

# RESEMBLANCE OPERATIONS AND CONCEPTUAL COMPLEXITY IN ANIMAL METAPHORS<sup>1</sup>

Aneider Iza Erviti  
Universidad de La Rioja

**Abstract:** For over thirty years cognitive linguists have devoted much effort to the study of metaphors based on the correlation of events in human experience to the detriment of the more traditional notion of resemblance metaphor, which exploits perceived similarities among objects. Grady (1999) draws attention to this problem and calls for a more serious study of the latter type of metaphor. The present paper takes up this challenge on the basis of a small corpus of 'animal' metaphors in English, which are essentially based on resemblance. Contrary to previous analyses by cognitive linguists (e.g. Lakoff & Turner 1989, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, 1998), who claim that such metaphors are based on a single mapping generally involving comparable behavioral attributes, I will argue that we have a more complex situation which involves different patterns of conceptual interaction. In this respect, I have identified cases of (i) animal metaphors interacting with high-level (i.e. grammatical) metaphors and metonymies, of (ii) (situational) animal metaphors whose source domains are constructed metonymically (cf. Goossens 1990; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Díez Velasco 2002), and of (iii) animal metaphors interacting with other metaphors thereby giving rise to metaphoric amalgams (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa 2011).

**Keywords:** Common animal terms, resemblance metaphor, ontological metaphor, metaphoric complex, metonymy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Cognitive Linguistics the study of conceptual metaphor has been a major concern ever since Lakoff & Johnson (1980) published their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*. In this approach, metaphor is seen as a mapping (that is, a set of correspondences) between conceptual domains. The mapping allows us to think, reason and talk about one domain (called the *source*) in terms of another (called the *target*). Often, such mappings are grounded in how we experience reality. For example, *I'm down* ('depressed') maps the lower verticality position associated with a drooping posture (source) onto the speaker's feelings of sadness (target), whether the speaker actually adopts such a posture or not.

The amount of literature on conceptual metaphor is at present impressive. Two major landmarks are found in Lakoff & Johnson (1999), which places metaphor within the context of present-day approaches to the embodiment of thought within cognitive science and in the study of conceptual integration carried out by Fauconnier & Turner (2003). There is also important work on metaphor carried out in connection to cultural studies (e.g. Kövecses 2005; Yu 2009), pragmatics (Gibbs 1994; Tendahl & Gibbs 2008), and discourse analysis (e.g. Pragglejaz Group 2007; Steen 2011), to mention just a few areas of impact and interdisciplinary connections. However, since the references given here could not possibly do justice to the breadth of studies on metaphor, we may draw the reader's attention to the critical overviews (and proposals for development) provided in Dirven & Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2010), Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Pérez Hernández (2011), Kövecses (2011) and Steen (2011).

<sup>1</sup> This work is associated with the *Center for Research in the Applications of Language* (CRAL), University of La Rioja, and the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, grant no. FFI2010-17610/FILO.

One of the main points of interest of what became known as the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor within Cognitive Linguistics (cf. Lakoff, 1993) is the so-called *correlation metaphor*. Most of the previous accounts –whether within literary theory (e.g. Brook-Rose 1958) or philosophy (Black 1954; Searle 1979)– thought of metaphor as a non-literal use of language grounded in the perceived similarity between objects, situations or events. By contrast, correlation metaphor is based on the co-occurrence of events in our everyday experience. For example, we tend to think of quantity in terms of height (which accounts for expressions like *Prices are going up*, *The US is a high-income country*, *Lately, I'm low on funds*) because both magnitudes co-occur in our experience (e.g. when we pour liquids into containers or pile up objects). What is more, such metaphors are grounded in primary sensory-motor experience, i.e. in knowledge arising from the way we interact physically with the world. For this reason, correlation metaphors are usually referred to as *primary metaphors*. Other primary metaphors are: GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS (*You won't get to the end of the book*), ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE (*We all have different patterns of thought*), and STATES ARE LOCATIONS (*She's in great health*).

Grady (1999) called attention to the fact that, because of the strong emphasis made by cognitive linguists on correlation metaphors, the more traditional notion of *resemblance metaphor* was being neglected. The situation is still the same, probably because of the growing interest within Cognitive Linguistics in the notions of embodied thought and its neural basis (e.g. Gibbs 2006), which seems to draw the analysts' attention to primary concepts such as Johnson's (1987) image schemas (e.g. motion along a path, part-whole structure, container-contents relations, etc.) and other basic constructs arising from our sensory-motor experience (e.g. such notions as color, shape, size, weight). According to Grady (1999), the challenge, in this connection, would be to give adequate attention to resemblance metaphors.

In this paper, I take up Grady's (1999) challenge by looking more seriously into the notion of resemblance metaphor on the basis of data from animal-based ontological metaphors, because of its productivity not only in terms of the potential types and subtypes of metaphors it gives rise to, but also because, owing to the dynamic and interactive nature of animals as sentient entities, this is the only domain of Lakoff & Turner's Great Chain of Being where situational metaphors are more frequent. In order to do so, I have first compiled a list with all the animal names present in the "animal kingdom" section of the *Merriam Webster Visual Dictionary Online*, and searched for potential idiomatic expressions that could make use of such terms in the Collins Co-build dictionary. This initial search has revealed that most animal names are not used in idiomatic expressions, but only those that are prototypically associated with a specific feature or with a set of (usually behavioral but also physical) properties that are perceptually salient. It has also revealed that each salient property is usually associated with one animal, although, from a purely experiential perspective, there may be other "objective" possibilities. For example, one could expect other animals than pigs (e.g. rats, cows) to be potential candidates for metaphors on filthiness. However, this is evidently not the case thus making pigs the conventional stereotype for such a property. Then, on a second stage, I have enriched my search by using the *British National Corpus* (BNC) to find the types of construction and context in which these animal expressions appear and I have selected the most significant examples for the purpose of this paper.

