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## Holism, Cognition and Metaphor

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

*EWA WYCHORSKA\**

## **HOLISM, COGNITION AND METAPHOR**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper aims to reconsider the accounts of holism and cognitive linguistics in the determination of meaning and meaning creation. I argue that the meaning of metaphors is not only subjected to source – target domain relations. I suggest a theorem which emphasizes the cognitive epistemology of metaphors and accounts for the holistic approach in the process of metaphor cognition and communication. The need to research this aspect of language arises from the observation of the fact that language shapes human thought enormously in the era of new socio-cultural behaviors, activities, ventures, priorities and values that seem to emerge. The empirical evidence for my research comes mainly from everyday language used in songs, advertisements, informal dialogs and social internet portals/blogs, all of which are dominated, as it appeared in the course of this analysis, by dreams and emotions. The theoretical basis for my research are philosophical, theoretical and traditional findings of cognitive linguistics. My aim is to show how holism can accommodate and also increase meaning stability which is essential for understanding of any written and spoken discourses. Cognitive linguistics treats language, its semantic properties and features and the human mental system as one meaning representational system. Holism postulates that each representation depends semantically on every other representation in this system. The priority of the whole over its parts will be explained as well as the fact that holism is the sense of the fundamental truth of any experience.

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## 2. Atomism, anatomism, modularism and cognition

The best point to start my analysis is probably the clarification of the terminological confusion of the terms *holistic*, *atomistic*, *anatomistic* and *modularist* in relation to linguistic studies. There seem to be many uses of the term *holistic* in maths, physics or philosophy. Cognitive linguistics puts emphasis on the distinction between *meaning holism* and *content holism* in general. Meaning holism is defined as conditions for the possibility of linguistic expressions that have meaning and it is connected with the philosophy of language. On the other hand, content holism is simply what the thought represents or what it is about and subsequently it is connected with the philosophy of mind.<sup>1</sup> Cognitive linguistics seems to encompass both of these theories. In meaning holism, the items which cognitive linguistics examines are linguistic expressions in the holistic system which is language. As far as content holism is concerned the items are thoughts in the system which is the human brain's reasoning potential plus human experience.<sup>2</sup> The holistic approach to this discussion allows me to formulate the following opinion: *a dream/wish/aim/desire/emotion is a part of a whole system of human empirical cognition of both abstraction and reality*. If there is a combination of reality and abstraction, it is the holistic approach to meaning recognition and creation that provides a thorough explanation. Abstraction and reality, in turn, are frequently expressed in metaphors. Holism allows us to treat these metaphors as networks of relational, inferential, analogous and dynamic fields. These networks constitute a language. The holistic approach to the meaning of metaphors defines metaphor meaning as parts of large fields of relations, inferences, analogies and beliefs. These are present in everyone's mental content. For example, if X believes that *money is happiness* and Y believes that *money isn't happiness*, then it is clear that people do not have the same beliefs. However, I would argue that both X and Y also have beliefs that, for example, Z can have either a belief that *money is happiness* or *money isn't happiness*. Consequently X must have the belief that there is a belief that *money isn't happiness* in which X does not believe and by analogy, Y must have the belief that there is a belief that *money is happiness* in which Y does not

<sup>1</sup> For a definition see <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/meaning-holism/> (25.05.2015) and Quine, W. V. *From a Logical Point of View*. Cambridge 1953, MA: Harvard University Press: 41, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Empirical examples in this discussion are metaphors of dreams and emotions.

believe. It is based on the notion of *deductive validity* and can be rigorously stated for systems of *formal logic* in terms of the well-understood notions of semantics.

$$S\{A \vee A1 \vee A2 \vee \sim A \vee \sim A1 \vee \dots\}$$

$$X \in A \ Y \in \vee \sim A \vee A \ X \ \& \ Y \in Z \rightarrow A \vee A1 \vee A2 \vee \sim A \vee \sim A1 \vee \dots \leftrightarrow A \in S \text{ etc.}^3$$

