

## METAPHORS FROM COLLOCATIONS

Rūta Marcinkevičienė

*Vytautas Magnus University*

Cognitive linguists claim that our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. It is widely recognized that "... we typically conceptualise the non-physical in terms of the physical, that is, we conceptualise the less clearly delineated in terms of the more clearly delineated" (Lakoff 1980:59). The analyses of linguistic expressions of abstract notions reveals metaphors, esp. the dead metaphors, that are unconscious, conventionalised and pervasive. Some cognitive linguists point to close relationship between collocations and dead metaphors: "The metaphor is a novel, unconventional, modal typification/categorisation that could not be expressed as collocation until the metaphor or system of metaphors dies and becomes a set of collocations" (Alverson 1994:57, also see Lakoff 1980:51, Kovecses 1986:132). Nevertheless practically cognitivists do not use existing corpora and/or collocational patterns to derive metaphors from. (For an overview of the Internet sites for metaphors see ([http://www.compapp.dcu.ie/~tonyv/links\\_frame.html](http://www.compapp.dcu.ie/~tonyv/links_frame.html)))

This paper aims at linking cognitive and corpus linguistics. It seeks to demonstrate that metaphors, if they are to reflect the most popular understanding of a concept, should be derived from collocations, i.e. from corpora. The concept of *mind* has been selected for this purpose as 1) a frequent and 2) an abstract notion. Besides, *mind* belongs to the so-called "empty lexicon" (see Sinclair 1996 for the definition) that is semantically unstable, depending heavily on lexical relationships. It is only in connection with its context that *mind* acquires a concrete sense. Thus we claim here that syntagmatic and not paradigmatic relations are of paramount importance in illuminating the concept under consideration. (For the comparison of syntagmatic and paradigmatic approaches see the entry of *mind* in the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary and EuroWordNet <http://www.hum.uva.nl/~ewn>).

The detailed analysis of the usage of the singular form of *mind* was based on the concordance of 54 580 lines, derived from the Bank of English, i.e. the corpus of ca 300 million words. The result of the analysis was the pattern of usage, consisting of 22 syntactic patterns, filled in with the most frequent lexical items, collocating with *mind*, e.g. *Somebody may have, keep, put run, settle, set, fix his/her mind on or take it off something (marital problems, work, plan, business, something else, match, game, politics, etc.)* The pattern of usage of *mind* was the source of dead metaphors, presented below.

Collocations are retrieved from the corpus on statistical bases, i.e. frequency of co-occurrence, metaphors have to be singled out from collocation on purely intuitive bases, i.e. subjectively. The topic of metaphor is too broad to receive a more detailed treatment here, so let us simply state that a metaphor comprises the source/donor and target/receptor domains and induces the reader or hearer to map one into another: "The essence of a metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff 1980:3)

Looking for more objective criteria we suggest here that metaphoricity could be explained with the help of the notion of collocational range. A source domain is lexicalized by a node word, e.g. *the moon*, which has its typical collocates, e.g. *new, full, rises, wanes*. Some of them, like *new, full, rises* are frequent words used with a great number of

collocates of their own, therefore they do not get associated with any of them. Some other collocates of the node under consideration, such as *wanes*, have limited collocability and are used mostly and exclusively with the node. When used in a new context, i.e. with *enthusiasm*, they retain their previous associations. In other words, it can be stated that only words with a restricted collocational range can be used for metaphorization of abstract concept. *Bright*, collocating with both *day* and *room*, cannot be said to be an example of a metaphor since *bright* has a collocational range too wide to carry associations from one of its collocates to another. *Infectious* would be a better example of a metaphor when used with *laughter* allowing to interpret laughter as a disease (cf. Dufour 1998, Montemagni et al. 1996 for a similar approach).

Metaphors of *mind* is a topic widely discussed by cognitive linguists. Examples of these metaphors such as MIND IS A BRITTLE OBJECT, MIND IS A BODY, MIND IS A MACHINE are given in the Conceptual Metaphor WWW server at the University of California, Berkeley (<http://cogsci.berkeley.edu/MetaphorHome.html>) and in a special John Barnden's database for the metaphors of *mind* (<http://www.cs.bham.ac.uk/~jab/ATT-Meta/Databank/>). The concept of *mind* is represented there not only with the help of metaphors, e.g. MIND AS PHYSICAL SPACE, MIND AS AN ANIMATE BEING OR LIVING BODY, MIND AS A PHYSICAL OBJECT, etc., but also with the help of related concepts of IDEAS AS EXTERNAL ENTITIES, COGNIZING AS SEEING, etc.

