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Metaphor Scenario Analysis as Part of Cultural Linguistics

The study of metaphor as part of Cultural Linguistics highlights the culture-specific aspects of figurative language. This study focuses on the reception and interpretation aspect and reviews cross-cultural metaphor interpretation as well as presents new data from a survey of differential understanding of the nation-as-body metaphor. It is based on a questionnaire survey, administered in 10 countries to students who were given the task of applying the metaphor of the “body politic” to their home nation. The results show systematic variation between four main interpretations, i.e. NATION AS GEOBODY, AS FUNCTIONAL WHOLE, AS PART OF SELF AND AS PART OF GLOBAL STRUCTURE, as well as evidence of further pragmatic and polemical elaboration. The two dominant versions, i.e. NATION AS GEOBODY and NATION AS FUNCTIONAL WHOLE, were represented across all cohorts but showed opposite frequency patterns for Chinese vs. Western cohorts, which can be linked to culture-specific discourse and traditional cultural conceptualisations. This finding contributes to a constructivist, non-essentialising definition of cultural cognition as a central issue of Cultural Linguistics.

Key words: conceptual metaphor theory, culture, Cultural Linguistics, metaphor interpretation, NATION AS BODY, scenario analysis

Analiza scenariuszy metaforycznych w ramach językoznawstwa kulturowego

Badania nad metaforą w ramach „językoznawstwa kulturowego” podkreślają uwarunkowane kulturowo aspekty języka używanego w sensie przenośnym. Niniejsza praca skupia się na aspekcie recepcji i interpretacji oraz analizuje interpretacje metafor międzykulturowych, a także przedstawia nowe dane pochodzące z ankiety badającej różnice w rozumieniu metafory narodu jako ciała, przeprowadzonej w 10 krajach wśród studentów, których zadaniem było odnieść metaforę „ciała politycznego” do własnego narodu. Wyniki wykazują regularne zróżnicowanie na cztery główne interpretacje tzn. NARÓD JAKO CIAŁO GEOGRAFICZNE, JAKO FUNKCJONALNA CAŁOŚĆ, JAKO CZĘŚĆ WŁASNEGO CIAŁA I JAKO CZĘŚĆ GLOBALNEJ STRUKTURY, jak również dalsze uszczegółowienie pod względem pragmatycznym i polemicznym. Dwie dominujące wersje, tzn. NARÓD JAKO CIAŁO GEOGRAFICZNE I NARÓD JAKO FUNKCJONALNA CAŁOŚĆ, pojawiały się we wszystkich grupach, ale cechowały się odwrotną częstotliwością w przypadku grup chińskiej i zachodniej, co może być związane z uwarunkowanym kulturowo dyskursem i tradycyjnymi konceptualizacjami kulturowymi. Ten wynik przemawia za konstruktywistyczną, nie-esencjonalizującą definicją poznania kulturowego jako jednego z kluczowych zagadnień językoznawstwa kulturowego.

Slowa kluczowe: teoria metafory konceptualnej, kultura, językoznawstwo kulturowe, interpretacja metafor, NARÓD JAKO CIAŁO, analiza scenariuszy.

Zur kulturlinguistischen Analyse konzeptueller Metaphernszenarien

Die kulturlinguistische Metaphernanalyse hebt die kulturspezifischen Aspekte figürlichen Sprachgebrauchs hervor. Die vorliegende Studie gibt zunächst einen Überblick über die kulturvergleichende Metaphernforschung im Verhältnis zur kognitiven Metapherntheorie Lakoff'scher Prägung. Darauf aufbauend präsentiert und diskutiert sie neue empirische Ergebnisse zum Verstehen der Metapher vom Nationalstaat als Körper (NAK). Über 700 Probanden aus zehn Nationen beantworteten einen Fragebogen zur Interpretation der NAK-Metapher in fünf Bedeutungsvarianten: Nation als geographischer oder institutioneller Körper, als Teil des eigenen und als Teil eines umfassenderen Körpers sowie Nation als Person. Für die beiden ersten Varianten, welche die große Mehrheit des Korpus ausmachen, zeigten sich deutliche Häufigkeitsdifferenzen zwischen den Antworten chinesischer und westlicher (europäischer, US-amerikanischer und israelischer) Probanden: erstere bevorzugten im Verhältnis von 3:1 die geographische Bedeutungsvariante, letztere die institutionelle Variante. Diese Unterschiede werden abschließend anhand begriffs- und diskursgeschichtlicher sowie pragmalinguistischer Hypothesen erläutert.

Schlüsselwörter: Kognitive Metapherntheorie, Kultur, Kulturlinguistik, Metaphernverstehen, NATION ALS KÖRPER, Szenarienanalyse

1. Introduction: Cultural metaphor and Cognitive Metaphor Theory

The notion of “cultural metaphor” as developed in “Cultural Linguistics”, currently advocated by Farzad Sharifian, focuses on “culturally constructed conceptualizations” that are specific to speech communities (Sharifian 2014a: 476-478). However, defining “culture” in relation to speech communities is not unproblematic.¹ As regards intercultural communication, culture is, in Scollon and Scollon’s memorable words, probably best conceived of as a “verb” (Scollon, Scollon and Jones 2012: 5), i.e. it is not a static, identical entity, but a dynamic, variable form of communicative action that manifests itself in socio-historically embedded and, crucially, culture-specific situations (Frank 2008). The application of this insight to “cultural metaphors” raises the long-standing issue of “linguistic relativity”. Are metaphors, as concepts, universal or culture-specific in the sense that they provide insights into culture-specific cognition patterns that are not necessarily transferrable into other cultural contexts without losing some of their semantic and/or pragmatic value?

