Cross-cultural variation in conceptual metaphors: A work in progress report

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Abstract:
This is a work in progress report on the dissertation project “Cross-cultural variation in conceptual metaphors. A corpus-based study on post-colonial varieties of English.” Conceptual metaphors are everpresent and pervasive and in our everyday world, however, they have been shown to differ, both conceptually and linguistically, across cultures (cf. e.g. Kövecses 2005, Wolf & Polzenhagen 2007).

The current study focuses in metaphor variation across varieties of English and will examine two post-colonial varieties, Hong Kong English and Kenyan English, for their conceptual metaphors with the help of the Corpus of Global Web-based English (GloWbE corpus).

Methodologically, this study adopts a corpus-based approach in which a balanced sample will be analysed with regard to variation in figurative language use. Since it is a multi-layered process to look for (as yet unknown) metaphorical expressions, the process requires a change of perspective to check the validity of the results. I will therefore work with two different methods which have been discussed in the recent publications: a top-down approach and a bottom-up one. The first one draws on Stefanowitsch’s ideas of semantic frames as triggers of metaphorical patterns (Stefanowitsch 2004) and the second one is methodologically closer to the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by the Pragglejaz Group (Pragglejaz 2007). The results will then be compared with those from the first study for diverging or converging findings. To make sure that the results are comparable, other parameters such as genre, semantic field and variety of English will remain the same.

This presentation will give an overview on the project design and report on the challenges of finding methodological approaches to identify and analyse variation in metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors.

References:


