primarily concerned with how the physical environment may affect metaphor choices whether or not speakers/writers are consciously aware of the connection between source domain and communicative situation. In fact, part of their argument is that our uses of metaphor may be influenced by our physical environment without us being consciously aware of this influence. In this chapter I am concerned more specifically with how situationally triggered metaphors may be deliberately exploited for rhetorical purposes, since, I would argue, such metaphors are particularly suited to achieve involvement and persuasion in a range of genres. Given the problematic nature of consciousness and intentions, I would not claim that speakers/writers are consciously aware of all the processes involved in using a situationally triggered metaphor, but I do claim that, at some point, they make a conscious decision that what I call a situationally triggered metaphor is best suited for their rhetorical purposes in the text they are producing.

One such case is an advertisement for the soft drink Lucozade that I have discussed in more detail in Semino (2008: 171-5). This advertisement was placed on small billboards in motorway service stations in the UK in the spring of 2007. More specifically, it was positioned just outside the main building, so that people would see it as they walked towards it from the car park. At the top, the ad features two lines of text that read:

REFUEL YOUR CAR
REFUEL YOURSELF

At the bottom, in slightly smaller print, it contains the slogan that was used for the advertising campaign of which this ad is part: ENERGISING BRITAIN. The picture of a Lucozade bottle is placed horizontally just above this slogan, and a spurt of bubbles squirting from the bottle forms the shape of a fuel pump, which occupies the centre of the poster. The background is black, the writing and fuel-pump shape are orange, and the Lucozade bottle features the trademark colours: yellow, red and orange (with black writing). Clearly, the verbal and

visual components of the ad interact to convey a 'refuelling' metaphor for the product. The text at the top addresses the viewer directly and sets up a parallel between them and their car, by suggesting that both should be refuelled. The picture suggests that the liquid contained in a Lucozade bottle is equivalent to a fuel pump. Hence, the Lucozade drink is presented as equally necessary for the viewer as fuel is for their car.

This advertisement could potentially work anywhere, but it is clearly the case that the 'refuelling' metaphor was chosen because of the nonmetaphorical relevance of the REFUELLING source domain in the physical location in which the ad was meant to be viewed by its target audience. Petrol stations and food outlets are default components of motorway service stations, and the main reasons why drivers stop at service stations are to refuel their vehicles and to get refreshments for themselves (in addition to fulfilling other physical needs that are usually regarded as taboo). In the ad, a type of refreshment is metaphorically presented as fuel, and the process of drinking it as refuelling oneself. I would argue that the choice of this situationally triggered metaphor is appropriate for the advertiser's goals in a number of respects. At its strongest, the situational relevance of the source domain could potentially contribute to the perception of the metaphor as 'natural' and appropriate, and to the establishment of a connection between the product and service stations/refuelling. More generally, the metaphorical construction of the drink as fuel in the setting of the service station may be perceived as humorous and witty, as in the case of headlines such as the one I discussed in the previous section. This may make it more likely that viewers will notice the ad, perceive it positively, remember it and be influenced by it. This is particularly important in the context of service stations, where advertisements of all kinds and sizes vie for people's attention in the car park, foyer, restaurants, shops and even lavatories.

Advertising may exploit in similar ways the time of year in which a particular campaign is launched. In Semino (2008: 170) I have discussed a mailshot from Barclays Bank which advertised a loan that could be used to repay someone's debts at a rate that was presented as competitive. This loan was metaphorically presented as a detoxification regime to be adopted in order to become thinner and healthier: the leaflet enclosed in the mailshot included pictures of healthy food and drink, and the text contained expressions such as 'debt detox', 'unhealthy debt' and 'financial health'. Significantly, this mailshot was sent out in January 2007, a time of year when many people in Britain suffer from the consequences of the excessive eating, drinking and spending that are associated with the Christmas and New Year period. The opening of the letter included in the mailshot explicitly refers to this:

It is that time of year again. If you are anything like me, you've been overdoing it, feel a bit guilty and your mind naturally turns to being healthier.