Since animal metaphors are based on similarities between objects they can naturally be classified as what Lakoff & Johnson (1980) called *ontological* metaphors (those which help us to understand nonphysical experience in terms of substances and objects). However, as noted in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Pérez Hernández (2011), animal metaphors are often used as part of more complex situational metaphors whose central element is animal behavior, so some of our examples can be classified as cases of situational metaphor.

In Lakoff & Turner (1989) ontological metaphors were discussed as based on the Great Chain of Being, a cultural model that distinguishes five orders of “entities” (humans, animals, plants, objects, artifacts) and defines their shared physical and behavioral attributes. Ontological metaphors see attributes of entities at one level in terms of attributes of entities at another level. For example, human behavior may map onto animal behavior (*He is a rat*) or attributed machine behavior (*He is a bulldozer; He works like a machine*). On the face of it, resemblance metaphors, unlike those based on correlation, are not directly grounded in primary sensory-motor experience. They are very basic mappings since correspondences are evident through mere attribute comparison. However, although the resulting systems might seem trivial at first glance, in this paper I will contend that this is not exactly the case and argue that resemblance metaphors are the result of more complex cognitive processes ultimately grounded in primary experience, often in the form of emotions and psychological reactions. In order to substantiate this contention, I will offer the analysis of a sample of English animal metaphors<sup>2</sup> with a special focus on the nature of resemblance between source and target and the interaction patterns involved in accounting for their meaning impact. This study is meant to be a preliminary attempt that should be complemented by further research that takes into account a larger number of animal metaphors and their relationship with other ontological metaphors.

## 2. CLASSIFYING METAPHOR

Based on previous works by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Otaol Campo (2002), Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Pérez Hernández (2011) have offered the most comprehensive classification of metaphor types. They have done this by considering this phenomenon from different taxonomic perspectives: the complexity of the mapping system; the nature of the source and target domains; the levels of genericity of the domains involved; and the nature of the correspondences. This last criterion has given rise to the distinction between *resemblance* and *correlation* metaphors, already discussed in the previous section. Let us consider the rest of the perspectives in turn.

Metaphoric mappings can be simple or complex. Simple systems, called by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2000) “one-correspondence” metaphors, are based on highlighting one attribute of an entity, which is then put into correspondence with a similar attribute of another entity. Lakoff & Turner’s (1989) metaphor *Achilles is a lion* is a straightforward example. Lions are ferocious, instinctual animals whose behavior when fighting and killing another animal is suggestive of human behavior when faced with an enemy (or any other dangerous or challenging situation). So, this metaphor brings out this feature (which Lakoff & Turner, 1989, identify with “courage”) and makes it central to its interpretation. Complex systems, or “many-correspondence” metaphors (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, 2000), do not place so much interpretative weight on a single correspondence, but create a reasoning system that acts as supportive background for the correspondence that is directly called upon by the metaphorical expression. For example, *I am at a crossroads*, when uttered in the context of making a decision, designates a moment of uncertainty. However, the range of meaning implications is larger: we understand that the speaker was making progress towards his goals but is now faced with the problem of choosing among different alternative actions, none of which is clearly better, in order to keep making progress.

Metaphors can also be classified according to the nature of the source and target domains. I cannot go here into all the details of this classificatory perspective. For the purposes of the present paper, it will be sufficient to discuss a basic distinction between *situational* and *non-situational*

<sup>2</sup> Besides metaphors, three cases discussed in the present paper are based on simile. These will be used to give a broader view of resemblance operations and of the complexity of conceptual mappings. Similes will be explicitly discussed as such in the paper.

metaphors, first put forward by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Otal Campo (2002) (see also Peña Cervel, 2003). The former depict relationships among participants in a given scenario, while the latter draw our attention to specific attributes of objects or entities in the world (which, of course, may take part in situations, but which are not seen from that perspective). An example of situational metaphor is *He ran away with his tail between his legs*. The source domain depicts a situation in which a dog puts its tail between its legs when faced with harsh treatment (e.g. when someone hits the dog or speaks angrily to it). The target domain is any situation in which a person who has made a mistake feels he could be criticized and decides to leave with embarrassment rather than confront the problem. This metaphor is not strictly speaking a Great Chain metaphor since it is not based on mapping generically attributed animal behavior onto human behavior but on mapping elements of a specific (although stereotyped) situation involving an animal onto elements of another specific stereotyped situation involving a person. Thus, calling someone “a dog” is usually an expression of contempt based on the idea that dogs lead an unhappy existence full of mischief and unfair treatment. Other expressions such as *lead a dog's life* and *go to the dogs*, which date back to the early 1600s, are situational and reflect the original use of dogs as part of hunting practices rather than as cherished household pets.

Metaphors can also be studied from the perspective of the degree of genericity of the domains involved in the mapping. Thus, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Mairal Usón (2007) have proposed the existence of so-called high-level metaphors, which are the result of putting into correspondence generic concepts such as actions, processes, events, and so on. Lakoff's (1993) Event Structure metaphorical system contains cases of high-level metaphors such as ACTIONS ARE TRANSFERS (*She gave him a kiss*), STATES ARE LOCATIONS (*She is in pain*), and CAUSES ARE FORCES (*The news brought him discomfort*). Other cases of high-level metaphor are used to license lexical structure into argument structure constructions of the kind postulated by Goldberg (1995; 2006) in her Construction Grammar. A case in point is the possibility of using activity verbs such as *laugh*, *stare*, *wink* with the caused-motion construction. In principle this construction requires a caused-motion verb (e.g. *She pushed me into the room*), but if we re-construe the verbs above metaphorically, they can be used with this construction too: *She laughed/stared/winked me out of the room*. The plausibility of postulating the existence of this metaphor hinges on the fact that it is possible to see psychological impact (inducing to self-instigated motion) as if it were physical impact (directly causing motion).

