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The Metaphor of Metalanguage from the Perspective of Contemporary Linguistics: Insights into the Relationship between Conceptualization and the Theoretical Modelling of Language, Communication and Translation

Abstract

The paper aims at discussing the problems of conceptual metalinguistic metaphors, its influence on the way theoretical considerations are exercised in contemporary linguistic discourse, which results in the creation of specific models of language, communication and translation. The problem of metaphorical profiling discussed in the following considerations is approached from the perspective of contemporary linguistics, which makes it possible to see a peculiar confusion of “reality” and “cognitive” aspects in metalinguistic reflection. Undoubtedly, it is impossible to think and discuss the most abstract aspects of language outside the metaphorical framework. But should all metaphorical imagery, including the most “common sense” constructs, justify the theoretical modelling of language, communication or translation and set the course for a scientific cognitive approach to these categories? The metaphorical language of the researcher should be an element consistent with the theoretical assumptions that the researcher represents. This is because a metaphor is a reflection of a person’s way of thinking. A lack of congruence between expressions and the description of the declared views may result in a lack of credibility of the language theory. The conclusions presented in this paper will be subjected to further investigations.

Keywords: metalinguistic metaphors, conduit metaphor, language models of communication and translation, Anthropological Linguistics, Cognitive Linguistics

1. Introduction

The discussion included in this paper revolves around selected aspects of metalinguistic metaphors and the way in which linguistic theoretical considerations are conducted in contemporary linguistic

and metalinguistic discourse. The questions posed in the foregoing are considered from the perspective of cognitive models of conceptual metaphors, Anthropological Linguistics and the Grucza's theory of languages ([1983] 2017). The metaphors that is present in the linguistic discourse is assumed to significantly affect the subject matter and the approach to the metalinguistic reflection and thus determine the direction of the discussion presented in this paper.

This article focuses on the status of conceptual metaphor in language descriptions, linguistic theory and metalinguistic discourse. This is because a question arises as to the extent that metaphor can be part of theoretical models of language or translation. Cognitive linguistics provides the theoretical framework for a number of studies on metaphor.¹ It turns out that the metafiction of metalanguage does not always correspond to contemporary theoretical modelling.

Admittedly, the metaphor of metalanguage is a legitimate element that perfectly fits in the cognitive approaches,² cognitive and frame semantics (Fillmore 1982, Busse 2012) or Anthropological and Cultural Linguistics. However, in some models metaphors does not always allow us to capture the essence of meaning, when it refers too strongly to the rigid framework of structuralist linguistics. This fact is, in my opinion, an argument for including Anthropological and Cultural Linguistics (Duranti 1997, Chruszczewski 2011) and cognitive linguistics concepts in the discussion. This paper is an introduction to further inquiry into this area and the research project extends the scope of this paper. The extended analysis will cover a discussion of whether the meta-linguistic metaphors that automatically come to mind conflict with the theoretical assumptions of the given concept.

Other works that are planned will also be related to the relevant approaches of the representatives of Polish linguistic schools less well-known in the English-speaking circles of linguistics. In the present context I will limit myself to theoretical remarks, constituting a starting point for the research on the metaphors of metalanguage.

Metaphor, understood as a conceptual category, appears first of all whenever we deal with the most speculative, abstract aspects of reality, while talking and thinking about language, communication or translation requires representation based on experiences of physical reality. Conceptual Metaphor Theory treats metaphor as a projection of the (different) domains of human experience³ as "a systematic set of correspondences, or mappings, between two domains of experience." (Kövecses 2018: 125).

The views I represent are closest to the frame semantics derived from Fillmore (1982) and developed in Germany by Dietrich Busse (2012), but I think it is appropriate to also include here the theories that recognize the influence of culture and society on people's language (Duranti 1997, Chruszczewski 2011) and the concepts that accept the importance of the users' individual knowledge regarding their idiolect (Grucza [1983] 2017).