Furthermore, holistic approach has always been opposed to or contrasted with modular (Fodor, 1983)<sup>4</sup> and atomistic (Wittgenstein, 1967, Russell, 1918)<sup>5</sup> theories of semantic description and explanation. My reasons to reject atomistic theories, according to which each simple expression can have a meaning independently of all other expressions (sentences have a meaning in isolation from others), or molecular theories (that lead to holism in the aspect that we share at least some beliefs) according to which there are meaning dependencies that are restricted to smaller parts plus the fact that they are and are not (which I will try to show later) unidirectional become the reason to accept holism in cognitive analysis of e.g. dream and emotion metaphors. The whole system of cognition falls into parts – transducers.<sup>6</sup>

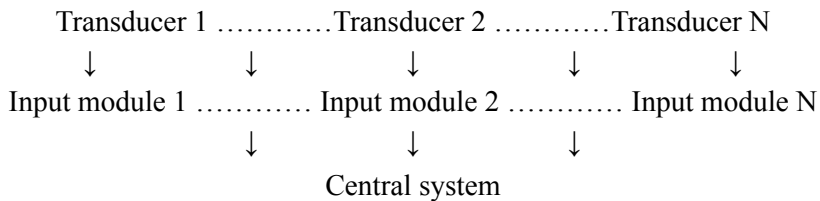


Figure 1: Fodor’s model of perception and cognition

They pick up sensory input and turn it into representations. Then input systems map these representations onto other representations and finally there is

<sup>3</sup> Analysis of a belief in deductive validity, formal logic : set membership, logical disjunction, propositional logic, lattice theory.

<sup>4</sup> Fodor and LePore, (1992: 2–5), define “holistic property” to be a property such that, if one entity has it, then a lot of entities have it. Semantic holism (meaning holism, content holism), as they understand it, is then the doctrine that generic semantic properties, like the property of having meaning, are holistic.

<sup>5</sup> Russell and Wittgenstein eventually rejected Logical Atomism. In his book , *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1967), rejected it and investigated the “limits of the world” and later meaning holism. Russell, B. (1956) “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism,” in Marsh, ed., *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901–1950*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

<sup>6</sup> Figure 1: Fodor’s model of perception and cognition according to Fodor (1983) *The Modularity of Mind*. MIT Press, Bradford Books.

the central process of reasoning or problem solving that works with these second representations. Modularity treats the input systems as objects of research. Linguistic atomism, on the other hand, focuses on the properties of words that are explained with the properties of parts / molecules that constitute these words and subsequently parts / molecules are explained with other parts/atoms in these words. I am trying to argue that both the atomistic and molecular explanations of the empirical cognition of metaphors of dreams and emotions raise serious problems in the semantic dimension of linguistic explanation. We do not focus on one single detail during the semantic analysis of a metaphor but we use the holistic spectrum of information (both a priori and a posteriori knowledge). Metaphors are very non-autonomous structures (e.g. idiomatic expressions), therefore rarely do we explain the behavior and function of the entire metaphorical expression from the properties of its parts. If idioms are to be considered e.g.: *leave under a cloud, moods are weather, light at the end of a tunnel, short-cut to success, on the road to recovery, worth a whole week, pull your socks up etc.*, the application of the holistic approach places no possibility to map their parts to discernible functions within the function of the entire expression. What shall we do the cognitive mapping for in a metaphor? *Even by doing so one cannot get any crucial properties such as frequency of co-occurrence, mutual informativity or contexts that influence their meaning.*<sup>7</sup> The structures in question, namely metaphors of emotions and dreams, wishes or desires, are logically primary to the properties of parts, which is the basic assumption of holism. It is the whole expression's cognition that decides on how the parts behave. If there is a need to define parts in order to understand the whole in metaphors of dreams and emotions or if it is necessary in any case, then we turn to source – target domain relations or the holistic technical notion called anatomism.<sup>8</sup> A property is anatomic / holistic on condition that *if anything has it, then at least one other thing does* (Fodor, Lepore 1992:1).<sup>9</sup> The property of anatomism turns our attention to the ontological interdependence of things. Semantic properties of words are determined by their role in language. What a word means in a metaphorical expression is determined by its role in the language as well. That is why the property of being a symbol is anatomic, like a liver is a part of the whole system of the human

<sup>7</sup> L. Kálmán, 2008, 'Holisztikus szemlélet a nyelvészetben [The holistic view in linguistics]'. SzabadVáltozók, [www.nytud.hu/oszt/elmnyelv/kalman/publist.html](http://www.nytud.hu/oszt/elmnyelv/kalman/publist.html) (5.06.2011).

