

Annotating and interpreting deliberate metaphors: An implementation of Steen's Five Step Method

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Metaphor

Metaphor can be defined as a 'mapping across two conceptual domains' (Steen 2007). It fulfills a special role in religious language, where its capacity to express ideas about an abstract entity with reference to a well-known concrete entity works as a means to make statements about the transcendent.

In (1), the metaphor SALVATION IS HEALING is used to convey religious ideas: abstract theological notions such as original sin and salvation are mapped onto a more tangible domain by referring to the concepts of wounding and healing.

(1) fo vnir herre got alle die wnden virbindit die wir ie von adamef fvnnd gefrvmeton
'Thus our Lord God binds up all the wounds we have suffered through Adam's sin.' (Source: Züricher Predigten, from around 1200)

Interdisciplinary Research Group



An interdisciplinary research group is starting to investigate the role of metaphor in religious language across time and space. By annotating metaphor, we aim at making acts of textual interpretation explicit. Consequently, the aim is not necessarily to create easily reproducible annotations with high inter-annotator agreement. Still, annotations need to be systematic enough to be helpful as a basis for further analyses with methods from computational linguistics (e.g., automated metaphor identification), social sciences (analysis of interpretative patterns) and philological hermeneutics.

Annotation Scheme

This poster presents an annotation scheme for deliberate (non-conventionalized) metaphors, which implements and extends the method described by Steen (2007). The scheme guides the annotators through the individual steps of the analysis and provides a rigorous and transparent format that makes it easy to identify the cross-domain mapping.

We see the scheme primarily as a tool that helps scholars to become clear about their own assumptions and (otherwise often unspoken) basic assumptions underlying their analysis, and at the same time to document these assumptions for others. It is in this sense that the resulting annotations and analyses are reproducible.

Kay, Christian et al., eds. (2009). *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary: With Additional Material from A Thesaurus of Old English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-920899-9.
Steen, Gerard J. (2007). "Finding Metaphor in Discourse: Praggeljaz and Beyond". In: *Cultura, Lenguaje y Representación* 5, pp. 9–25.

Steen's (2007) Five Steps

1 Identification of metaphor-related words (MRW)

(2) Now sleeps the crimson petal
(Source: poem by Alfred Tennyson)

2 Identification of propositions: transform linguistic expressions into conceptual structures (subscripts s and t relate the concepts to the source and target domains, respectively).

P1(SLEEP_s PETAL_t)
P2(MOD P1 NOW_t)
P3(MOD PETAL_t) CRIMSON_t

3 Identification of open comparison: transform propositions into mono-domain ones with open slots for the missing predicates and arguments, and compare the propositions by the function SIM{...}

SIM {∃F ∃a
[F(CRIMSON PETAL)]_t
[SLEEP(a)]_s}

4 Identification of analogical structure: interpret and fill the open slots, which results in a closed comparison in the form of an analogy

SIM
{[BE-INACTIVE(CR. PETAL)]_t
[SLEEP (HUMAN)]_s}

5 Identification of cross-domain mapping: read the corresponding arguments of the parallel propositions and add further correspondences, projecting implicit elements of the source to the target domain

SLEEP > BE-INACTIVE
HUMAN > CRIMSON PETAL
GOAL OF SLEEP
> GOAL OF BE-INACTIVE: REST

Our Annotation Scheme

1 Mark metaphor: translate sentence to English and mark MRW in both versions

2 Extract explicit propositions: break relevant information into minimal units, in three forms:

- ▶ **Property:** <A> has the property <Prop>
- ▶ **Relation:** <A> has the relation <Rel> to
- ▶ **Type:** <A> is of type <Type>

3 Fill table (incomplete/open): transfer the propositions into the table's cells

- ▶ upper left cell: literal expression
- ▶ lower right cell: MRW

4 Fill table (complete): fill the blanks in the table, using test questions:

- ▶ lower left cell: "Who/what would normally be <A>?"
 - ▶ upper right cell: "What is actually meant by ?"
- Read the comparisons (*are like*) and find a *tertia comparationis*, by asking:
- ▶ "In which way/sense is <A_t> like <A_s>, and <B_t> like <B_s>?"

5 Revise steps 2–4: add implicit or contextual propositions and derive conceptual metaphor

6 Link with thesaurus: e.g. HTE (Kay et al. 2009)

(3) Skelette von Hochhäusern ragen rechts und links in den Himmel.
'Skeletons of skyscrapers rise into the sky on the right and left.'
(Source: online sermon by Stephanie Höhner)

<Skyscrapers> have the relation <have> to <skeletons>

	<A>	Relation	
Target domain	Skyscrapers	have	support structures
	are like		are like
Source domain	Humans	have	skeletons

Support structures and skeletons serve to keep their 'owner' upright

<Skeletons> have the property <visible> (implicit, "rise")
<Skyscrapers> have the prop. <destroyed> (context)

Concept	HTE ID	HTE Concept
Skeletons	01.02.03.13.01.05	Skeleton
Skyscrapers	03.02.07.03.01	Types of building generally

Relation	A'	A	Relation	B'	B
Target domain	Destroyed skyscrapers	have	visible support structures	are like	
	are like		are like		
Source domain	Dead humans	have	visible skeletons		

Conceptual metaphor:
SKYSCRAPERS ARE LIKE HUMANS
DESTROYED IS LIKE DEAD
SUPPORT STRUCTURES ARE LIKE SKELETONS
Tertium: visible