### 3. PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN ANIMAL METAPHORS

I shall here make a distinction between *interaction patterns* involving metaphor and metonymy, as discussed by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Díez Velasco (2002) (see also the developments in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2008; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Mairal Usón 2011; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa 2011) on the basis of previous work by Goossens (1990), and general *conceptual integration* processes, as proposed and treated in detail by Fauconnier & Turner (1996; 1998) (see also Coulson and Oakley 2000; Turner 2007; Fauconnier 2009). Conceptual integration is the result of combining selected conceptual structure from various cognitive domains (or *input spaces*) into new “emergent” structure that may contain idiosyncratic properties not present in the inputs. For example, the interpretation of the metaphor *My surgeon is a butcher* features ‘incompetence’ as an essential ingredient. However, this ingredient is not present either in the source or in the target (butchers and surgeons are generally competent in what they do). The idea of incompetence arises from seeing the surgeon's delicate “cutting” task when doing surgery in terms of the apparently more sloppy way in which a butcher cuts up meat. In turn, interaction patterns are generalizations about how metaphors and metonymies can combine with other metaphors and metonymies. Such patterns thus determine the integration potential

of metaphoric and metonymic source and target domains, which arguably makes their analysis a pre-requisite of conceptual integration.<sup>3</sup>

For our analysis of animal metaphors, it has been fruitful to study some such interaction patterns. In this section I will classify and analyze the examples in my sample in the light of the proposals made by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Díez Velasco (2002). This study is a considerable improvement on Goossens (1990) since it takes into account the situational nature of most animal-based metaphors and systematizes a larger number of cases. I will complement my analysis with a number of cases of metaphoric complex of the kind proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Mairal Usón (2011) for high-level metaphor, and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa (2011) for phrasal verbs. My own analysis will show that postulating metaphoric complexes is useful to account for resemblance-based animal metaphors. This contention involves a drastic departure from previous discussions of ontological metaphors and invites further scrutiny of this largely neglected class.

### 3.1. Metonymy in non-situational metaphor

The following examples follow a simple one-correspondence pattern, where an attribute of the animal in question is put into correspondence with a similar attribute of humans with the purpose of mapping behavior onto behavior: The expression *look sheepish* is used to refer to people who look a bit embarrassed because they feel foolish or have done something silly (e.g. *He gave me a sheepish grin*). As sheep are frequently thought of as extremely unintelligent animals, this is an example of an ontological, “one-correspondence” metaphor based on highlighting one attribute of sheep (their low intelligence), in the source, which is then put into correspondence with a similar attribute of humans in the target; this attribute is further developed metonymically into ‘acting foolishly’ (we expect unintelligent people to behave unintelligently). The target thus has a person who feels embarrassed for having acted in a stupid way.

The following is a slightly different example, whose interactional pattern is represented in figure 1 below. In the simile *He speaks like a frog*, an activity that is exclusive of frogs (croaking) is attributed to a person. This example highlights a property of frogs (the low, hoarse sound of croaking) that is made to correspond with the way a person speaks when his throat is partly blocked by phlegm. The metaphoric target is developed on the basis of the EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy (speaking with a low, hoarse voice is caused by partial blockage of the throat). It should be noted that, even though the expression is formally a simile (*X is like Y*), it is based on the same cognitive processes as metaphor.

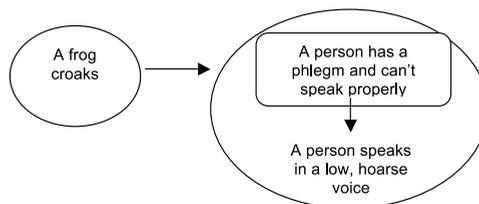


Figure 1. *Speak like a frog*.

<sup>3</sup> Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and some of his associates (e.g. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1998; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Santibáñez Sáenz 2003; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Peña Cervel 2005) have been critical of much of the work on conceptual integration carried out from the perspective of Fauconnier & Turner's proposals. In general, Ruiz de Mendoza and his associates argue that conceptual integration takes place in a fully predictable way and that the process does not generally involve the asymmetries and irregularities that Fauconnier & Turner postulate (see Kövecses 2011, for further defense of Ruiz de Mendoza's position). It is in line with this observation that I claim that identifying interaction patterns can cast light on actual conceptual interaction and integration.

A more complex pattern is found in the expression *make a pig's ear of something*, which suggests that someone has done a very low quality job. This is an idiomatic expression with fixed and variable elements: *make a pig's ear of X*, where X is an action or an event. The syntactic framework "make X (out) of Y" in origin is the formal part of a construction (following Goldberg 1995, an entrenched form-meaning pairing) used to talk about making objects by combining material and parts (e.g. *He made a puppet out of some wood, a ball, and a string*). This is in fact an image-schematic metaphor: creating an object on the basis of some material is taking it out of the material. In this construction, X is the product and Y is the material. A pig's ear is metonymic for any low quality product, one that is hardly worth producing. Making "a pig's ear" out of something, therefore, is the same as minimizing the value of (or wasting) the material used to make the worthless product. Interestingly enough, the metaphor chooses for its source a pig's body part on the basis of its lack of value, an idea which is reinforced by other negative connotations that derive from our world knowledge about pigs.

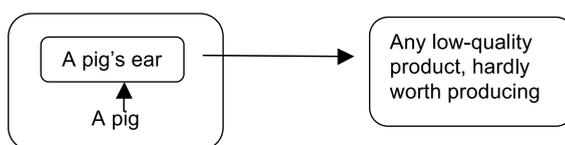


Figure 2. *Make a pig's ear out of something (to make X out of Y).*

### 3.2. Situation mapped onto situation

The expression *He is a snake in the grass* will serve as our first example of animal metaphors in which a situation is mapped onto another situation. If you refer to someone such as a business colleague or a friend as *a snake in the grass*, you mean that they are secretly acting against you, for example by saying things which are harmful to you. This is a situational metaphor with a built-in metonymy in the source: there is a situation in which there is a snake in the grass; if someone accidentally steps on the snake or passes by too close to it, the snake will be led to attack by instinct, and the result of the attack can be mortal. This situation maps onto real-life situations of unrecognized danger.