But I'm not suggesting you only eat lentils and drink foul-tasting sludge for the next month.

No, I'd like to help you sort out your **financial** health.

In other word, the 'detoxification' metaphor has clearly been chosen not just because it presents the service offered by the bank as a positive, caring initiative, but also because the source domain (PHYSICAL DETOXIFICATION/HEALTHY LIVING) is closely associated, for at least part of the public, with the time of year in which they received the mailshot. In fact, in this case, both the source domain and the target domain (LOANS/DEBT REPAYMENT) are closely associated with the beginning of the year, and particularly with the stereotypical New Year resolutions to live more healthily and spend more prudently. The choice of a situationally triggered metaphor, therefore, exploits an existing association between the source domain and the time of year in order to suggest that accepting the bank's offer is just as sensible and appropriate as deciding to eat and drink more healthily after the excesses of the holiday season. The exploitation of this association can also, as in other cases, contribute to the perception of the ad as clever and witty, at least to some extent. It should also be noted, however, that the choice of source domain in the mailshot also makes tacit assumptions about culture. It is assumed that the reader (directly addressed as 'you') is the kind of person who has been 'overdoing' it, both in terms of spending and in terms of consumption of food and drink, over the preceding period. This may not apply to everybody, and particularly to people who do not celebrate Christmas and the New Year at the end of December, such as non-Christians, or those for whom the main New Year celebration occurs later (e.g. Chinese communities). These groups, however, are not the main target of the advertising campaign, since they are less likely to have just increased their debts when they receive the mailshot from Barclays.

Similar considerations apply to an email advertisement I received from Boden, a clothes company who operate primarily online and via mail order. The email was sent on 18th March 2008, five days before Easter Sunday, which in that year fell on 23rd March for most Christian churches. The subject line of the email reads: 'Great offers hatching from the good eggs at Boden'. The email itself is structured as follows. In the centre is a picture of 4 eggs in colourful egg cups. Three of the eggs are whole; the fourth is open at the top to reveal a soft-boiled centre. Above the picture, one finds the company's name on the left (Boden) and, on the right, the words: 'Egging you on'. Below the

picture, the specific offer is explicitly spelt out: 'Buy three items and get a 4th for a £1'. Eggs are closely associated with the Easter period, even though their connection with the onset of spring predates Christianity. In the mailshot, the EGGS source domain is playfully exploited to present Boden's offer humorously and creatively. The subject line metaphorically describes the company as possessing 'good eggs' which they offers 'hatch' from. The expression 'good egg' is conventionally used to provide a positive evaluation of a human being. Here it is used in the plural to refer to the people who work at Boden, or to the products they produce. In the picture, four (appealingly presented) eggs stand metaphorically for the four items that the reader could get by paying for three of them plus £1. Indeed, one of the four eggs is different from the other three, and reveals that one is indeed looking at 'good' eggs (in the sense of being good to eat). The expression 'Egging you on' could also be interpreted as a metaphorical pun involving the EGGS source domain, although in this case the phrasal verb 'egg on' is not related to it: it derives from the Old English verb 'eggen' ('to incite') which is in turn to be traced back a different Indoeuropean root ('ak-') from that which gave rise to the noun 'egg' ('awi-'). This cannot of course prevent the perception of 'egging you on' as involving a pun, or even a metaphorical exploitation of the EGG source domain (via a folk etymology). Be that as it may, the choice of a situationally triggered metaphor in the Boden advertisement is likely to produce the kind of humorous effect that I have mentioned in earlier cases, and hence make it less likely that the recipients of the email will delete it or ignore it.