The considerations presented in the foregoing result from the need to discuss the penetration of all elements of the conceptual sphere into scientific discourse, which sometimes happens even involuntarily and leads to the conventionalization of metaphors and formalization of theoretical models (at least declaratively) based on conceptualizations. The discussion presented in the foregoing is a continuation of the considerations initiated in 2020 (Bąk 2020), preceded by preliminary empirical research on

1 See: e.g. Reddy ([1979] 1993), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Kövecses ([2006] 2011, 2018).

2 See: Tabakowska (1993).

3 Cf. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 117, 161, 254).

metalinguistic metaphor (Bąk 2019).⁴ In order to discuss the essence of metaphors in the field of metalanguage, in the context of both its causes and effects on (meta) linguistics, it is necessary to recall the assumptions of modern linguistics, cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory, essential for the meaningful – in my opinion – determination of the status of the category of conceptualization in the context of the problems related to thinking and cognition.⁵ These considerations are couched in cognitive linguistics mainly due to the fact that the categories of *language*, *communication* and *translation* are made real on the ground of this linguistic school (F. Grucza [1983] 2017, 1993, S. Grucza 2013a,b, Żmudzki 2013, 2017, Knapik and Chruszczewski 2018: 671–678).

Let us take note of the close connection between the metaphorical rationalization of abstract categories of language in the field of linguistic theory and translation studies and the creation of theoretical and certain quasi-theoretical models of language, communication or translation through metaphorical representation.⁶ In view of the elusiveness of some of the categories considered here, the possibility of a natural and at the same time unavoidable conceptualization of the abstract aspects of language may result – and sometimes unfortunately does result – in the researchers escaping into terminology that can close the reflection into the rigid framework of paradigmatic methods of traditional linguistics. They do not always allow for exploring the mechanisms of thinking, exposing the epistemological dimension of language, taking into account the issues of inter- and externalization of knowledge.⁷ What I mean by this is that the cognitive aspects and the interplay between language and culture are often overlooked. Language should be considered with regard to its embeddedness in the world and culture. Communicative acts, texts and discourses are not performed in a vacuum, but are embedded in cultures, contexts and situations (Chruszczewski 2011: 215–224).

4 The metalinguistic metaphors examined there come from a chapter on the history of reflection on semantics in Gerhard Helbig's work "Geschichte der neueren Sprachwissenschaft" (1974) and its translation by Dorota Morciniec and Czesława Schatte "Dzieje językoznawstwa nowożytnego" [History of Modern Linguistics] (1982). The issue of metalanguage metaphors will be developed in subsequent discussions, including contrastive and translational analyses. It includes a discussion on the translation of meta-linguistic metaphors, but also on the very status of metaphor in language and on linguistic models of language, communication and translation. In the following context, I will present my reflections on the characteristics of meta-linguistic metaphor as a reason for the dominance of some selected profiling in terms of discussing linguistic models.

5 The theoretical framework for consideration is outlined in the aforementioned works (Bąk 2019, 2020).

6 The statement that metaphors create rather than reflect analogies is an important complexity in the approach to conceptual metaphors. The purpose of the following discussion is not to criticize theoretical models for being based on conceptual metaphors. Metaphors are not merely linguistic expressions, but they are a matter of reasoning (cf. Fojt 2009: 115–120). Metaphorical projections and constructed analogies are present in all theoretical and metatheoretical reflection. Linguistic theoretical models, however, should not be an accidental product of the natural conceptualization of the concepts of a given discipline, and metaphors should not have the status of an objective reflection of some reality, such as linguistic.

7 This reality calls for, among others, answers to questions about the boundaries between scientific and non-scientific thinking (F. Grucza [1983: 31–32, 416–418] 2017: 25–26, 365–367). Grzegorz Pawłowski also attempts to answer these and other questions in his work *Metafizyka poznania lingwistycznego* [The Metaphysics of Linguistic Cognition] (Pawłowski 2021).

2. Metaphorics

58 Metaphor shows the way a person thinks about certain aspects of the world, even if they are not fully aware of it.

[W]e tend to think about a domain the way we speak about it. In other words, the language we use in relation to a particular subject matter indicates which aspects of that subject matter we routinely attend to. We talk about a large part of many subject matters by means of metaphors, which can thus serve as indicators of how we think about these topics. (Kövecses 2019: 21)

Common descriptions of language and communication provide us with countless examples illustrating how human beings mentally process abstract aspects of language and metaphorically rationalize them. However, they do not seek an objective analogy to reproduce them, but rather they construct one.