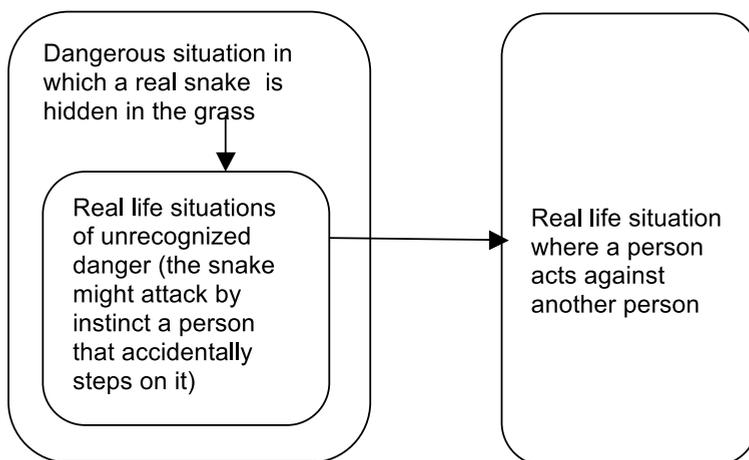


Figure 3. *Be a snake in the grass.*

Consider as well the metonymic element that allows us to structure the metaphorical source domain for the expression *a pig in a poke*. We can describe something that is offered for sale as *a pig in a poke* when we cannot examine it before we buy it. The implication is that the sale may not be a good one (e.g. *You know I'm not going to buy that kind of pig in a poke*). In this metaphor the pig in a poke is metonymic for the situation in which you try to buy a pig that is hanging from a hook and that you cannot examine properly (this becomes the metaphoric source). The target is any real-life sales situation where you can't actually examine the quality of what you're going to buy.

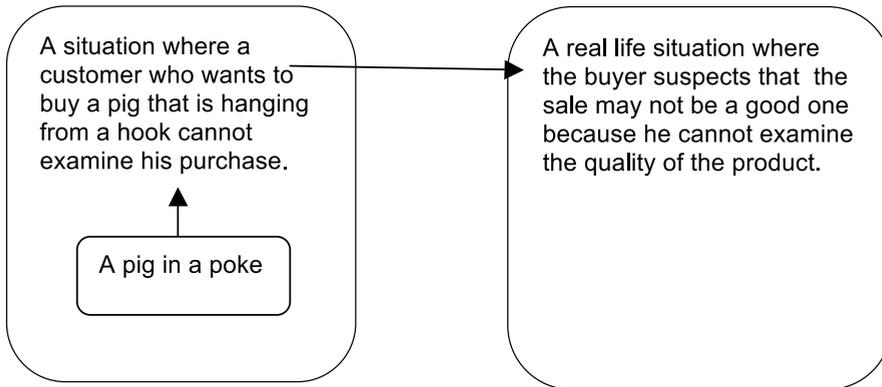


Figure 4. *A pig in a poke*.

A similar interaction pattern where the metaphoric source is constructed metonymically is found in the expression *to separate the sheep from the goats*. This expression is used to refer to target situations in which you select from a group of people those who are considered to be better in some way than the others. In this respect, consider the sentence *This test should separate the sheep from the goats!* This expression becomes meaningful if we bear in mind the behavioral differences that exist between sheep and goats. Goats are naturally curious and independent, while sheep tend to be more distant and aloof. Most goats naturally have horns and, with them, they will generally turn and face an intruder. By contrast, most breeds of sheep are naturally hornless (polled). These differences in appearance and behavior make sheep preferable to goats as they are perceived as more reliable and docile. The metaphor could be catalogued as a situational one built on PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS. Like other situational metaphors it involves a development of an ontological metaphor where the emphasis is not so much on the attributes of entities *per se* but on their observable behavior when interacting with other entities. However, the scene is probably a constructed one, unless some shepherds actually separate sheep from goats before working with them (e.g. shearing them) or selling them.

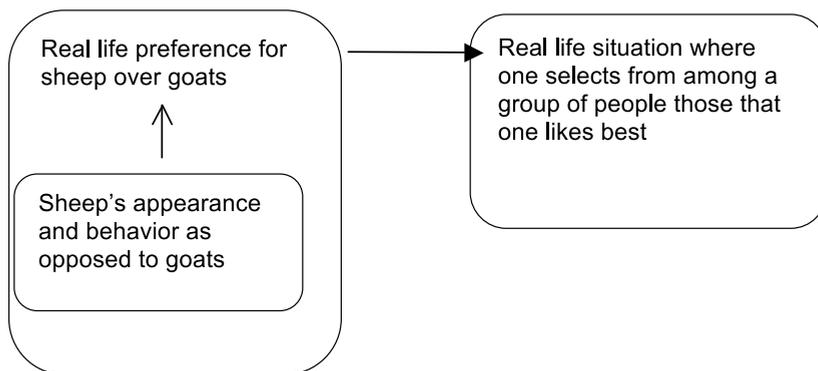


Figure 5. To separate the sheep from the goat.

A more complex pattern is illustrated by the expression *make sheep's eyes (at someone)*, which is used to refer to a situation in which someone looks at people in a loving and adorable way. "To make eyes" stands for making a particular gesture with the eyes (i.e. to look in a certain way). The eyes can stand for the action of looking at things (which is necessarily performed with the eyes; e.g. *She eyed the passing crowd with indifference*<sup>4</sup>). At the same time, this use of "eyes" is based on a metaphor whereby "eyes" are manufactured products, i.e. the result of intentional action to achieve a purpose or obtain a result. By default, "make eyes" refers to how we give shape to our eyes figuratively "making" them so as to achieve a special communicative purpose, usually of a sexual nature. This default meaning can be overridden by specifying the type of result. In "making sheep's eyes" the configuration of the eyes resembles in shape those of a sheep. Since "sheep's eyes" are metonymic (through a CAUSE FOR EFFECT mapping type) for the feelings they cause on us as observers (we find them likeable for their innocence, which resembles the facial expression of human innocence), giving sheep's shape to our eyes is seen in terms of a metaphor whose source contains object-making for a purpose, plus the target-in-source metonymy just mentioned for the object.