The choice of situationally triggered metaphors in both advertisements seems to be one of the many strategies that advertisers use to counter what one may call 'consumer fatigue', i.e. the consequences of perceiving and receiving so many advertisements that one no longer pays any attention to them (at least at a conscious level). Both banks such as Barclays and online clothes companies such as Boden write to their customers regularly, so that they constantly need to find new ways of attracting their attention and to reduce the potential irritation that may result from receiving yet another mailshot (whether electronic or otherwise). The use of metaphors that may be perceived as particularly witty, clever and entertaining (due to their situational motivation) seems to be aimed at achieving these goals. In cases such as the Barclays mailshot, however, there is a further connection between source and target domain that may be loosely described in terms of the experiential correlations mentioned by Grady (1999), i.e. some of the recipients may be worried about their health/fitness and their debt at the same time of year. This association may contribute more strongly to the persuasive goals of the bank in advertising its loans.

3. SITUATIONAL TRIGGERING 2: ADDRESSER AND ADDRESSEE

In this section I will discuss the use of metaphors where the source domain corresponds to an area of experience that is closely associated with the speaker/writer or reader/listener. My examples will be drawn from the political oratory of Silvio Berlusconi, media magnate and three-time Italian Prime Minister.

In an earlier study, Michela Masci and I showed how, at the beginning of his political career, Berlusconi frequently exploited metaphors drawn from the source domains of FOOTBALL in order to justify his decision to enter politics and to talk generally about political issues (Semino and Masci, 1996):

Così ho sentito che la partita si faceva pericolosa, che era tutta giocata nelle aree di rigore e che il centrocampo era desolatamente vuoto. [...] E ci siamo detti che non potevamo lasciare quell'immenso spazio libero.

(So I felt that the match was becoming dangerous, that it was all being played in the penalty areas and that the midfield was sadly empty. [...] And we said to one another that we could not leave that vast space free.)

In addition, the party Berlusconi created in just a few months in 1994 was called *Forza Italia* ('Come on Italy') – an expression that is used to support national teams in international competitions, and particularly Italy's national football team. The official colour of the party was the shade of blue that is associated with the shirts of the national football team, and Berlusconi referred to party members with the same expression that is used for the members of the national squad, 'gli azzurri' ('the blues').

SPORTS metaphors are of course commonly used in politics, particularly due to their potential for conceptual simplification and emotional involvement (see Semino, 2008: 97ff. for an overview). However, in Berlusconi's case there is also a strong personal connection with the FOOTBALL source domain, as he was (and still is), the owner of one of Italy's most prestigious and successful football clubs, *AC Milan*. It is also well-known in Italy that Berlusconi often intervenes directly in team tactics, and therefore claims some personal credit for the team's successes. On the one hand, Berlusconi's use of FOOTBALL metaphors can be related to the kind of variation at the individual level that Kövecses has explained as the result of personal experiences and interests (e.g. doctors using medical metaphors, etc.) (see Kövecses 2002: 193ff., 2005: 244ff.). On the other hand, there is also ample evidence that, especially at the beginning of his career as a politician, Berlusconi deliberately and strategically used FOOTBALL metaphors as one of the ways in which he presented himself as a credible politician, who was likely to be more successful than any other

candidate. For example, he has explicitly claimed that ‘gli italiani dovrebbero prendere esempio dai miei giocatori’ (‘the Italians should follow the example set by my players’), and he regularly refers to his successes as owner of AC Milan as part of his political credentials. The extract below is taken from an interview given to *La Stampa* newspaper in 2007:

se c'è qualcuno che ha qualche possibilità, che è capace di mandare avanti tante cose insieme questo è il sottoscritto. Ho guidato il governo più longevo nella storia di questo paese. Ho fondato aziende. Ho portato per otto volte il Milan alla finalissima di champion league e ho vinto cinque coppe. Sono io il più concreto, il più pragmatico.

(if there is anyone who has any chance, who is able to keep many things going at the same time this is yours truly. I have led the longest-lived government in the history of this country. I have funded companies. I have taken AC Milan to the Champions League final eight times and I have won five Cups. I am the most concrete, the most pragmatic.)