Relevant examples of such conceptualization include the following, more or less permanent, attributive or predicative word combinations including the lexeme *znaczenie* ('meaning') employed in the sense of 'semantic value' (e.g., the meaning of a word, not as 'rank', 'prestige' as in *landmark meaning* ('*znaczenie przełomowe*'). The National Corpus of Polish has recorded the following sample instances in point:

znaczenie ('meaning'): *dosłowne* ('literal'), *jedyne* ('sole'), *jedno* ('one'), *pierwotne* ('primary'), *podstawowe* ('basic'), *rozmyte* ('fuzzy'), *ukryte* ('hidden'), *zawoalowane* ('veiled'), *posługiwać się* ('use')/ *zonglować znaczeniem* ('juggle meaning'); *oddać* ('render')/ *mieć* ('have')/ *przekazać* ('convey')/ *wyrażać* ('express')/ *znaleźć* ('find')/ *odszukać znaczenie* ('look up meaning') (e.g. *znaleźć znaczenie w słowniku/ w głowie* ('look up meaning in a dictionary'/'in one's head')), *stracić/ tracić znaczenie* (o wyrazie) ('lose meaning' (about a word)); (trafnie) *uchwycić* ('accurately') ('grasp')/ *wyjaśnić (ukryte) znaczenie* ('explain (hidden) meaning'), 'meaning' (of a word): *zawierać znaczenie* ('contain meaning') (e.g. *kamienne tablice zawierają znaczenie* ('stone tablets contain meaning')), *znaczenie dociera do mnie* 'meaning gets to me'... ([NKJP – National Corpus of Polish] <http://nkjp.pl/poliqarp/nkjp300/query/>)

Some of the examples accounted for above have entered the discussion of language researchers as images indispensable to the consideration of certain categories. They can be found in many theoretical models, and they occur in the structuralist school. A number of relevant examples can be cited from the area of *valence theory* (*valence, valuation, actants, structural order* (Tesnière 1959)), *pragmalinguistics* (*sender/receiver, language use* (Kalisz 2011)), *different variants of cognitive linguistics* (*source and target domain (of metaphors), projection, amalgams, mental spaces* (Kövecses 2011)). They are also present in the concept of *cognitive frame semantics* (*frame, filler, slot* [Fillmore 1982]) *etc.* Without many of these it is impossible to imagine effective linguistic considerations and adequate statements about it. In these cases, the metaphors are not only an unconscious mechanism of thought, but they are consistent with a theoretical model of language or translation. However, sometimes metaphorics is treated as a faithful reflection of implicit relations. In practice, this has occasionally been the cause of metaphorical simplification. In my opinion, in translation studies it has resulted in a metaphorical TRANSFER and, among other things, in the creation of two-stage models of translation.⁸ Other methodological approaches to the problem area

8 Cf. Reiß and Vermeer (1984: 41).

in question, i.a. the “translation system” proposed by the Polish researcher, Franciszek Gruzca (1981), a Polish theoretician of linguistics, translation studies and glottodidactics, and further developments of his concept, as proposed by his follower Sambor Gruzca (S. Gruzca 2013a, b) take human beings into account in the context of translation – the author of the original, the recipient of the target message and, above all, the person of the translator as an indirect recipient and sender. Thus, the competence of the translator, and not only his or her creations, texts, became the focus of interest (Małgorzewicz 2012, Żmudzki 2013, 2017). TRANSLATION and TRANSFER (German: *Übersetzung*) appear as metaphors.⁹ Jerzy Żmudzki puts the subject of the holistic approach of modern translation studies in the following way:

The description of the specific properties of individual objects, with the absolute domination of the main and central object as the mentioned subject of translation activities and operations, became the basic research program outlining the directions and basic areas of tasks within translation studies as a discipline. Processes and people, defined by the above-mentioned system, are considered to be its autonomous subject, which at the same time testifies to the autonomy of translation studies, while the research material were (and are) specific translational acts of specific translators and the effects of those acts. (Żmudzki 2013: 178)