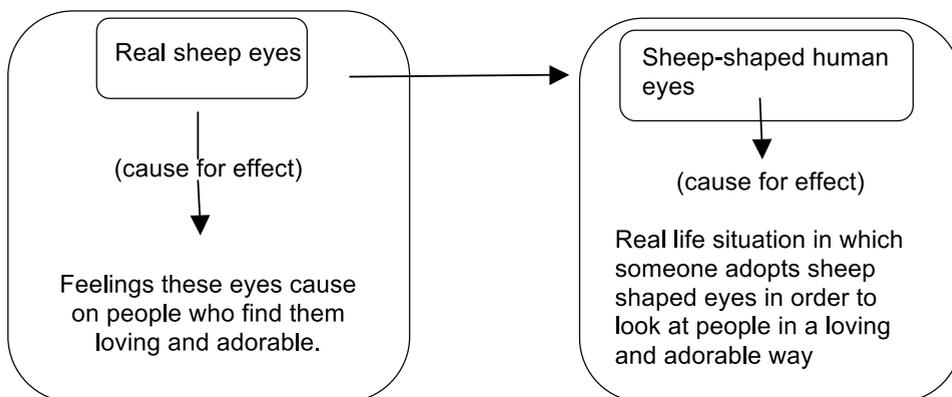


Figure 6. To make sheep's eyes.

<sup>4</sup> This verbal use of "eye" is a case of the metonymy instrument for action (Kóvecses & Radden 1998; Ibáñez & Pérez Hernández 2001).

There is a large amount of cultural knowledge based on our experience in the brief explanation given above. Being a key animal in the history of farming, sheep have a deeply entrenched place in human culture. By experience, we have interiorized the idea that the primary defense mechanism of sheep is simply to flee from danger. Sheep have little ability to defend themselves, compared with other species kept as livestock. Even if sheep survive an attack, they may die from their injuries, or simply from panic. In this sense, we perceive sheep as defenseless animals unable to harm anybody. This inability to harm makes them loving and adorable, since by natural instinct we perceive defenseless creatures as such (as in the case of babies, puppies etc.).<sup>5</sup>

Another mapping involving situational knowledge occurs when we say that (a group of) people are *like sheep* (which is a simile). This expression is used to talk about situations in which people will follow up on someone else's lead rather than make their own decisions about what to do. The source has a group of sheep that –because they are naturally gregarious animals– always stay together in a pack and imitate other sheep's behavior for biological reasons. Sheep have a strong instinct to follow the sheep ahead of them even if this is not a good “decision”. For example, sheep will follow one another to slaughter. If one sheep jumps over a cliff, the others are likely to act in the same way. Even from birth, lambs are conditioned to follow the older members of the flock. This instinct is “hard-wired” into sheep.

This is an example of a “one-correspondence” mapping, as it is based on highlighting one attribute of sheep (their strong tendency to follow other sheep), which is mapped onto a similar attribute of some humans that, when faced with a decision, are unable to develop their own approach to the problem and (rather unthinkingly) choose to follow someone else's instead.

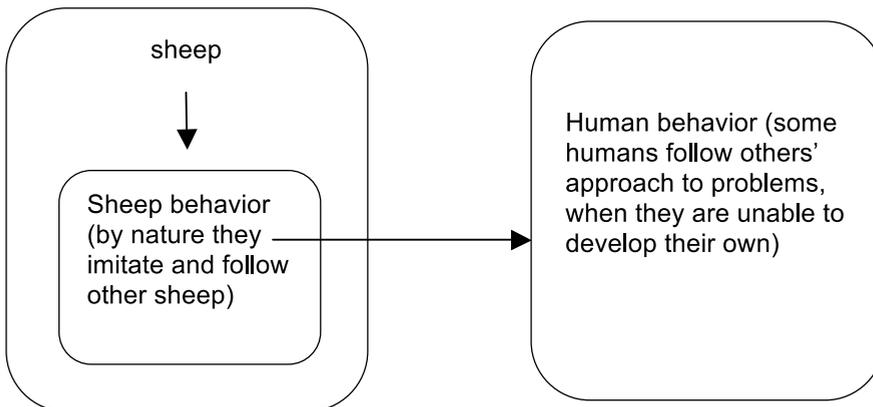


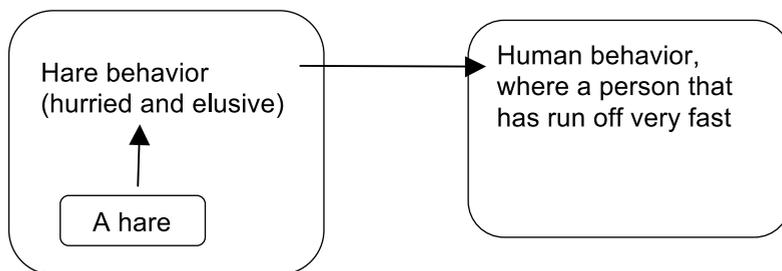
Figure 7. A group of people is like sheep.