¹ See critiques of over-egged versions of Linguistic Relativism and of essentialism in Gumperz and Levinson 1996; Holliday 1999; Niemeier and Dirven 2000.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), developed since the 1980s by Lakoff, Johnson and others, has taken up a fundamentally universalist stance by locating the roots of metaphorical cross-domain mappings in neurophysiological structures; however even Lakoff has claimed compatibility with linguistic relativity when it has suited him (Lakoff 2004a). But such ‘squaring of the circle’ is only possible at the expense of relegating culture-specific variation to a secondary, lexical and discursive “elaboration” level, whereas the primary, metaphor-constitutive “image-schemas” are conceived of as “embodied conceptual universals” (Lakoff 2004a; see also Gallese and Lakoff 2005; Lakoff 1993, 2008, Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003, 1999). The only attempt at a testable CMT-oriented analysis of culture-specific metaphor variation that the Lakoff-school has made is a questionable interpretation of the 1990s international debate about the last Soviet leader, M. Gorbachev’s slogan of the “Common European House”. According to Chilton and Lakoff (1995), the lexemes *dom* in Russian and *house* in English access different, culture-specific mental models of the general concept of HOUSE, on account of the alleged fact that the Russian HOUSE stereotype is a communal apartment block whereas the Western HOUSE stereotype is supposed to be a free-standing, owner-occupied family home. Therefore, they hypothesised that “[when] the metaphor was translated out of Russian into the language and cultural setting of other European states, the entailments were different” (Chilton and Lakoff 1995: 54; see also Chilton and Ilyin 1993). But when this hypothesis was applied to multilingual corpus-data, British and German media, which can plausibly be regarded as belonging to the ‘Western’ camp, were shown to frequently use the supposedly Russian-specific ‘communal apartment block’ version of the metaphor slogan during the late 1980s (Bachem and Battke 1991, Musolff 2000). they only stopped doing so when the Soviet Union, and with it Gorbachev’s international prominence, became history in 1991. The slogan’s demise thus did not result from differences in the conceptual systems of Russian and other European languages or cultures but from contingent political circumstances.

Lakoff’s other analyses of metaphor variation have concentrated on intranational contrasts in the usage of the NATION AS FAMILY metaphor in the political sphere of the United States of America, specifically the ideological differences between Liberals and Conservatives (Lakoff 1996, 2004b). Lakoff has referred to this contrast as a cultural divide (E.g. Lakoff 1996: 222), but in the loose sense of “political cultures”, not in the sense of linguistic relativity. In the following sections I would like to overview and comment on more specifically cross-cultural metaphor research that has been carried out in the wider field of cognition studies and then present and discuss recent empirical findings that focus on the reception and interpretation side of cultural cognition.

2. Research on cross-cultural variation of metaphor

Whether metaphorical meanings vary across culturally distinct communities cannot be determined by just consulting dictionaries or lists of idioms but only on the basis of empirical discourse data. This maxim is borne out by the largest overview of culture-specific metaphor variation to date, i.e. Kövecses' 2005 volume on *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Kövecses defends CMT's tenets in general but makes two crucial "modifications" to classical CMT to accommodate culture-specific metaphor variation by making: a) he stresses that it "is complex metaphors – not primary metaphors – with which people actually engage in their thought in real cultural contexts" and b) he introduces the notion of a "main meaning focus" that metaphors gain within a community of speakers (Kövecses 2005: 11-12). This culture-specific meaning focus consists of source-conceptual material that is typically applied to a range of target domains within specific communities but not others. For instance, the apparently universally occurring metaphorical conceptualization of the emotion ANGER (target concept) as PRESSURE IN A CONTAINER (source concept), which has been researched across cultures by Kövecses and others (Kövecses 1986, 1990, 1995, 2000; Matsuki 1995; Taylor and Mbense 1998; Yu 1998), has distinct semantic manifestations. In English it is expressed by way of analogy to a fluid but in Chinese by analogy to a gas, and its main locations can be the *head* (English), the *belly* (in Japanese) or the *heart* (Zulu) (Kövecses 2005: 68-69). The investigation of cultural differences in conceptualization of emotionally and cognitively central body parts (i.e. as *seat* of emotional and cognitive agency) has been developed further into a typology of "abdomino-", "cardio-" and "cerebrocentrist" perspectives (Sharifian et al. 2008, Ibbaretxe-Antuñano 2012). Recent corpus-based research into metaphorization of emotions across English, Russian and Spanish has shown that these three languages share some salient conceptualizations (of which the BODY-based ones are only a part) but at the same time exhibit significant differences in the "appraisal, expression, regulation and the saliency of physiological aspects of anger" (Ogarkova and Soriano 2014). In a similar vein, Yu (2008) has demonstrated that the SOCIAL FACE-metaphor of folk-psychology (as, for instance, in English, *to save/maintain/lose face*) is differentially composed in Chinese and English, respectively emphasising the aspects of DIGNITY IS FACE vs. PRESTIGE IS FACE, and MUTUAL vs. EGOCENTRIC FACE.²

Besides the contrastive synchronic studies of culture-specific use and elaboration of metaphors, diachronic studies have further shattered the initial univer-