Metaphorization and other forms of conceptualization take place within the mind of the subject, not outside it. According to Michel Reddy, conceptual metaphor underlies most statements about the mechanism of language and the functioning of communication (Reddy [1979] 1993: 178). These observations can also be applied to translation (Bąk 2019, 2020). The metaphor, common in both colloquial and scientific discourse on language, is referred to by the researcher as a CONDUIT metaphor:

Our examples thus far have been drawn from the four categories which constitute the “major framework” of the conduit metaphor. The core expressions in these categories imply, respectively, that: (1) language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another; (2) in writing and speaking, people insert their thoughts or feelings in the words; (3) words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts or feelings and conveying them to others; and (4) in listening or reading, people extract the thoughts and feelings once again from the words. (Reddy [1979] 1993: 170)

The metaphorical conceptualization of words as a CONTAINER, meanings as CONTENT, THING and communication as a CHANNEL, *etc.* serves to rationalize abstract aspects, especially the categories of *meaning, term, concept, emotion* or *communicative intention*. The metaphors of the CONTAINER and its CONTENT imply each other. The subsequent conceptual metaphors are the logical development of this metaphoric¹⁰ including those concerning the relations of translation

9 On the metaphor of *translation* and on the differences in the conceptualization of the Polish term *tłumaczenie* (‘translation’) and the German term *Übersetzung* (‘translation’) cf. Bąk 2020: 91–106.

10 Beyond these four classes of expressions, there are a good many examples which have different, though clearly related, implications. The fact that it is quite foreign to common sense to think of words as having “insides” makes it quite easy for us to abstract from the strict, “major” version of the metaphor, in which thoughts and emotions are always contained in something. That is, the major framework sees ideas as existing either within human heads or, at least, within words uttered by humans. The “minor” framework overlooks words as containers and allows ideas and feelings to flow, unfettered and completely disembodied, into a kind of ambient space between human heads (Reddy [1979] 1993:170).

(TRANSFER). The latter is not the subject of Reddy's considerations, although the author notes the ubiquity and indispensability of metaphorical depiction of linguistic categories.

Practically speaking, if you try to avoid all obvious conduit metaphor expressions in your usage, you are nearly struck dumb when communication becomes the topic. You can say to your wayward student, "Try to communicate more effectively, Reginald," but it will not have nearly the impact of, "Reginald, you've got to learn how to put your thoughts into words." [...] But even if you could avoid all such obvious conduit "metaphorisms," this would still not free you from the framework. The threads, as I said, are nearly everywhere. (Reddy [1979] 1993: 178)

Let me repeat an important statement which is related to Grucza's concept, but which is not always adequately emphasized in discourse: metaphorical conceptualizations take place within the mind of the subject, not outside it. The observation that metaphor is a mental category is a special premise for considering theoretical linguistic and translational reflections as abstract domains of discourses.¹¹ The sphere of various statements about language is predestined to observe the characteristic meta-linguistic metaphoricity as a way of conceptualizing abstract, speculative aspects, while referring to the most mundane (somatic) experiences of the surrounding world, the physical sphere, including oneself (one's own body), *etc.* (see: Bąk 2020), "...metaphors are [...] not only elements of language, but also of thought, of cognition – thought that cannot do without imagination." (Buchholz 2003: 8). Metaphor is a necessary, though unconsciously "used" mechanism of cognition and categorical perception for human beings (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3, Kövecses 2011: 176–180, Fojt 2009: 65–70). Undoubtedly, the phenomenon of communicative intention, profiling in discourse, construction of meanings, thinking processes, *etc.* cannot be discussed outside the metaphorical framework. However, not all metaphorical representations, including those that seem to be common sense, should (co-)constitute or determine the existence of theoretical models of language, communication, and translation.¹²