I would therefore argue that Berlusconi makes a strategic use of a source domain that corresponds to one of his own successful areas of activity in order to project a positive image of himself, and particularly to persuade the Italians that he can do for Italy what he has so successfully done for AC Milan (see Semino and Koller forthcoming for a more recent study of Berlusconi’s use of metaphor). It is also possible to argue that he also uses the source domain of BUSINESS/ENTERPRISE in a similar way, but I do not have the space to show this here.

Berlusconi’s skill as a public speaker is also evident in the choice of source domains that are particularly familiar and emotionally involving for his target audience, such as FAMILY and RELIGION. Indeed, the exploitation of source domains that are accessible for hearers/readers is crucial not just in politics but also in other fields, such as education (e.g. see Cameron, 2003). Here I am concerned specifically with the choice of metaphorical source domains that are strongly associated with the addressees of a particular spoken or written text. A blatant example of this type of situationally triggered metaphor can be found in a speech addressed by Berlusconi to an assembly of *Forza Italia*’s women (see Bolasco *et alii* (2006: 121ff.) for a detailed discussion). Bolasco *et alii* show how this speech is particularly didactic and informal, and contains a range of strategies that are typical of communicative situations in which the addressee has limited knowledge and understanding of the topic (e.g. the use of question-answer structures). In addition, there is a particularly high density of the domestic metaphors that Berlusconi also uses in other speeches, such as the

description of his political programme as a 'ricetta' ('recipe') and of political groupings as 'famiglie' ('families'). There are, however, also some instances of metaphor that Berlusconi does not use when addressing other audiences, and that appear to be chosen because of a nonmetaphorical association of the source domains with his addressees. For example, Berlusconi pays tribute to the 'vasta maternità delle protagoniste di Azzurro Donna' ('the vast motherhood of the (female) protagonists of Women's Blue'). Here the noun 'maternità' ('motherhood') is used metaphorically to refer to the contribution of the members of his party's female movement, which is described elsewhere as one of support and nurturing, rather than of direct political action. In other words, the use of a typically female experience as source domain is used both to emphasize the uniqueness of women's contribution to the movement, and to reinforce the notion that women are best placed to play a 'caring' role, while men lead the party and stand for election. Bolasco *et alii* (2006: 138-9) suggest that the expression 'maternità' may also have religious resonances due to an association with the Virgin Mary.

4. TOPIC-TRIGGERED METAPHORS

In this section I return to topic-triggered metaphors, namely those cases where a nonmetaphorical association can be established between the source domain of a metaphor and the target domain, or the topic of the text in which it occurs. As I suggested in the introductory section, this phenomenon is often used in newspaper headlines to create a humorous pun that plays on the literal and metaphorical meanings of particular expressions, such as 'honeymoon' in the headline from *The Guardian*. Here I will not discuss newspaper headlines any further (see Kövecses, 2005: 96ff., 236ff.; Semino, 2008: 222-23), but rather consider the rhetorical potential of topic-triggered metaphors in political discourse.

In Semino (2008: 118ff.) I analyse in detail an election leaflet by the British National Party (BNP) which focuses on the threat supposedly posed by asylum seekers for people living in Britain. In the leaflet it is explicitly claimed that asylum seekers often engage in terrorist activities in the countries they enter, and reference is made to the 2004 Madrid train bombings as an example of this. Crucially, throughout the leaflet the consequences of the arrival of asylum seekers are described via metaphorical expressions drawing from the source domains of EXPLOSIONS and PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION, such as 'time-bomb', 'blowing a massive hole in our pockets', and 'ripping apart our countryside'. The same metaphors are also realised visually, for example via a small image

of Britain that appears to be on fire. In cases such as this, however, there are no obvious punning effects. Rather, a nonmetaphorical association between source domain and topic is both reinforced and exploited in order to achieve a particular rhetorical goal, i.e. persuade readers that asylum-seekers are dangerous, and that the party should vote for a party that will take drastic measures against asylum. For the BNP's target audience, the nonmetaphorical relevance of the source domain to the topic may also contribute to the impression that the EXPLOSION/PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION metaphors are particularly apt and 'natural', rather than sensationalist and hyperbolic. This use of topic-triggered metaphors is not infrequent in politics, and has not yet received the attention it deserves on the part of scholars (see Semino, 2008: 104ff. for further examples).