² For the important consequences of this culture-specific difference of FACE concepts in Politeness Theory, which was at first considered an undisputed pragmatic "universal" (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987), see Jia 1997; Pan 2000, Pan and Kadar 2012, Watts 2005.

salist CMT bias. As early as 1995, Geeraerts and Grondelaers highlighted the fact that the EMOTION-AS-PRESSURE IN CONTAINER metaphor, which had been researched by then mainly on the basis of English language data, bore an uncanny resemblance to the traditions of ‘humoral’ medicine and philosophy that dominated European thought for more than a thousand years, deriving their authority from ancient medical philosophers such as Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) and Galen (129-217 CE). Their terminological traces can be found in many modern European languages to this day, e.g. in the phraseology of *choleric*, *sanguine*, *phlegmatic* and *melancholic temperaments*, which is based on the theory of the “Four humours” (Geeraerts and Grondelaers 1995; Temkin 1973). This cultural continuity provides at least as much of a semantic motivation for the *fluid*-version of EMOTION-AS-PRESSURE IN CONTAINER as its physiological grounding in body temperature sensations.

A further example of culture-specific variation can be observed for the metaphor of the NATION (STATE) AS A BODY, WHICH plays a central role in expressing collective identity. Evidence of national variation can be found both in historical texts and in present-day usage. Contrasting European and Japanese, Shogimen (2008) has shown how this metaphor differed in medieval political thought. The European tradition, as exemplified, for instance, in the *Policraticus*, authored by the cleric, politician and philosopher John of Salisbury in the mid-twelfth century, “highlighted coercive and punitive aspects of government as the final solution to political conflicts” on the basis of assumptions about medicine as disease eradication and surgery. By contrast, the contemporary Japanese concepts of “medical treatment as controlling physical conditions” with an emphasis on “healthcare and preventative medicine” favoured preventative measures at the political (target-)level (Shogimen 2008: 103, see also Nederman 1988).

Further evidence of culture-specific variation of the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor has been found in present-day lexicalisations in English, French and German public political discourse (Musolff 2010 a,b, 2011). On the one hand, these three language communities share conceptual coverage of the source domain BODY when mapped onto the target concept NATION (STATE) by all of them including aspects of LIFE CYCLE, ANATOMY-PHYSIOLOGY, STATE OF HEALTH, INJURY and THERAPY. Its origins date back to the late medieval Latin terms *corpus mysticum* and *corpus politicum*, which were translated into European vernacular languages in the sixteenth century (Archambault 1967, Bertelli 2001, Charbonnel 2010, Guldin 2000, Hale 1971, Kantorowicz 1997, Patterson 1991); e.g. into English *body politic*, French *corps politique*, German, *politischer Körper*, Italian *corpo politico*, Dutch *politiek lichaam*, Polish, *ciało polityczne*, and many others.

Despite this common origin, however, typical uses of the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor in today’s language communities show divergent trends in usage and lexi-

calisation patterns. In English, the central lexicalisation is the phrase *body politic*, which since its loan-translation from late Latin has largely shed its once-salient role as a politico-theological counterpart of the King's *body natural* (Kantorowicz 1997). Instead, *body politic* nowadays refers to whole of the socio-political organisation of a nation. Nevertheless, graphic bodily connotations of the medieval and Renaissance meanings still surface in a sub-strand of British political discourse that is distinctive in terms of its pragmatic stance, i.e. irony and sarcasm:

- (1) I am inventing a new diet: it's called the *Greek austerity diet*. And I am putting myself on it right away. ... the first and most obvious difference [to the EU-led economic austerity policy in post 2008-Greece] is that *my Greek Austerity Diet is entirely a scheme of my own devising*. I voted for it. *My own body politic took the decision*. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 14 November 2011, author: Boris Johnson (portly British Tory politician, Mayor of London))
- (2) *Body politic*: [. . .] In what is perhaps the ultimate betrayal of the Celebrity 'Cool Britannia' culture he embraced upon entering Downing Street, *Heat* [magazine] this week prints a long-lens snap of *Blair resplendent in his Caribbean holiday podge – a sort of 'ripples and nipples' look*. (*The Independent*, 14 August 2007)

In these cases, the physical body or body appearance of a prominent politician is the ostensive target referent of the phrase *body politic*, but the use of that very phrase points to an implicit target, namely the politician's standing, power and status. Their frequency in English political discourse appears to be higher than in German and French corpus samples (Musolff 2011). German public discourse, on the other hand, has three instead of one lexicalized items to express political BODY-status: the rarely used phrase *politischer Körper* ('political body'), the more frequently found compound *Staatskörper* ('state body') and the by far most popular, *Volkskörper* ('people's body'). The two latter compounds occur in present-day public discourse in starkly different usage environments: 'state body' can be applied to any nation or a multi-national entity seen as a whole; 'people's body' on the other hand, is used almost exclusively in contexts of the author expressing a critical stance to that concept on account of its historical-ideological connotations that relate it to (neo-)Nazism and to (neo-)Nazi jargon:

- (3) The individual citizen drunk on Germanness became identical with the rabid *collective body of the people* (*Die Zeit*, 16 August 2012, referring to the photo of a drunken Neo-Nazi attacking an asylum-seekers' home in Rostock in 1992, translation here and in further examples AM).
- (4) This *sick people's body* harbours a wounded soul. Katharina Rutschky sees the debate about biopolitics [i.e. about demographic decline] as a symptom of

a mass hysteria which has its deepest roots in the German traumas of the 20th century (*Die Welt*, 26 March 2006).