To prevent the means of cognition from being a compilation of inconsistent or contradictory statements, they should be subjected to selection, verification and scientific development in accordance with the linguist's scientifically founded views (F. Grucza [1983: 50–64] 2017: 42–55). The metaphoricity of the researcher's metalanguage should be in a relationship of correspondence with the linguistic theory represented by the researcher, not just with our mind's faithless way of rationalizing abstract concepts. Franciszek Grucza notes the danger of mixing the "real" and "cognitive" aspects.¹³ The distinction between metaphorization and theoretical modelling, I would like to stress, is not included in Reddy's description of the CONDUIT metaphor. The researcher does not speak of the metaphoricity of scientific

11 See: Jäkel (1997).

12 In a different context, Franciszek Grucza comments on the need to differentiate the means of cognition as follows: "I mean [...] that, taking into account [...] universal convergences, similarities and analogies of all human cognition, one should not lose sight of the fact that the properties (aspects) differentiating the cognised reality are in many respects so different that they can cause the necessity of differentiating and choosing different means of cognition." (F. Grucza [1983: 12] 2017: 9. Unless otherwise indicated translations are those of the author.

13 For example, de Saussure's term *langue* may refer, on the one hand, to "linguistic reality" and, on the other, to some "product (construct) of linguistic cognition, i.e. [...] a model intended to reflect (reproduce) this reality." (F. Grucza [1983: 287] 2017: 252)

metalanguage, but of those everyday, colloquial expressions of language and communication (Reddy [1979] 1993: 166–177).¹⁴

However, Reddy is aware of the above aspects and – reaching for the truth about man and the world – he is committed to undertake reflection, including meta-reflection. It allows – at least to some extent – to capture the specificity of the relation between the conceptualization of abstract problems of language and its influence on the verbalization of theoretical linguistic models. At this point let me make a statement, which – in my opinion – is convergent with Grucza's thesis that a researcher in the highest form of his or her own cognitive work, i.e. scientific work¹⁵ (F. Grucza [1983: 42–50, 86] 2017: 35–42, 74), can treat metaphorical conceptualizations as a foundation, but not as an equivalent or, even less, a substitute for scientific considerations. Metaphorical representation can be considered in this way against the background of the following statement made by Franciszek Grucza: “[T]he concept of scientific work *sensu largo* implies to some extent simultaneously all the primitive (earlier) developmental forms of cognitive work, both intellectual (e.g. common-sense) and physical.” (F. Grucza [1983: 35] 2017: 28).

The conceptualization of aspects of language, the beginning of theoretical thinking, is a natural process. However, it is not able to fulfil the role of scientific operationalization of knowledge, verbalized within the framework of a particular theoretical model that is reflected or created (in a planned way): “From the subjective point of view, scientific work is additionally characterized by the fact that it is – by intention, i.e. consciously – performed cognitive work, and not work performed by chance. Thus scientific work is cognitive work *a priori*, and not merely *a posteriori*” (F. Grucza [1983: 35] 2017: 28).

Therefore, there is a fundamental difference between thinking and scientific thinking. The scientific nature of the researcher's work consists, among other things, in conscious selection, in the deliberate inclusion by the cognitive subject of certain selected conceptualizations, rather than in the inclusion in the process of theoretical modelling.¹⁶ Therefore, in the linguistic discourse that is the subject of our interest, it is justified to empower not only the human being in whose mind an involuntary conceptualization takes place, but also the person involved in the construction of intellectual models.

3. Contemporary linguistics and new approaches to language

Modern linguistics analyses social and cultural conditions, emphasizing their impact on the language of the people representing a community and the need to take into account the anthropological dimension of language. Contemporary linguistics refers to man who lives and acts in a particular culture and society that influence the stock of knowledge he internalizes. “If culture is learned, then much of it can be thought of in terms of knowledge of the world. [...] Language in this case is understood as a set of propositions about what the speaker (as a member of a society/speech community) knows (or believes).” (Duranti

14 With regard to his own contribution to the considerations on the conduit metaphor, he states: “If one should look, I daresay even the present article is not free from conduit metaphor expressions.” (Reddy [1979] 1993: 177)

15 Franciszek Grucza speaks extensively on the subject of cognitive work and scientific work (F. Grucza [1983: 24–38] 2017: 19–31). Cf. also Pawłowski (2021: 89).

