

Lexical typology and cognitive semantics: extended uses of temperature terms

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Metaphoric and metonymic processes are a central concern of cognitive semantics (e.g., Geeraerts & Cuyckens 2007, Dąbrowska & Divjak 2015), but this field has on the whole operated with a limited number of languages. In fact, very few of the allegedly “universal” metaphors have been subject to systematic large-scale cross-linguistic comparison (some rare exceptions include THINKING AS PERCEIVING, cf. Sweetser 1900, Evans & Wilkins 2000, Vanhove 2008, Georgakopoulos et al. 2022, and INSTRUMENT AS COMPANION, Stolz et al. 2006). There are serious methodological reasons behind this. A central issue in systematic cross-linguistic or typological comparison, which is dependent on comparable data from different languages, is cross-linguistic identification of phenomena. This, in turn, presupposes a rigorous procedure that ensures we compare like with like. This is, however, difficult to achieve with Conceptual Metaphor Theory’s insistence on metaphors as more general conceptual associations that do not boil down to individual metaphorical uses or linguistic convention, but can manifest themselves in many different ways. To quote Gibbs (2015:183), “cognitive linguists, and others, should articulate criteria for identifying metaphoric patterns in language and inferring specific conceptual metaphors from discourse. These procedures should be specified with sufficient detail so that other researchers can possibly replicate the analysis and emerge with similar conclusions”. Translated into the methodology of systematic cross-linguistic research, this means that we can only test the extent to which some concrete manifestation of metaphor rather than the conceptual metaphor as a whole is found across languages of the world, is very rare, or shows areal and/or genetic preferences.

This talk will focus on *extended uses of temperature terms* (such as *warm, hot, cold, cool*), i.e., their uses outside of the temperature domain proper, including uses that are commonly viewed as metaphors (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2015, Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Nikolaev 2021). These include examples of famous metaphors applying to warming temperatures such as AFFECTION IS WARMTH, e.g., *warm words*, and ANGER IS HEAT, e.g., *hot temperament* (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Grady 1997, Kövecses 2003, etc.), but also others, applying to warming and cooling temperatures, e.g., PEACE IS COOLNESS, as in *e-naa jo* ‘his-mouth (is) cold’ = ‘He is able to create peace always’ in Ga (a Kwa language spoken in Ghana) (see also Shaefer 2015). We will look at the areal and genetic patterns in such uses and at their absence across a sample of about 100 languages from all around the world, and discuss to what extent the findings provide evidence for vs. against the allegedly universal conceptual metaphors AFFECTION IS WARMTH (whose linguistic manifestations show a surprisingly limited areal and genetic distribution) and ANGER IS HEAT (whose linguistic manifestations are much more frequent). The study demonstrates once again the dramatic influence of the Anglocentric, Standard Average European, and WEIRD perspective on many of the central concepts and conclusions in linguistics, psychology and cognitive research, and emphasizes the necessity to bring in linguistic diversity into this research (cf. Piirainen & Sherris 2015, Wnuk & Ito 2021, Blasi et al. 2022).

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