Historically, the use of ‘people’s body’ can be traced back to the 1840s, and from the mid-19th century onward, became popular with racist, especially anti-Semitic, writers in Germany. It acquired the status of a quasi-technical term in Nazi ideology, where it was used to depict the supposed German/Aryan ‘Self’ as being under attack from the Jewish *parasite* and other supposed racial enemies (Bein 1965; Rash 2006; Musolff 2010a: 23–68). In this highly specialised, after 1945 generally stigmatised version it has survived only in marginalised neo-Nazi and similar extremist discourse (Bein 1965; Rash 2006; Musolff 2010a: 23–68). Its relatively high frequency in German media vis-à-vis other body-political terminological variants is therefore not a sign of any ‘positive popularity’ but rather of a measure of the strongly critical attention paid generally to Nazi-reminiscent vocabulary (Eitz and Stötzel 2007).

French seems to have a morphologically and semantically equivalent phrase to the English *body politic*, i.e. *corps politique*, but as in German we find ‘competitor’ or ‘partner’ terms in the expressions *corps électorale* and *corps social*. The following, corpus-based examples illustrate the intricate interplay of the three terms (indicated in the translation as “[c-p]”, “[c-e]” and “[c-s]”, respectively; all translations by AM) (Musolff 2015b):

- (5) From Mitterrand to Sarkozy – an unstoppable decline of the presidential office and the *political system* [c-p]. (*Le Monde*, 5 March 2011)
- (6) For more than 25 years, the political classes, both the (neo-)liberal right and the socialist left, have mismanaged *the ageing body of French society* [c-s]. (*Le Figaro*, 9 November 2010)
- (7) To note a figure that was not highlighted during the election night, i.e. the 2.14 million void votes, 5.8 per cent of the whole *electorate* [c-e], which represents an extremely elevated level that is doubtlessly owed in part to the Front National voters of the first round. (*Éco* 121, 7 May 2012)

As these examples show, the meanings of the phrases *corps politique*, *corps social* and *corps électorale*, are not identical but very closely related: the social, electoral and political aspects of the politically active part of the French populace. Examples (5) and (6) depict institutions and classes as the ‘political body’ that cares (or fails to care) for the French nation as a social whole (example 6). Its manifest incarnation, however, are the voters in the national election, even if they spoil their votes, as is suspected in example (7).

Such mutually defining uses of *corps politique*, *corps électorale* and *corps social* are found frequently in the French discourse but have few counterparts in

the English and German samples. Which tradition can they be linked to? A commentary in the leftist newspaper *Libération*, which highlights the *sick body politic* scenario in its title, may help us here: “The body politic: a sick patient in search of a therapy“ (Boisnard 2005). The article’s author argues that the political classes must rethink their fundamental assumptions, in particular the notion that French society and state owe absolute obedience to a sovereign general will, which dates back to J.-J. Rousseau’s *Social Contract* (1762):

- (8) In order to think of the political sphere in terms of the image of a body should require no more than to reread Rousseau’s *Social Contract*. This metaphor is by no means neutral; it supposes that this body is directed by a singular unity of intention and that all members of society are only to be considered as its organs.³

If we follow this reading, the relationship between the ‘political’, ‘electoral’ and ‘social bodies’ of the nation in French present-day usage can be traced back to Rousseau’s impact on revolutionary and republican thought (de Baecque 1997, Sinding 2015). Such an explication does not imply that every French politician or journalist who uses these terms today must be aware of the conceptual link with his philosophy. But it is plausible to assume that, thanks to the enduring presence of Rousseau’s thought in French public discourse (Bertram 2003), his definitions still form a distinctive focus of the French public. This characteristic distinguishes it both from the historical legacy of *Volkskörper* in the German public sphere, which harks back to the catastrophe of National Socialist rule, and the distinctive English wordplay on double-entendres of *body politic/natural* with respect to politicians’ public status.

3. Culture-specific interpretation of metaphors

One central question left open by contrastive studies that concentrate on metaphor production and usage is that of whether differences in figurative conceptualisation impact on understanding processes. There is now a growing body of evidence that much metaphoric discourse in World Englishes and English as *lingua franca* provide as many instances of miscommunication as of successful intercultural understanding. Sharifian (2014b), for instance, analyses in detail communicative clashes between speakers of Standard Australian English and Aboriginal English that originate in the latter’s conceptualization of the concepts LAND, RAIN, MEDICINE as being linked to the belief in ancestor beings, whereas

³ Boisnard 2005, translation AM.

such links appear in a non-Aboriginal context only as irrational superstitions or at best quaint, ‘merely’ rhetorical metaphors. Analyses of English used as a *lingua franca* in secondary and higher education contexts have exposed hitherto unnoticed miscommunication that is due to wrongly understood figurative language use (Littlemore 2001, 2003; Littlemore et al. 2011; MacArthur et al. 2013; Piquer-Piriz 2010; Wang and Dowker 2010), as well as instances of creative adaptation of L2 lexis to L1 mappings (Heredia and Cieślicka 2015; Nacey 2014; Philip 2010). ‘Creative misunderstandings’ also seem to occur in the media use of “hybrid metaphors” that adapt a metaphorical idiom in one language to accommodate meaning aspects that were originally parts of an idiom in another language, such as the Spanish neologism *la pelota está en el tejado de alguien* (‘the ball is on someone’s roof’) arising from contact between the established Spanish expression *estar en el tejado* (‘to be at a stalemate’) and loan translations of the English idiom, ‘the ball is in the other court/ half’ (Oncins 2014). We are thus confronted with a complex and methodologically challenging situation: metaphoric expressions are understood varyingly by L2 or *lingua franca* users, with possible influence from their L1 cultures; furthermore, this variation can lead to miscommunication but also to the creation of new metaphor meanings.