16 This statement refers to the development of general scientific theories set in distinct methodological frameworks (e.g. rationalism vs. empiricism).

1997: 27–28) The differences among researchers representing the need to account for cognitive processes concern the location of the category of meaning or the occurrence of interpretation processes.

Duranti, a leading practitioner of anthropology of language, believes, for example, that “meaning is not only in people’s minds, it is also in routine actions” (Duranti 1997: 318) and: “In anthropology, meanings are seen as located not only in language, but in social values, beliefs, social relationships and larger exchange and support systems, including family structure and the social organization of the community” (Duranti 1997: 277).

A different view is represented by Dietrich Busse, a German proponent of Frame-Semantik, who believes that meaning should be understood in terms of the knowledge relevant to understanding, previously internalized by people through their experience of the world. Meaning itself, however, must be constructed each time. Meaning is the result of the interpretation of what linguistic signs embedded in context, discourse and interaction evoke in the human mind:

Woher soll kommen, was im Text an Bedeutung ist, wenn nicht vom Interpreten? Der Schall oder die Tinten-Flecken können nicht selbst sprechen und ihre „Bedeutung“ verraten; die muss schon ein Interpret aus seinem Gehirn holen. (Busse 2012: 129)

Where should the meaning of the text come from, if not from the interpreter? The sound or the ink stains cannot speak for themselves and reveal their “meaning”; an interpreter has to get it out of his brain. (Busse 2012: 129)

According to Franciszek Grucza (F. Grucza [1983] 2017, 1993: 25–47), the real form of the existence of language is the idiolect specific to each person.¹⁷ This real language is based, among other things, on the properties, skills and knowledge of specific people. The idiolect is developed by the individual on the basis of the inherited biological-genetic potential and functions within, inside the individual’s mental sphere and constitutes his or her cognitive capacity. He is the subject of the processes of cognition, knowledge processing, linguistic thinking and meaning generation that take place in him. In the light of this concept, it is not the abstracted systems, theoretical or hypothetical constructs that constitute the real manifestation of the existence of language.

The author of the said concept, Franciszek Grucza, postulates that the properties that exist independently of linguistic models, but not independently of people, should also be the subject of linguistics¹⁸ as it is only in relation to specific people that one can talk about the real existence of language. Even if the idiolect cannot be captured in its entirety or directly in an empirical way, it can be subjected to (at least partial) reconstruction. The common approach to language as an idealized construct fails to answer the basic questions about its actual status:

To sum up, it can be said that linguistics is not interested in utterances due to their properties, which they possess as self-contained physical objects (although it takes these into consideration as well), but due to the properties that they distinguish in them as essential, or those that are attributed to them by their users (speakers-audience). That is, linguistics is not concerned with utterances as intrinsic physical objects, but with how speakers-audience create, hear, and understand them. (F. Grucza [1983: 294] 2017: 258)

¹⁷ Cf. S. Grucza (2013b: 114).

¹⁸ See: F. Grucza ([1983: 294] 2017: 258).

According to one of the main theses of the theory of languages, which was originally referred to as the “relativistic concept” or “anthropocentric linguistics” by Franciszek Gruzca,¹⁹ it should be stated that the real object of linguistic consideration is the initiator of specific linguistic engagement – the human being, together with his or her features and capabilities, even if linguists do not always agree on this. They often end the description on tangible products of language.²⁰ Language is a mental disposition of a particular person, who in an individual way assimilates, processes and generates certain knowledge.²¹ It enables them to formulate utterances (realization of expression structures), to ascribe certain semantic functions to them (understanding their own utterances), to identify analogous utterances and finally to interpret the meaning of others’ utterances.²²

4. The status of metaphors in the context of contemporary linguistics

In the history of language research, the ontological relationship between “language and man” has not always been given due attention. The cognitive functions of language and language as a mental fact have long remained excluded from theoretical linguistic considerations. This fact is explained by Franciszek Gruzca (F. Gruzca [1983: 142, 312–313] 2017: 123, 274–275) on the ground of the structuralist approach and with a focus on the description of language identified with corpora created (or to be created). Duranti notes this, saying: “In these studies [= the structuralist program of Trier and Hjelmslev], language is seen as a system of ‘abstractions’” (Duranti 1997: 27).