### 3.3. (Low-level) animal metaphors in combination with high-level metonymy

Let us now analyze the third type of interaction pattern found in our data. Consider the expression *to hare off or hare away somewhere*. This expression is used to refer to a person that has run off very fast: *They took one look at him and hared off*. Here we have a case in which an originally ontological or Great Chain of Being (one-correspondence) metaphor is incorporated into a higher-level construction (*Vintr+off*). Such incorporation is licensed by the high-level metonymy AGENT FOR ACTION (originally identified by Kövecses & Radden 1998): we see

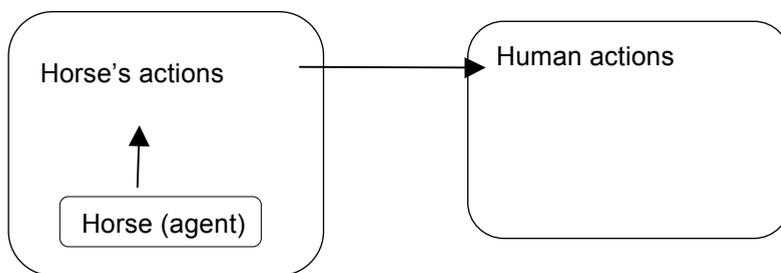
<sup>5</sup> “At” invokes a conative construction (cf. Levin, 1993). It suggests that the person tries to figuratively “touch” the receiver of the action to achieve a goal, by means of looking adorable and loving.

a hare as standing for the (observationally and thus culturally attributed) hurried and elusive behavior of hares. This conceptual package can be integrated into the construction with “off”, which suggests quick and rapid motion away from a place without a known destination.



**Figure 8.** *To hare off/hare away.*

The meaning of this example further illustrates our claim that the analysis of animal metaphors is not as trivial as it may seem at a first glance. If you *horse about* or *horse around*, you play roughly and rather carelessly, so that you could hurt someone or damage something (e.g. *He loved to horse around with them in the compound*). As in the case of the hare metaphor this is also an originally ontological or Great Chain of Being metaphor incorporated into a higher-level construction (*Vintr+about*). Such incorporation is licensed again by the high-level metonymy AGENT FOR ACTION: we see a horse as standing for the behavior of horses as they run. This conceptual package can be integrated into the construction with “about”, which suggests motion without a destination within a restricted area thus suggesting a scene of horses running around (e.g. in a meadow), which easily maps onto other real-life situations such as children playing and running around in the yard, etc. The re-categorization of “horse(N)” into “horse(V)” (i.e. act like a horse), which is possible on the basis of the AGENT FOR ACTION metonymy, is a requirement for the use of ‘horse’ with ‘about’. It must be noted that this metaphor is not situational since its source domain is not based on a situational metonymy whereby part of a situation stands for the whole situation, as we saw was the case for real cases of situational metaphor. The metonymic elaboration in the source is a pre-requisite for *horse* to be built into a syntactic construction with “about”.



**Figure 9.** *Horse about.*

Another example of low-level metaphor combined with high-level metonymy is found in the expression *pig oneself*, which is related to overeating in the same uncontrolled and disgusting way that pigs eat as seen from a human perspective. “Pig” is a denominal verb whose construction is licensed by the high-level metonymy OBJECT FOR ACTION (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Pérez Hernández 2001). The “object” part (the pig) stands for the typical actions in which it is involved. Through feature selection, only actions related to disgusting overeating are recruited for interpretation.

### 3.4. Revisiting classical analyses: metaphorical complexes in animal metaphors

As explained in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Perez Hernández (2011), Grady (1997) introduced the distinction between *primary* and *compound* metaphors. In Grady's work, primary metaphors are metaphors whose source domain is directly grounded in our experience. Primary metaphors have the ability to combine with others of the same kind in order to create compound metaphors. A clear example of this phenomenon is the 'conduit' metaphor, which interprets communication as the encapsulation of thought into objects that move from sender to receiver. This metaphor combines: CONSTITUENTS ARE CONTENTS (e.g. *The main idea in what he said*), BECOMING ACCESSIBLE IS EMERGING (e.g. *His innermost musings finally surfaced*), TRANSMISSION OF ENERGY IS TRANSFER (e.g. *give a speech*), and ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS ACQUIRING A DESIRED OBJECT (e.g. *I can't grasp that argument*).

But Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2008) has identified another type of combined metaphor, the so-called *complex metaphor* that does not involve compounding as described above for the 'conduit' system. Thus, the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY is constructed on the basis of the primary metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS. In fact, this primary metaphor underlies any metaphor were we talk about purposeful activities (Lakoff 1993). These metaphors are not the result of compounding several primary metaphors. Rather, the different correspondences in them are but specifications of the more abstract elements of PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS: people involved in a goal oriented activity are travelers (i.e., entities moving along a path), the partnership of these people is the means of transportation, progress in the activity is motion along a path, difficulties to achieve goals are impediments to motion, stages in progress and landmarks along the path, achieving goals is reaching the destination. Thus, the expression *We are at a crossroads*, in the context of LOVE IS A JOURNEY has two lovers that come to a point of uncertainty in their progress towards their common destination; in the context of A BUSINESS IS A JOURNEY it has two or more business partners that find themselves in a similar moment of uncertainty to proceed in their common venture. This means that the metaphors LOVE/LIFE/A CAREER/A BUSINESS IS A JOURNEY and the like are *complex* but not *compound*. They are built on a primary correspondence that is more central than the others, but they do not combine several primary metaphors into a single compound system.

The fourth type of animal metaphor that arises from our data fits well into the notion of *metaphoric complex*, as originally discussed in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2008), and later developed in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Mairal Usón (2011) and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa (2011). As pointed out by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2008), the combination of two or more different metaphors into a single conceptual package is sometimes necessary in order to fully account for the whole range of meaning implications of some metaphorical expressions.

Our first example here, *beaver away*, combines low-level and high-level metaphor. In general, someone is described as a "beaver" or an "eager beaver" when he or she is too enthusiastic about something or overanxious to work too hard. This is evidently an example of a (low-level) "one-correspondence" metaphor (like the first type of metaphors analyzed above), since it is based on highlighting one attribute of beavers that is then made to correspond with a comparable attribute of humans. Beavers are perceived as hard-working creatures because we picture them as marking their territory by building piles of mud continuously. This is suggestive of human behavior when they perform an activity continuously, like working without interruption. So, this metaphor brings out this feature and makes it central to its interpretation.