My list of metaphors differs in that a) it is based only on patterns, derived from significant collocations, which excludes cases of occasional usage and b) the metaphor necessarily includes the noun itself. Some of the metaphors coincide in their essence with those given by cognitivists, some differ.

The most common metaphor is MIND AS PHYSICAL SPACE. Under this metaphor a person's mind is a physical region. Ideas, thoughts, hopes, desires, images, emotions, feelings or mental events such as thinking, imagining, hoping, desiring can lie at various positions in it or can move within it under their own steam or as a result of being acted upon by other entities. This metaphor comprises two more specific cases: MIND AS TERRITORY and MIND AS A CONTAINER. The two metaphors differ in the implications of the verbs or adjectives. In the first case verbs of motion are used very often: *thoughts, ideas, images, words, pictures or memories* **come, cross, enter, race, run** in different directions, i.e. **around, from, into, out, to** one's mind. e.g. *He still had not asked the question that had come into his mind first.*

In the second metaphor a bounded space, such as a box, is implied by the collocates of *mind*. A lexico-syntactic pattern **There is something** (*dates, items, memories, thoughts, questions, dreams, decision, doubt, question, fear, images, picture, incident*) **in/inside** one's mind is most prominent for the detection of MIND AS CONTAINER metaphor. e.g. *The only evidence is inside my own mind.*

There are several borderline cases which cannot be safely included in either of the above mentioned groups, therefore they represent examples of the more general metaphor MIND AS A PHYSICAL SPACE. e.g. *Both of them knew - in a way, it was never out of their minds that what was now happening could not last long. All happenings are in the mind.*

Another metaphor closely linked to the above mentioned could be called MIND AS SECONDARY REALITY or, as it is done by John A. Barnden, MIND AS WORLD-DEFINER. In a typical manifestation of this metaphor, some activity of a person is described as if taking place in his or her mind. It is analogous to the use of collocations like *in the novel, in the movie, in the painting*, where it takes us into a fictional world. Word

combinations like *in his/her/my mind* can indicate states such as planning or merely entertaining or imagining: e.g. *He was writing a letter in his mind. In his mind he was scoring goal after goal.*

Two “object” metaphors can be described in a very general way as MIND AS A MOVING OBJECT and MIND AS AN OBJECT THAT IS ACTED UPON. In the first case, a person’s mind *races, runs, wanders, goes round, reels, drifts, roams, vaults, speeds, sinks, travels, spins, shifts or rushes back, jumps over, leapfrogs ahead, tilts towards, slips into, slides away, paces back, proceeds, circles*, etc. somewhere. e.g. *His mind sagged round and round on the same trick, like a ball falling again and again into the same series of slots.*

The second case verbs like *close, clear, broaden, brush, divide, destroy, pollute, sharpen, etc.* can illustrate the way a person may affect his/her own or somebody else’s mind: e.g. “*We control matter because we control the mind*”.

Concrete verbs that arouse specific associations (*to read, tune, sharpen one’s mind*) help to define MIND AS A SPECIFIC OBJECT e.g. MIND IS A TEXT or MIND IS AN INSTRUMENT: e.g. *The surgeon had read his mind and done him a favour. He is not tuning his mind to empty. He did not need to travel to sharpen his mind.*

Having too few manifestations of a specific metaphor, it is more reasonable to include it into a more general group, in this case into MIND AS A SPECIFIC OBJECT metaphor. One more group of sentences, with such verbs as *to work, to break, to keep on idle*, form a MIND IS A MACHINE metaphor. Much more numerous collocates from various patterns could be ascribed to MIND IS A BODY or MIND IS AN ANIMATE BEING metaphor: *to relax, to poison, to heal one’s mind, a mind that is **stripped naked, calm, agitated, excited mind**, etc.* In all the case *mind* is unconsciously comprehended as some specific living creature or a non-living object.

Mind is usually conceptualized in connection with other mental entities such as ideas, thoughts, images, visions, etc. Being mere abstractions they are also metaphorized in a great variety of ways and presented as concrete physical objects. Here two metaphors could be discerned: COGNIZING AS SEEING and COGNIZING AS A PHYSICAL CONTACT OF MIND WITH OTHER MENTAL ENTITIES. The first metaphor manifests itself in such collocations as: *images flicker, figures blur, memories stand out in someone’s mind* or *ideas flash, pictures come into somebody’s mind*. The most obvious manifestation of this metaphor can be found in frequent collocations *mind’s eye, cinema of mind, blackboard of mind*. e.g. *Perhaps my mind’s eyes were blindfolded too.*