This does not mean that metaphor interpretation is wholly unpredictable. However, we should be prepared to give up the assumption of one static, unalterable meaning unit as its secret ‘object of desire’ of the process of metaphor understanding; instead we must be prepared to conceive of it as a dynamic process that includes several variants, whose distribution patterns can be interpreted as reflecting social-cultural and -historical trends. My first encounter with such variation occurred when teaching a course on metaphor in Intercultural Communication for international MA students at the University of East Anglia (UK) in 2011. I ran a brief class test to make sure that the recently mentioned phrase *body politic* had been correctly understood by the students. Approximately 50% of them were Chinese, the other half was made up of British, US-American, European, Kurdish and Arab students. The instruction was informal and asked students to explain the meaning of *body politic* with reference to their home nations. Here are two examples of student responses (relevant metaphor instances in italics, AM):

- (9) The *head of the body* represents the Queen of England, as she is in charge of the whole country and she is royalty. The features of the *head (eyes, nose, mouth and ears)* represent the different official people, such as politicians, the Prime Minister, the Government.
- (10) Beijing: *Heart and Brain*, Shanghai: *Face* (economic center); Hong Kong and Taiwan: *Feet*; Tianjin: *Hands* (= army close to Beijing); Shenzhen: *Eyes* (= the first place open to the world).

It will come as no surprise that example (9) was produced by a British student and example (10) by a Chinese; what was unexpected was a complete 50/50 split in the class's answers between a 'Chinese' version and distinct non-Chinese one. All non-Chinese responses conceptualized the nation state and its institutions through functionally and hierarchically motivated analogies to the whole and parts of a human body (with minor variations at the target level depending on the respective political systems). These analogies reproduced 'sedimented' parts of the European conceptual and discursive traditions dating from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance sketched earlier.

The Chinese students' responses, by comparison, presupposed the basic mapping, GEOGRAPHICAL SHAPE OF NATION – ANATOMY OF A HUMAN BODY, salient parts of which were selected according to PLACE-FOR-POLITICAL INSTITUTION/FUNCTION metonymies (e.g. *Beijing – seat of government, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong – internationally relevant economic centres*). These metonymies were then associated with functional interpretations of prominent body-parts and organs, e.g., *brain or heart* as controlling the rest of the body, *face, eyes, arms* as oriented to the outside world, etc. For the Chinese respondents the basic geo-political metonymy served as the foundation to construct the metaphor, whereas it played no significant role in the other students' answers. The Chinese responses could not be linked to the 'Western' conceptual traditions that originate in the shared historical heritage of Late Latin *corpus mysticum/corpus politicum* terminology. However, that of course does not mean that they are without history. One possible link to historical traditions may be China's publicly imagined "geobody", with an emphasis on overcoming the legacy of Western imperialist attacks on its national territory up until the mid-twentieth century.⁴

After this first encounter with divergent *body politic* interpretations, I devised a simple questionnaire-based survey that posed the task to view one's home nation "in terms of a human body". With the generous help of colleagues the survey was administered in seven more UEA seminars and in language-/communication-related courses at two other British universities and in Higher Education institutions of nine more countries (China, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Spain). The survey yielded 748 questionnaires completed by participants from 31 distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds.⁵ It was presented as a simple vocabulary exercise before other metaphor examples were introduced as part of the syllabus. In this way, we aimed to reduce any inadvertent

⁴ Callahan 2009: 171, 2010; Schneider 2014; Schneider and Hwang 2014A comparable focus on territory-based interpretations of the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor can be found in Hungarian political discourse as a reflex of the territorial *amputations* after WW1, see Putz 2014: 126-131.

⁵ Musolff 2016: 115-132.

‘priming’ effects of lecturers conveying specific model answers to the students to a minimum. The survey was not set up as a statistically valid research or fully controlled psycholinguistic experiment; it thus did not yield reliable quantitative data. Instead, it aimed at a qualitative pilot-analysis of semantic variation in the interpretation of the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor and whether any striking distribution patterns emerged that can be hypothesised as being related to cultural traditions and provide a platform for further testing. Roughly 80% of all informants concentrated on interpreting the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor in a narrow bodily meaning, whilst one fifth widened it to a NATION-AS-PERSON reading. In the following sub-sections, the findings for both response types will first be presented separately and then discussed in an overview.

3.1 NATION-AS-BODY interpretations

After the first encounter with contrasting interpretations of the BODY POLITIC concept as either an anatomy-/function-based or geography-based metaphor it soon became clear that there was no 1:1 match of interpretations in relation to specific linguistic and/or cultural groups. For instance, British and US students’ responses include geography-based readings that are fully compatible with Chinese students’ answers:

- (11) This is Britain, a *vast, churning body* of 48 million people, sucking in resources, processing them, and spewing out fumes and ideas. The *mouth and nose* are Dover and Portsmouth, *sucking* in the oxygen of European food and produce. It travels down the *oesophagus* of the motorways, arriving in the *guts* of the suburbs.