Topic-triggering may also, paradoxically, be involved in cases where the source domain is chosen because of a quasi antonymic relationship with the topic. In the example below, Italian politician and civil-rights campaigner Emma Bonino describes the merits of non-violent methods (e.g. hunger strike) as a form of political action. The extract is taken from a speech given in Cairo to the members of the Suzanne Mubarak Women for Peace International Movement:

Un altro punto da chiarire è che la nonviolenza è una forma di attività nettamente caratterizzata. Molte sono le armi, gli strumenti di lotta e di intervento a disposizione del nonviolento. [...]

Nelle vecchie guerre guerreggiate, i soldati si muovevano serrati in ranghi strettissimi, gomito a gomito, per sostenersi reciprocamente, perché si trattava di soldati non dotati di spirito individuale di resistenza: oggi ad ogni singolo soldato è richiesto di muoversi autonomamente nello scontro, ed è responsabile di quello che lui stesso fa, dei propri compiti. Il paragone non sembra strano, anche il nonviolento è chiamato ad una sorta di battaglia, condotta con armi diverse ma non meno efficaci, se utilizzate bene.

(Another point to be clarified is that non-violence is a well defined form of activity. Many are the weapons, the instruments of struggle and intervention that are available to the non-violent campaigner. [...])

In old traditional wars, soldiers used to move in very tight ranks, elbow to elbow, in order to support one another, because they were not endowed with an individual spirit of resistance: nowadays each individual soldier is expected to move autonomously in battle, and is responsible for what he himself does, for his own tasks. The comparison should not seem strange, even the non-violent campaigner is called to a sort of battle, conducted with weapons that are different but not less effective, if properly used.)

As these extracts show, Bonino consistently describes the methods and activities of non-violent campaigners via metaphorical expressions drawn from the source domain of WAR/PHYSICAL STRUGGLE, such as ‘armi’ (‘weapons’), battaglia (‘battle’) and ‘lotta’ (‘struggle’). She also makes a lengthy analogy between the behaviour of soldiers in different types of wars and the behaviour of non-violent political activists. In other words, she chooses a metaphorical source domain that can loosely be described as the opposite of the topic (and target domain): non-violent methods are defined by the renunciation of weapons and physical violence, but Bonino describes them metaphorically in terms of war and violence. At the end of the quotation above, she explicitly reflects on the apparent oddity of her ‘comparison’, but spells out that she uses it deliberately to suggest that non-violent methods should not be seen as less powerful and effective than other, violent methods.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have discussed a range of cases where the choice of metaphor can be described as situationally triggered or topic-triggered. I have shown how different aspects of communicative situations can be exploited to provide metaphorical source domains (place, time, addresser and addressee), and that topic-triggered metaphors may rely on a range of relationships between source domains and topics, including relationships of opposition. Arguably, situationally triggered and topic-triggered metaphors can partly be explained in terms of the cognitive accessibility of particular source domains to speakers/writers in the process of producing their texts. My main concern, however, has been to argue that situation-relevant or topic-relevant source domains may be selected strategically to achieve particular rhetorical goals, such as attracting and involving hearers/readers via humour or persuading them of the validity of particular claims. My examples also suggest that the nonmetaphorical associations of source domains that may be exploited are often culture-specific, or indeed highly questionable (e.g. the association between asylum-seekers and terrorism). All in all, I hope to have shown that this phenomenon deserves more attention than it has so far received from metaphor scholars.

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