**Figure 10.** Initial metaphorical mapping in *beaver away*.

However, when we say that people are “beavering away”, we convey the idea that they are toiling hard at a job (e.g. *The volunteers had been beavering away down there for two months, working well into the night on many occasions*). In this manner, “beaver away” makes use of this feature in a more complex way: we have the integration of the metaphorical interpretation of “beaver” into a higher-level construction since this use of “away” is part of a constructional pattern, as evidenced by the meaning similarities among these expressions:

*The snow melted away*

*The hut rotted away*

*She was coughing away*

*He gazed at his wife, stitching away*

This construction conveys the idea of progression in a process: “away” emphasizes a continuous or repeated action. This meaning is grounded in the primary metaphor PROGRESS IS MOTION (“away” suggests motion from a source to an unknown, unplanned or undetermined destination).

The metaphoric complex that explains these correspondences is the following:

SOURCE	TARGET	SOURCE
Beaver's behavior	Human behavior	---
---	Progress	Motion
	Initial state	Source
	Potential final state	Expected destination

Metaphorical integration of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS and PROGRESS IS MOTION in *beaver away*.

In this manner, two metaphors combine by integrating their internal configurations into what Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Perez Hernández (2011) and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa (2011) have called a *metaphoric amalgam*, which is one kind of metaphoric complex<sup>6</sup>. It must be noted that the noun *beaver* can be used as a verb through the licensing effect of the metonymy AGENTS ARE ACTIONS. Then, when re-construed as an action-designating predicate, the verb can participate in the construction with “away” as described above.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, this is an example of what Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa (2011) call *single-source metaphoric amalgams*. There are cases of *double-source* amalgams, as in *He beat silence into me*, which combines ACQUIRING A PROPERTY IS CAUSED MOTION and ACQUIRING A PROPERTY IS GETTING POSSESSION OF AN OBJECT, which share the same metaphoric target. Another kind of complex is *metaphoric chains*, where the target of a metaphor becomes the source of a second target domain (e.g. *He broke down*, which maps physical fragmentation onto physical dysfunctionality, which then maps onto emotional disruption).

We observed above that ontological metaphors make use of resemblance cognitive operations (Grady 1999; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2011) in different ways. Consider the meaning implications of using the notion of “pig” in ontological PEOPLE ARE ANIMAL metaphors. Each use requires recruiting different (but internally coherent) sets of attributes from our knowledge about pigs to create the ontological source domain and then finding corresponding attributes in the target domain. For example, if we say that someone is a pig, this may mean that such a person is dirty, or greedy, or immoral, or abusive, and so on. We can even combine some of these features and apply them to the same target. The best explanation for the ontological behavior of animal metaphors is therefore one that takes into account (packages of) salient properties of the source and brings to bear upon interpretation only those that are consistent with the speaker’s intentions as cued for by the previous discourse or the context of situation. Experientially pigs are filthy (they stink and are usually covered with mud) and they eat large quantities of food in a way that resembles human gluttony. However, pigs are not intrinsically immoral or abusive. These attributes come from a complementary metaphor, IMMORALITY/ ABUSIVENESS IS FILTH (e.g. *He has dirty thoughts*), which we build into PEOPLE ARE PIGS (cf. Galera Masegosa 2011). This is an example of what Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Mairal Usón (2011) have called a metaphorical complex:

SOURCE	TARGET
Pig	Person
SOURCE	TARGET
Lack of cleanliness (‘filth’)	Lack of morality

A similar case is provided by the expression *She is a tigress in bed*, which integrates LUST IS (ANIMAL) FIERCENESS/WILDNESS (e.g. *Shy girls are wild in bed; He moved with animal ferocity; He couldn’t hold back*; cf. Kövecses 2000: 31) into PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS.

SOURCE	TARGET
Tiger	Person
SOURCE	TARGET
Ferocious animal behavior	Human lustful behavior

The integration is facilitated by the fact that lustful behavior is guided by instinct rather than reason. For this reason LUST IS (ANIMAL) FIERCENESS/WILDNESS is used to parametrize (i.e. specify) the animal behavior/human behavior elements of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS.

This brief examination of the examples given allows us to conclude that the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS usually maps animal behavior onto human behavior, as noted by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (1998). What kind of attributed behavior is mapped is a matter of consistency criteria. Also, PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS may be complemented by other metaphors used to reason about human behavior like IMMORALITY IS FILTH or LUST IS (ANIMAL) FIERCENESS/WILDNESS, thus giving rise to metaphoric complexes of the kind discussed by Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Mairal Usón (2011) for cases of high-level metaphor.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have analyzed some animal metaphors from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics and have found that their analysis is not as trivial as suggested by previous discussion of ontological metaphor. Various conceptual interaction patterns involving metaphor and/or

metonymy have proved crucial. In this respect, I have identified cases of (i) animal metaphors interacting with high-level metaphors and metonymies, of (ii) animal metaphors entering metaphonymic relations (cf. Goossens 1990; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Díez Velasco 2002), and of (iii) animal metaphors interacting with other metaphors thereby giving rise to metaphoric amalgams, as discussed in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Galera Masegosa (2011). In connection with the cases in (ii), I have also argued that basic ontological metaphors serve as the basis for the creation of more complex situational metaphors, all of which have a metonymic ingredient.

All these factors determine to a large extent the nature of much of our inferential activity that takes place when we interpret animal-based metaphorical expressions in whatever degree of idiomaticity. That is why overly simplistic views of these metaphors should be rejected in favor of more complex analyses, whose actual cognitive complexities have been largely ignored in cognitive-linguistic discussions on metaphor.

## REFERENCES

- Black, M. (1954). "Metaphor", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55: 273–294.
- Brooke-Rose, C. (1958). *A Grammar of Metaphor*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Coulson, S. and Oakley, T. (2000). "Blending Basics", *Cognitive Linguistics* 11(3/4): 175-196.
- Dirven, R. and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F. J. (2010). "Looking back at 30 years of cognitive linguistics", in E. Tabakowska, M. Choinski, & L. Wiraszka (eds.) *Cognitive Linguistics in Action: From Theory to Application and Back*. Berlin, Germany/New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter, 13–70.
- Fauconnier, G. and Turner, M. (1996). "Blending as a central process in grammar", in A. Goldberg (ed.) *Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language*. Stanford, CA: Cambridge University Press, 113–130.
- Fauconnier, G. and Turner, M. (1998). "Conceptual Integration Networks", *Cognitive Science* 22(2): 133-187. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0364-0213\(99\)80038-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0364-0213(99)80038-X)
- Fauconnier, G. and Turner, M. (2003). *The Way We Think*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fauconnier, G. (2009). "Generalized integration networks", in Evans, Vyvyan & Stéphanie Pourcel (eds.) *New Directions in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 147-160.
- Galera Masegosa, A. (2011). "A contrastive analysis of cognitive operations underlying the interpretation of English and Spanish sayings". Paper presented at the International Conference *Cognitive Perspectives on Contrastive Grammar*, University of Economics and Humanities, Bielsko-Biala, Poland, September 26-27, 2011.
- Gibbs, R.W. (1994). *The Poetics of the Mind*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbs, R.W. (2006). *Embodiment and Cognitive Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goldberg, A. (1995). *Constructions: A construction grammar approach to argument structure*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Goldberg, A. (2006). *Constructions at Work: The nature of generalization in language*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Goossens, L. (1990). "Metaphonymy: the Interaction of Metaphor and Metonymy in Expressions for Linguistic Action" in Dirven, R & Pörings, R. (eds.) *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 349-378.
- Grady, J. (1997). *Foundations of meaning: Primary metaphors and primary scenes*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of California, Berkeley.
- Grady, J. (1999). "A typology of motivation for conceptual metaphor: correlation vs. resemblance" in R. Gibbs & G. Steen (Eds.) *Metaphor in cognitive linguistics*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins, 79–100.
- Johnson, M. (1987). *The Body in the Mind: The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture: Universality and variation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2011). "Recent developments in metaphor theory: Are the new views rival ones?", *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 9(1): 11-25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/rcl.9.1.02kov>
- Kövecses, Z. and Radden, G. (1998). "Metonymy: Developing a cognitive linguistic view", *Cognitive Linguistics*, 9(1): 37-77. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/cogl.1998.9.1.37>
- Lakoff, G. (1993). "The contemporary theory of metaphor", in Ortony, A. (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (2nd ed). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 202-251.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Levin, B. (1993). *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A preliminary investigation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Peña, M. S. (2003). *Topology and Cognition. What Image-Schemas Reveal About the Metaphorical Language of Emotions*. Lincom Europa, München.
- Pragglejaz Group (2007). "MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse", *Metaphor & Symbol* 22 (1): 1-39. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms2201\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms2201_1)
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. (1998). "On the nature of blending as a cognitive phenomenon", *Journal of Pragmatics* 30: 259-274. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(98\)00006-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00006-X)
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. (2000). "The role of mappings and domains in understanding metonymy", in A. Barcelona (Ed.), *Metaphor and metonymy at the crossroads*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter, 109-132.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. (2008). "Cross-linguistic analysis, second language teaching and cognitive semantics: The case of Spanish diminutives and reflexive constructions", in S. De Knop & T. De Rycker (eds.), *Cognitive approaches to pedagogical grammar: Volume in honor of René Dirven*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter, 121-152.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. (2011). "Metonymy and cognitive operations", in R. Benczes, A. Barcelona Sánchez & F. J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (eds.), *Defining Metonymy in Cognitive Linguistics: Towards a Consensus View*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins, 103-124.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. and Díez Velasco, O. (2002). "Patterns of Conceptual Interaction" in Dirven, R. & Pörings, R. (eds.) *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlín/Nueva York, 489-532.
- Ruiz de Mendoza, F.J. & Galera Masegosa, A. (2011). "Going beyond metaphonymy: Metaphoric and metonymic complexes in phrasal verb interpretation", *Language Value* 3; in press.
- Ruiz de Mendoza, F. J. and Mairal Usón, R. (2007). High-level metaphor and metonymy in meaning construction. In G. Radden, K. Köpcke, M. T. Berg, & P. Siemund (Eds.), *Aspects of Meaning Construction*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins; 33-51.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F. J. and Mairal Usón, R. (2011). "Constraints on syntactic alternation: Lexical-constructive subsumption in the lexical-constructive model", in P. Guerrero (ed.) *Morphosyntactic alternations in English: Functional and cognitive perspectives*. London, UK/Oakville, CT: Equinox, 62-82.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F. J. and Otal Campo, J. L. (2002). *Metonymy, Grammar, and Communication*. Granada, Spain: Comares.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. and Peña Cervel, M.S. (2005). "Conceptual interaction, cognitive operations, and projection spaces", in F.J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & M.S. Peña Cervel (Eds.) *Cognitive Linguistics: Internal Dynamics and Interdisciplinary Interaction*. Berlin/ New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 254-280.

- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. and Perez Hernández, L. (2011). "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: Myths, developments and challenges", *Metaphor and Symbol* 26: 1–25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2011.583189>
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F. J. and Pérez Hernández, L. (2001). "Metonymy and the grammar: Motivation, constraints, and interaction", *Language and Communication* 21: 321–357. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309\(01\)00008-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309(01)00008-8)
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J. & Santibáñez Sáenz, F. (2003). "Content and formal cognitive operations in construing meaning", *Italian Journal of Linguistics* 2 (15): 293–320.
- Searle, J. (1979). "Metaphor", in John Searle (ed.) *Expression and Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 76-116.
- Steen, G. (2011). "The contemporary theory of metaphor — now new and improved!", *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 9(1): 26–64. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/rcl.9.1.03ste>
- Tendahl, M., & Gibbs, R. W., Jr. (2008). "Complementary perspectives on metaphor: Cognitive linguistics and relevance theory", *Journal of Pragmatics* 40: 1823–1864. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.02.001>
- Turner, M. (2007). "Conceptual Integration", in D. Geeraerts and H. Cuyckens (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yu, N. (2009). *The Chinese HEART in a Cognitive Perspective: Culture, Body, and Language*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.