On the other hand, some Chinese students chose to construct function-focused BODY PART-INSTITUTION mappings that seemed to be typical of the Western *body politic* tradition, as in example (12):

- (12) The communist party of China is the *head of the body*. It leads the functions of the whole body system, which decides the entire national affairs. The government is the *nervous system of the body*, which is controlled by the *head of the body*.

However, interpretations such as (12) only represent a minority among the Chinese cohort’s responses. The ratio of anatomy-/function-based vs. geography-based interpretations of the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor for the Chinese cohort is 1:3. For the British/US cohort, this ratio is almost exactly reversed, i.e. 2.9:1,

and for other European/'Western' cohorts with sufficiently many responses, the preponderance of the anatomy-/function-based reading over the geography-based interpretation is equal or even more pronounced (for German: 15:1; for Hungarian 3:1; for Israeli 7:1; for Italian 4:1). Although these ratios cannot be regarded as statistically valid, they indicate a marked difference between Chinese and non-Chinese respondents. The great majority of responses given by Chinese students is geography-based, whereas the European, US and Israeli student's responses are much more likely to resemble more the 'Western' tradition of conceptualising the nation as a body of interdependent and hierarchically ordered members and organs.

In addition we find special cases that add a proverbial flavour to the mainstream interpretation, as in a Polish student's reading, who after according *head*-status to the president speculated on "numerous [*sic*] suspicions who is the neck that makes the head turn". This is based on a proverbial saying about "the man being the head but the woman the neck that turns the head whichever way it wants", which has been recorded for Greek, Polish and Russian and was made it into a dialogue line in the film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.⁶ Such creative uses that lead to a "hybrid" interpretation make use of specific cultural idioms and proverbs as an elaboration on the mainstream version.

In addition to providing corroborating evidence in support of our hypothesis of at least two culture-related tendencies in interpreting the NATION-AS-BODY metaphor, the survey also reveals two more interpretation perspectives, which focus a) on viewing the nation as part/organ of a larger body and b) on configuring it as part of one's own personal body. The former perspective can be observed in examples (13) – (14), the latter in example (15):

- (13) England is like an *appendix*, not very significant anymore but can still cause trouble and make you realise its [*sic*] there if it wants to (English L1 informant)
- (14) Norway is a *hand waving to the world*. (Norwegian L1 informant)
- (15) Israel is the *heart* of the Middle East. It is a main artery that transporting [*sic*] Merchandise for all the middle east [*sic*]. (Hebrew L1 informant)

Examples (13) and (14) and others of this type leave open the question of precisely which larger BODY-whole the nation in question belongs to. They also often invoke folk-theoretical and symbolic encyclopaedic knowledge as the conceptual grounding (*appendix* as 'superfluous' organ, *hand-waving* as symbol of friendliness). Some responses, however, specify the BODY target referent, as in (15) or indicate that the international community of nations is the 'ground' against which the nation is profiled, e.g. Germany as a *fist* (on account of the two World Wars),

⁶ See <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0259446/quotes>.

Israel as a *finger nail* (on account of its size and being the target of design changes by outside powers), and China as the *back* of the world (on account of its role in the global economy). The alternative ‘nation-as-part-of X’ version, i.e. NATION AS PART OF ONE’S OWN BODY, is not present in some of the smaller national cohorts but forms a recurring pattern across Chinese, British and German samples. About half of them are sourced from notions of HEART and BLOOD as the centre/medium of a person’s identity, emotional existence and heritage, as in the following example:

- (16) Motherland likes [*sic*, presumably intended: is like] my *blood*. *Blood is a part of my body so that I can’t live without blood, and I also can’t live if I lost my motherland*. What’s more, motherland likes [*sic*] my *blood*, because *I feel its warmth and at the same time it provides me the ‘oxygen’ and ‘nutrition’*. (Mandarin L1 informant)

Other examples of this type conceptualise the nation as the speaker’s own *feet/legs* (for “standing up and going forward in the world”), *hands* (“creating the people”) or *eyes* (“noticing the democracy and equality enjoyed by general citizens as well as the corruptions and irresponsibility of some government parasites”). Compared with such ‘personalised’ and often ideologically charged interpretations, the two main readings, (i.e. anatomy/function- and geography-based interpretations) are more standardised and repetitive, whilst at the same time being much more frequent.

Overall, this finding of a wide range of semantic variation in the survey responses throws in question the assumption of an automatic understanding of metaphors, which underlies much of the classic CMT literature. It also shows that seemingly unproblematic metaphorical communication may hide differences in understanding. Doubtless, informants can interpret conventional metaphors quasi-automatically when they are asked to produce just one meaning and have been primed by source-related stimuli, as has been confirmed many times in psycholinguistic research (Gibbs 1994, 2005; Giora 2003, Glucksberg 2001, 2008, Glucksberg and Keysar 1993). As our survey shows, however, responses to metaphor interpretation tasks can be much more varied and imaginative if elicited by an open-ended task and with less priming, and this variation appears to show some systematic distribution patterns that can be linked to culture-specific traditions. The degree to which respondents may be aware of these traditions still remains to be explored further.