The corpora are often considered as autonomous entities in isolation from human beings. From the point of view of Gruzca’s theory of languages, certain overused metalinguistic metaphors, which grant the expressive forms of language the status of language “components”, can be regarded as controversial.

As Sambor Gruzca argues,²³ effective communication is possible thanks to the compatibility of the interlocutors’ idiolects, at the same time, however, neither the SENDER nor the RECEIVER is able to PACK, SEND or RECEIVE meanings.²⁴ After all, no linguistic signal can “by itself” have an inherent, fixed semantic function.²⁵ The meaning of lexemes is an individual process of activation of previously internalized knowledge (knowledge about the world, about language, grammar, contexts of occurrence of expressions, their compatibility, *etc.*). We treat this knowledge as a cognitive frame, which, however, is not an element of the external world or discourse, but an internal property of the subject (S. Gruzca 2013b:

19 See: F. Gruzca ([1983: 290] 2017: 255), S. Gruzca (2013a: 84–85).

20 It happens that translation analysis, as declared by the researchers, in fact turns out to be a contrastive study, consisting in comparing the generative possibilities of linguistic structures, including the description of the equivalence of grammatical structures and the abstracted, often nameless corpus data.

21 See: F. Gruzca (1993: 31), Knapik and Chruszczewski (2018: 671–678).

22 See: F. Gruzca (1993: 32). The possession of a particular idiolect manifests itself in its functioning in actual communicative acts, during the activation of knowledge resources (construction of meanings), and significantly these aspects also apply – as Sambor Gruzca explains (see: S. Gruzca 2013a: 75–77, 2013b: 113–114) – to specialist languages.

23 See: S. Gruzca (2013a: 75–76).

24 See: also Pawłowski (2021).

25 Cf. S. Gruzca (2013b: 131).

114). However, the linguistic, situational context or the discourse in which an utterance is embedded, as external conditions, influence the activation of this frame in a person.²⁶ Importantly, the constitution of meanings²⁷ always takes place individually, as the resources of internalized knowledge have an individual character. The congruence of these resources in individual people gives them the ability to communicate with each other (S. Grucza 2013a: 75), but primarily knowledge is individual, not collective. Only with this proviso can the thesis about the “sharing” of knowledge and meanings by discourse participants be accepted (Warnke 2009: 113).

The metaphorical conceptualisation results indirectly²⁸ from the most elementary experience of physical facts, such as space, environment, location, objects, one’s own body, *etc.* These mentioned aspects of the source domain play a decisive role in the depiction of abstract facts, categories, and relations.²⁹ The metaphor, however, does not reflect features of the “source domain” (therein) treating them as aspects of the “target domain,” but construing analogies by reference to concrete human experiences (the physical versus the abstract, the intellectual). Cognitive scientists do not always confirm such views in their own statements. They sometimes transfer metaphorical rationalization to the expressive layer: USING metaphor as in “the use of conceptual metaphors” (Lakoff 2008: 28) or “the use of metaphoric language” (Lakoff 2008: 35) *etc.*³⁰ By externalizing the metaphor or by pragmatizing it, they bring to life a model that is disjunctive to the declared mental character of the phenomenon studied. This metaphor is rightly contested by Franciszek Grucza, who states:

As far as the term “language is a tool (or means) of communication” is concerned, it can be considered – in the light of the above remarks – at most as a certain metaphorical way of explaining the function of language, or better – the sense of its existence. On the other hand, in a literal sense, as tools (or means) of communication, one can treat only utterances taken as physical signals which fulfil the function of material carriers of meaningful values. (F. Grucza [1983: 307] 2017: 269)

To sum up, I consider metaphorical conceptualization to be a biological endowment of the human being that should be taken into account when reflecting on the functioning of shared, supraindividual mechanisms, i.e. properties that – to use a certain simplification – bind people together in polylects, enabling them to categorize concepts similarly based on the same mental mechanism.