Physical contact between some abstract mental entities and *mind* is conceptualized with the help of a spacial metaphor where *mind* itself is *on/off* the abstract entity. Thus a person may *have, keep, put, run, settle, set, fix his/her mind on or take it off marital problems, game, combat, new project, young ladies, troubles, worries, sex, etc.* On the other hand abstract entities, that usually are connotated negatively (cl. metaphor PROBLEMS ARE HEAVY OBJECTS), such as *pressure, concern, failure, problem, shame, revenge, death*, can be used in collocations like: *be (prey, stay) on somebody’s mind* or *be a load or a weight off somebody’s mind*. e.g. *I just forgot. I’ve had a lot on my mind.*

MIND AS A CONTAINER supports the metaphor COGNIZING IS A PHYSICAL CONTACT OF MIND WITH OTHER MENTAL ENTITIES to a certain extent since objects of cognizing are either in *mind* or outside it. Distance of mental entities that are outside *mind* (e.g. *Nothing could be further from my mind. A reshuffle is far from his mind*) as well as their position inside the mind (*uppermost, foremost in my mind, to store sth at the back of one’s mind, to push the thought to the front of one’s mind, etc.*) has to do

with their relevance and importance. Thus the spacial relationship is elaborated to a greater extend.

Beside metaphors, there are several manifestation of metonymies. The most basic is the metonymy MIND STANDS FOR ITS FUNCTION OR ABILITY TO THINK, REMEMBER, etc. With the help of this metonymy *mind* is substantivized and turned into an object which is further metaphorically conceptualized. The very possibility to have this concept as a noun exemplifies a regular metonymy. In other metonymies *mind* stands for a person and thus can be described with the help of the same adjectives (*conscious, brilliant, healthy, suspicious, tired, romantic, calm, etc.*). The sentence *He has a suspicious mind* can be rendered as *He is suspicious*. e.g. *The search for new weapons continues unceasingly, and is one of the very few remaining activities in which the inventive or speculative type of mind can find an outlet. Only the disciplined mind can see reality.*

Collocability of *mind* with the names of countries, institutions, boards, governments and committees is due to the metonymical use of PEOPLE-INVOLVING ENTITY FOR THE PEOPLE INVOLVED (Barnden's wording for it). This is manifested in the sentences below: e.g. *Even the Labour Party had closed its mind to the possibility of radical change. But the film's British audience had its mind on other things. But the West also needs to keep its mind on the job.*

The metaphors and metonymies, enumerated above, are only the most prominent ones and do not exhaust all the collocations that could be interpreted metaphorically since the aim of this paper was only to show the possibility of such a procedure rather than to give a detailed analysis of the concept under consideration. Still a tentative generalization could be made of how *mind* is conceptualized.

***Mind* is an entity that a human being or a group of people is characterized by its presence or absence. As such it is juxtaposed with body as well as feelings or heart. Usually *mind* is conceived as physical space, territory or container, occupied by other mental entities or ideas representing outside reality, which are situated in different parts of the *mind*-container or moving in different directions inside as well as in and out this space. *Mind* the same as a container can be full or empty, open or closed and ideas, visions, images and other mental acts can be easily dismissed or brought back. In a way *mind* can be a substitute for the real life since all the happenings and actions that take place in reality can be repeated or exist only in *mind*.**

Besides *mind* can be conceived as an object which can either move by itself or be moved. It can get into contact with mental entities that are also conceptualized as objects with different qualities. *Mind* can be affected in the same way as a human body or as a physical object that can be in a certain state or of a certain quality, typical of human beings or non-living things. *Mind* metonymically represents a person and can be referred to as a part of the whole.

### List of Literature

- Alverson, H. 1994. *Semantics and Experience. Universal Metaphors of Time in English, Mandarin, Hindi, and Sesotho*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Dufour, N. 1998. "Recognizing Collocational Constraints for Translation Selection: DEFI's Combined Approach". EURALEX'98 Proceedings, ed. by T. Fontenelle et al., 109-118. Liege: University of Liege.

- Kövecses, Z. 1986. *Metaphors of Anger, Pride, and Love. A lexical Approach to the Structure of Concepts*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Lakoff, G. and M. Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago / London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Montemagni, S., S. Federici and V. Pirrelli. 1996. "Example-based Word Sense Disambiguation: a Paradigm-Driven Approach". EURALEX'96 Proceedings, ed. by M. Gellerstam et al., 151-160. Göteborg: Göteborg University.
- Sinclair, J. McH. 1996. "The Empty Lexicon". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, Vol.1, No 1: 99 - 120.

### **Annotation**

This paper aims at linking cognitive and corpus linguistics and argues that metaphors, if they are to reflect the most popular understanding of a concept, should be derived from collocations. One noun *mind* has been selected for a case study as a frequent and unique concept of the English language. The paper is provided with the list of metaphors, based on collocational pattern of *mind*. All the metaphors are tentatively generalised into an overall concept of *mind*.