3.2 NATION-AS-PERSON interpretations

Roughly one fifth of all responses focused on the PERSON concept as the source for the metaphor interpretation, with the Chinese cohort providing the bulk of this response type and fewer examples coming also from the European and Israeli cohorts. The majority of responses list character traits or activities of PERSON TYPES, as in the following examples:

- (17) My nation is *like a woman who has experienced a lot*. She has been living over thousands of years and the mountains and rivers are like *wrinkles on her body*. The land is like her *warm hug and she uses it to feed* trillions [*sic*] of people. (Mandarin L1 informant)
- (18) China *welcomes and gives warm hugs* to foreigners who come to China. *China is growing up day by day*. China *wears a beautiful dress to show her elegance to the whole world*. China fights against violence bravely. *China kissed the India* [*sic*] and comforted them in a very kind way. (Mandarin L1 informant)

The characterisations of one's nation as a *mother* or *beautiful woman* dominate the Chinese sample: they account for 30 and 16 occurrences respectively, out of total of 70 responses (66 of which were given by female respondents). These are also represented in Israeli, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian, Spanish responses, but, curiously, not in the German and British cohorts. The latter do contain *father* characterizations (one quoting the term "fatherland" as evidence) but the number of occurrences (7 across the overall corpus) is too small to be indicative of any socio-cultural trend. The main MALE figure in the NATION-AS-PERSON characterisations, however, is the *old wise man/(grand)father/teacher* figure who looks after his family as competently and caringly as the *mother* figure does. This type is represented across several 'national' cohorts, as the following examples show:

- (19) China is a *father* who has survived many vicissitudes but still has infinite power. Hong Kong, who had been abandoned helplessly, is *his favorite daughter among lots of children*. Nowadays, after the excited and impressive coming, *her father does all he can and does his best to compensate for this abandoned thing*. (Mandarin L1 informant)
- (20) My nation looks like a *65 year old man, who is wise and clever but he hasn't be* [*sic*] *able to use his intelligence to become happy* [...]. (Greek L1 informant)
- (21) Britain is an easily *likeable friend*, [...] [He] is *ancient but is experiencing revitalisation* [...]. (English L1 informant)

- (22) As Abraham Avinu [Abraham our father] signed an *alliance between god and his body, so does the land of Israel* and all of its [sic] citizens with god. [...] (Hebrew L1 informant)
- (23) [...] when a group of people or a person is in pain he [= Romania] is going to get help. (Romanian L1 informant)

This *male father/teacher* figure collocates strongly with other characterizations that focus on wisdom and competence (including the roles of *lawyer, doctor, pacifist, philanthropist*), which altogether account for 53 responses. By contrast, there seem to be only two responses that come close to the *strict father* model that Lakoff (1996, 2004) has identified as the dominant metaphor model of US political discourse, both of which betray no great liking or positive bias on the part of the writer:

- (24) My country is like a *muscular, middle-aged man*. He [...] has scarfs [sic] all over him, but still stands tall. He is *white* an [sic] *catholic, but shows respect to others*, [...] He has a *strict facial expression, even if he tries to smile*. (German L1 informant)
- (25) My Government is like a *selfish father*. His “kids” are affected by his decisions *without being asked*. (Spanish L1 informant)

Characterizations of one’s own country as a *BABY/CHILD* only occur in small numbers, relating as they do to the respective nations’ (relatively) recently regained political or economic status. What emerges overall from these recurring characterizations is the picture of an *EXTENDED FAMILY*, in which *NURTURE, SOLIDARITY* and *COMPETENCE* are of prime importance. The two main results that can be gleaned from these data are a marked preference for *mother*-type nation-concepts.

There is a small sub-group of *NATION-AS-PERSON* interpretations in terms of national politics. These are sophisticated constructions that allude to topical and/or historical aspects, taking a specific political stance, as in the following examples:

- (26) Despite being a *fairly young nation, Norway is already a full-grown petroholiac*. *Like most addicts*, Norway might appear well-functioning for longer periods of time [...] Still, *Norway frequently turns into a state of denial*. (Norwegian L1 informant)
- (27) The Romanian nation [...] knows too well the *price of hardship and whose hard work has left deep marks on its soul*. It [...] puts a lot of *soul* in everything it does. [...] *It has not learnt yet that mind and reason should prevail over soul and heart*. (Romanian L1 informant)

(28) *The soul of my nation is the mentality the people have. Body and mind didn't work together properly the last 100 years that's why it has been seriously ill at least two times.* (Polish L1 informant)

In these examples, nation-specific experiences of economic development, crisis and conflict are reinterpreted as personality traits, with the NATION-AS-PERSON metaphor providing a platform for political comments.

3.3. Discussion

Our principal finding is that metaphor reception/understanding is at least as variable as metaphor use and production. Even for a centuries-old mapping such as that between the concepts of a human body/person and a nation, understanding is neither automatic nor universal but, on the contrary, variable and culture-specific/-sensitive. This variation is particularly visible in the contrast between the two main preferred/most frequent versions of corporeal conceptualisations of the nation in the questionnaire responses. Chinese responses clearly favoured interpretations based on a geography-institution metonymy, which was interpreted further metaphorically, as in Beijing being portrayed as the *heart* of China, on account of it being the seat of government. The majority of non-Chinese responses, on the other hand, reproduced the hierarchically organised, anatomy-and/or physiology-based analogies to political institutions, which have been the staple of Western political theories since the Middle Ages. In addition, two less frequent interpretations emerged from the pilot survey: the conceptualization of the nation as an organ/part of a larger (international or global) body and its 'reverse' version, i.e. the understanding of the nation as part of the Self's own body.

