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Book review

Marianna Bolognesi, Ana Werkmann Horvat. *Metaphor Compass: A Guide to Language, Cognition, Communication, and Creative Metaphor Research*. New York: Routledge 2023. xiv + 189 pages.

With the advent of *conceptual metaphor theory* (CMT), metaphor research has shifted dramatically towards understanding metaphors as fundamental structures of human thought and language. Over the past four decades, this body of work has expanded into diverse domains such as politics, economics, and science (e.g., Ervas et al. 2017; Prandi & Rossi 2022). However, as the field continues to grow, the challenge of keeping research innovative amidst an increasingly crowded landscape remains. In *Metaphor Compass: A Guide to Language, Cognition, Communication, and Creative Metaphor Research*, emerging scholars Bolognesi and Werkmann Horvat offer a fresh perspective that both reflects on past achievements in metaphor theory and suggests new directions for future research. Through a structure metaphorically organized around a compass, the book navigates four core areas of metaphor research: linguistic diversity, cognitive processing, communication, and creativity.

Metaphor Compass presents its material in a way that mirrors its thematic structure, reflecting the compass metaphor as a guide for navigating metaphor research. The introduction establishes the book's goal to provide a roadmap for the future of metaphor studies, while the eight chapters that follow delve into key themes. Notably, the authors explore both conceptual and creative metaphors, drawing on a wide range of perspectives to broaden the scope of the field.

Chapter 1 addresses the universality and variability of metaphors, stressing the importance of linguistic and cultural context. This aligns with the foundational work of Kövecses (2020), who also emphasizes the tension between universal bodily experiences and culturally specific metaphorical expressions. The authors take issue with the field's reliance on WEIRD (Western educated industrialized rich democratic) languages, particularly English, and call for a more global approach that includes comparative studies across linguistic families. This critique speaks to a growing awareness in metaphor studies of the limitations imposed by English-centric research.

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Chapter 2 revisits the concept of conceptual metaphors, particularly focusing on embodiment¹ and the divide between universality and variability. Building on the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the authors challenge the idea of embodiment as a universally applicable process in metaphor comprehension, suggesting that the evidence for embodied simulation remains inconsistent. They introduce the *metaphor identification procedure* (MIP), advocating for its more widespread use. While the MIP has proven valuable, its manual nature highlights the need for more automated tools, which the authors suggest could be further developed through computational linguistics.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the cognitive and individual processes involved in metaphor interpretation. The authors critique the common view that metaphor processing is straightforward and predictable, proposing that a range of factors – such as conventionality, aptness, and deliberateness – must be considered in understanding how metaphors are processed. Chapter 4 also explores metaphorical competence, particularly in second-language learners, an area that has garnered significant interest in applied linguistics. Bolognesi and Werkmann Horvat propose a large-scale assessment tool to evaluate metaphorical competence, which could significantly advance studies on language proficiency and metaphor comprehension.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine the multimodal use of metaphors, urging scholars to move beyond static studies of text to embrace dynamic and multimodal research. The authors advocate for cross-genre and cross-modal comparisons, recognizing the growing importance of incorporating diverse sensory modes, such as visual and auditory metaphors. Their call for using synaesthetic metaphors to map connections across different sensory modalities is timely, aligning with current trends in cognitive science (Forceville 2016).

Chapters 7 and 8 shift focus to creative metaphors, exploring the mechanisms behind metaphor innovation – bending, breaking, and blending – and emphasizing how these processes contribute to cognitive flexibility and creative thinking. These ideas echo principles from *conceptual blending theory* (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). However, the book could expand on how these mechanisms interact with social and cultural factors.

Bolognesi and Werkmann Horvat's work represents a significant contribution to metaphor research, particularly in terms of critically reassessing foundational ideas in CMT. The authors challenge the absolutist assumptions surrounding concepts like universality and embodiment in metaphor theory, proposing a more nuanced understanding that takes into account the var-

¹ Lakoff & Johnson (1980) introduce the idea of embodiment. They argue that cognition is based on the body's perceptions, movements, and emotional experiences, which influence our understanding of the world and the use of language. Specifically, cognitive processes are closely related to the physical structure and perceptual-motor systems of the body, and the mind and cognition are closely related to the specific body.

iability of metaphorical expressions. This rethinking is crucial, as it avoids the dangers of reductionism in metaphor research, providing a clearer path forward for interdisciplinary studies that incorporate social, cultural, and cognitive factors.

The authors' focus on creative metaphors is another notable contribution. While much of the metaphor literature centers on conventional metaphors, *Metaphor Compass* offers a sophisticated framework for understanding creativity in metaphor usage. The mechanisms of bending, breaking, and blending proposed in the book align with recent advances in cognitive science, which emphasize the dynamic and flexible nature of metaphor processing. This emphasis on creativity not only broadens the theoretical scope but also opens up new avenues for empirical research, particularly in neurocognitive studies.

Additionally, the book's call for the development of digital resources – such as metaphor identification algorithms and metaphor corpora – reflects the growing importance of computational tools in linguistic research. These innovations are timely, given the increasing availability of large-scale digital data, and they promise to revolutionize metaphor analysis by making it more accessible, efficient, and scalable.

While *Metaphor Compass* offers a refreshing and forward-looking perspective on metaphor theory, there are several critical aspects that warrant further attention. One of the main shortcomings of the book is its insufficient engagement with non-Indo-European languages. While the authors make important calls for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research, the book's examples and case studies predominantly draw on English and other European languages. Given the central role of metaphors in human cognition, it is essential to engage with a broader array of languages and cultures, particularly those outside the WEIRD group, to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of metaphorical expressions.

Moreover, while the book does an excellent job of exploring the cognitive processes underlying metaphor comprehension, there is a lack of in-depth discussion about the social and pragmatic functions of metaphors. Metaphors are not only cognitive tools but also deeply embedded in social contexts. Their interpretation often depends on shared cultural knowledge, power dynamics, and social identities. Incorporating these aspects would provide a fuller understanding of the role metaphors play in communication and persuasion.

Another area that could benefit from further development is the integration of research on multimodal metaphors. Although the book briefly touches on the importance of incorporating visual and auditory elements, it could further explore how these multimodal metaphors interact with verbal ones. More empirical research on how the brain processes multimodal metaphors would help clarify the cognitive mechanisms involved and their impact on communication.

Metaphor Compass offers a comprehensive and forward-looking examination of metaphor research, blending theoretical reflection with practical insights. The book critiques long-standing assumptions in metaphor theory, offering fresh perspectives on embodiment, universality, and

the creativity of metaphorical language. However, its focus on English and other widely studied languages limits its global applicability, and further attention to the social dimensions of metaphor would deepen its relevance to communication studies. Despite these limitations, the book provides valuable insights for future research, particularly in its emphasis on technological innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. Bolognesi and Werkmann Horvat's work paves the way for new directions in metaphor research, ensuring the field remains dynamic and attuned to the complexities of global linguistic diversity.

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