On the assumption that cognitive methods should be tailored “to fit” the object of cognition, I do not deny that there are principles that are common to all human cognition. The existence of general principles of cognition has to be agreed upon only because, on the one hand, all subjects that are persons are inherently characterized by certain common cognitive properties [...]. (F. Grucza [1983: 12] 2017: 9)

26 See: Busse (2012: 11, 23), Bonacchi (2011: 36), Pawłowski (2012: 253–259).

27 The act itself takes place in the face of specific, incidental pragmatic conditions.

28 It is directly the result of the projection of experience.

29 Cf. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 14–21). We find a similar opinion in Jäkel (1997: 44).

30 Researchers also consider metaphor within the framework of “figurativeness of language” and “figurativeness of meaning.” While the metaphor of USING LANGUAGE has some validity (whether in English, Polish or, for example, German), the claims about the “figurativeness of meaning” of metaphorical utterances are somewhat controversial (e.g., Kövecses 2011: 267–270, 276–287).

Metaphor as a mechanism can thus, in line with Anthropological and Cultural Linguistics, be considered a shared, supra-individual mechanism. However, experience, the resources of internalized knowledge³¹ and the specific activation of the cognitive frames in the actual pragmatic conditions all have the character of individual acts.³² Communicative acts are culturally conditioned but take place in a particular context, situation and discourse.

5. Concluding remarks and implications

The issue of metaphors undoubtedly deserves to be accorded its due central status in the considerations on the metaphor of metalanguage. Referring to the problem of the relationship between metaphorical representation and theoretical modelling, it should be stated that – within the paradigm of linguistics discussed earlier – not all conceptualizations can constitute a constructive (scientific) model of language or communication, and metaphors cannot function as a reliable, objective reflection of a reality, including, for example, linguistic reality. For language serves not only to faithfully reproduce aspects of the world around us, but to create reality. The metaphoric metalanguage of the researcher should be an element that is consistent with the theoretical assumptions that the researcher represents. For a metaphor is a reflection of a person's way of thinking.

At this point it is important to note a significant difference between *thinking in general* and *scientific thinking*. The first one promotes mental rationalization of abstract concepts. The privilege of scientific thinking, however, implies a little more, and it also covers the ability to think theoretically, set limits and make conscious choices, the ability to devote oneself to scientific reflection and the readiness for meta-reflection. The goal should not be to unwittingly indulge in nonselective simplifications or to take shortcuts.

Hence, how should we talk about language, communication and translation? Undoubtedly, not differently than what the natural mechanism of metaphorization suggests. This is the one that allows our mind to construct analogies and rationalizes the processing of abstract aspects of language or communication. However, metaphors is an explication of the thought processes that constitute the first step in theoretical thinking, so researchers / theoreticians should be aware of the difference between the natural metaphorization of concepts and the scientific description of the scientific model they are constructing. Constructed linguistic concepts can be convincing if the metaphorical expressive layer of the linguistic description corresponds to the researcher's postulated theoretical assumptions.

This paper presents a brief reflection on the characteristics of metaphor in metalanguage. The following papers will address, by way of examples, the conceptualizations of metaphor in structuralist, pragmalinguistic, anthropological and cognitive theories, as well as in translation works founded on various linguistic assumptions. The discussion will focus on orientational, ontological and structural metaphors and their compatibility with the model of language, communication and translation represented by the researcher. Congruence or a lack of congruence between metaphor and the theoretical model provides

31 Sambor Gruzca speaks extensively on this subject (S. Gruzca 2013b: 113–115).

32 It should be noted that there may be differences in the formal realization of conceptualization in the expressive layer. Besides, the alleged metaphorical congruence may result in the appearance of interference errors, the so-called false metaphorical friends of the translator (metaphorical tautonyms) (Bąk 2019: 36, 2020: 101–102).

a glimpse into the way we think about language, communication and translation. Therefore, I consider the discussion of metaphor of metalanguage as still being of importance.

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