This latter interpretation links to the second group of responses, i.e. the NATION-AS-PERSON interpretation. On the one hand we found evidence for the conceptualisation of the state as an *authority-figure in a family*, with the great majority of responses focusing on the role of a *nurturing and wise parent*. These results generally confirm CMT's insight into the centrality of the NATION-AS-PERSON metaphor in political thought (Chilton and Lakoff 1995; Goatly 2007; Lakoff 1996, 2004b, Musolff 2010a; for a critique see Twardzisz 2013). They also partly confirm Lakoff's specific hypothesis about the fundamental role that the conceptual complex NATION-AS-PERSON-AS-FAMILY MEMBER plays in political thought (Lakoff 1996, 2004b). However, they add a cross-cultural analysis dimension to it that relativises any potential assumptions about a universal predominance of *Strict Father* over *Nurturant Parent* models, at least for the Chinese data. Within the group of NATION-AS-PERSON readings we also found

a sub-section of elaborate comments on political stereotypes about one's own nation.

These findings put the traditional view of metaphor interpretation as understanding and accepting 'automatically' the ideological bias of metaphors. If interpretations vary to such an extent and also include creative de- and reconstructions of metaphors, it seems plausible to credit their understanding processes with 'deliberateness' (Steen 2008, 2011; for critique see Gibbs 2011a, b). The emergence in the survey of distinct trends of metaphor interpretation among specific linguistic and national groups does provide evidence of culture-specific bias that can be related to particular discourse traditions. This result does *not*, however, imply that the respondents had no choice in doing so. Socially entrenched interpretations may provide easily accessible and socio-culturally acceptable models to follow but they are neither the only ones available nor exempt from reflexive or meta-linguistic uses that enable speakers/writers to put the respective political bias under scrutiny. Unlike the necessity to only identify a metaphor's target referent the decision to endorse and disseminate its bias is in the gift of the interpreter.

4. Conclusions

How, then, do ontologically and ideologically 'biased' interpretation patterns that can embody cultural knowledge become cognitively accessible for metaphor interpreters? Cognitive semantics provides a general answer through reference to the category of conceptual "frames", as outlined first by Fillmore and developed further by Lakoff and others (Fillmore 1975, Lakoff 1987, Taylor 1995). As regards metaphors, CMT has long contented itself with relying on notions of "image schemas" and other highly schematic frame structures (e.g. SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, GREAT CHAIN OF BEING and CONTAINER schemas), all of which correspond to primary metaphors.⁷

However, their very generality makes it highly unlikely that they carry socio-culturally and -historically situated information of the type that we have found in our corpora of metaphor production and reception. To capture such cultural aspects of metaphor production and reception, I have proposed to adapt the notion of "scenario", as an ontologically rich sub-type of frames, to the empirical study of figurative language and have demonstrated its heuristic value in a num-

⁷ Hence, non-spatially targeted uses of prepositions, deictic expressions and transitive constructions have all been viewed as "metaphorical", see, e.g. Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003, 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989. For critiques see, *inter alia*, Jackendoff and Aaron 1991; Pinker 2007.

ber of corpus-based studies (Musolff 2001, 2004a, 2006, 2010a, b, 2011; see also Deignan 2010: 360-362; Semino 2008: 219-222; Sinding 2015). Unlike abstract image-schemas, scenarios include narrative, argumentative and evaluative frame-aspects, which suggest a specific, pragmatically loaded perspective for inferences about the target topic. These inferences are not cognitively or logically binding but rather a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about prototypical elements of the source concepts (participants, story lines, default outcomes) as well as ethical evaluations, which are connected to social attitudes and emotional stances prevalent in the respective discourse community. In the case of the NATION AS BODY metaphor, for instance, the following aspects of source domain knowledge can be shown (see examples above) to be routinely transferred as default assumptions onto the NATION concept as target:

- A HEALTHY BODY IS PREFERABLE TO A SICK BODY
- BODILY WHOLENESS/INTEGRITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SELF'S WELL-BEING
- ALL PARTS OF THE BODY MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR OPTIMAL FUNCTIONING
- SOME BODY PARTS (e.g. HEAD, HEART) ARE MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE SELF'S SURVIVAL THAN OTHERS

Scenario-based perspectives inform users' metaphorical interpretations that appear in the empirically elicited data. Their cultural specificity can be analysed in terms of the links between distribution patterns and collocations in the respective corpus and their pragmatic exploitation and elaboration in argumentative uses and historically contextualised discourse traditions. The above-mentioned hypotheses about culture-specific preferences for the NATION BODY as an INSTITUTIONAL HIERARCHY vs. a GEOPOLITICAL ENTITY articulate the results of such corpus analyses: they are not just put forward on the basis of a few 'fitting' examples but are testable (and, if necessary, falsifiable) conclusions from patterns of scenario uses as they emerge from the data. As we have seen, the hypothesised differences are not a case of 'all-or-nothing' occurrences of particular scenario versions in one cultural group vs. another group, but of contrasts in relative frequencies. All metaphor users/interpreters have a range of scenario perspectives to choose from. Some of them may be found to use the non-default/non-typical versions, but the majority in each group appear to 'agree' on using the 'mainstream' scenario patterns. In this way, cultural metaphor cognition can be seen not so much in opposition to but rather as complementing the universal aspects of metaphor highlighted by CMT. As in many other branches of Language Contact Studies, e.g. Translation and Multilingualism Studies, acknowledgement of cross-cultural contrasts does not entail an absolute incommensurability of languages or cultures but is, on the contrary, a condition for modelling their role in inter-cultural communication as a process of mutual adaptation and learning.

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