<sup>8</sup> J. Fodor, E. Lepore, 1992, *Holism: A Shopper's Guide*, Oxford, Blackwell.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

body and it also has a role in this whole system to which it belongs. Metaphors of dreams, such as, *a heart is life* are understood holistically. The holistic approach encompasses the primary meaning of this metaphor. It is not atomistic because it cannot be said that the meanings of *heart* (*love, warmth, organ, etc.*) and *life* (*love, difficulties, goals, etc.*) do not depend on other things. If it depends on at least two, it is anatomic and if it depends on many other things, it is holistic. It is exemplified by similarity or analogy in cognitive mapping.

### 3. Holism and cognition

Language reflects patterns of thought and it helps understand human cognition or how the human mind works. Therefore, to study language from this perspective is to study patterns of conceptualization. The holistic approach (among many others advocated by linguistic, psycholinguistic and philosophical studies) is of merit. Language offers insight into cognitive functions, providing evidence about the nature, structure and organization of thoughts and beliefs. The most important way in which cognitive linguistics differs from other approaches to the study of language is that language is assumed to reflect certain fundamental properties and design features of the human mind. Humans rely upon language in order to express, understand and perform actions. Features of language such as form, meaning, content, mental image, conceptualization, categorization, experiential frames, conceptual domains, image schemas (Langacker 1987, 1999; Fillmore 1982; Fauconnier 1997; Turner 1991; Rosch 1975; Johnson 1987 among others)<sup>10</sup> help explain human cognition. Human cognitive abilities integrate natural, unprocessed and raw perceptual information into a coherent and well defined, characterized, precise mental image. The meanings encoded by linguistic symbols then, refer to the projected reality<sup>11</sup> which is a mental representation of reality, construed by the human mind, mediated by unique perceptual and conceptual systems.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>11</sup> Discussed by R. Jackendoff, 1983, *Semantics and Cognition*, MIT Press.



empirical experience and the content from the embodied mind. The most important here would also be the basic virtue of information encapsulation which, according to Fodor (1983)<sup>15</sup>, is the fact that it enables input systems to do this work quickly. Holism would reconcile the fact that cognition is partly computational but works, in part, by combinatorial symbol-manipulation, not just associations among sensory features, as in many connectionist models.<sup>16</sup> The question arises at this point whether the holistic content is accessed every time an adult understands a meaning? Consequently to answer the question, the above discussion brings me to the idea of Hochstein (2007)<sup>17</sup> who seems to have found the right solution by comparing and finally naming the doubts mentioned above with notions of situated cognition, situated holism and situated context holism. Hochstein (2007)<sup>18</sup> calls his theory *situated holism*. It happens when a metaphor enters a mind, then a closest meaning recognition is chosen, either an abstract one or a physical one. One goes over the options in the mind, quickly separates the plausible options from the implausible ones. Some explanations, definitions, senses, significances, values are considered likely, while others are dismissed when holistic content is entered during meaning recognition. What influences the final meaning adjustment? *The totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges. [...] A conflict with experience at the periphery occasions readjustments in the interior of the field. Truth values have to be redistributed over some of our statements. Re-evaluation of some statements entails reevaluation of others, because of their logical interconnections.*<sup>19</sup> Human brains did not evolve in complete isolation from the world. They evolved specifically to help us *cognize* first and then *survive in* and to *deal with* the world around us. *An important comment on cognitive science is that minds, unlike computers, exist in the context of a complex physical world. In this conception, mental activity does not occur in a vacuum, isolated from the sur-*

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>16</sup> See discussions by S. Pinker, 1997, *How the mind works*, Penguin Books, London.

<sup>17</sup> E. Hochstein, 2007, *Situated Cognition and Situated Holism*, Paper draft presented at: Conference on Cognition: Embodied Embedded, Enactive, Extended, <http://situatedholism.pdf> (27.05.2015).

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> W.V. Quine, 1951, *Two Dogma's of Empiricism*, "The Philosophical Review", Vol. 60, No. 1:39.



*rounding world. Much of our thinking is directly connected to sensory inputs and motor outputs. It is devoted to interacting with the “outsides”, as opposed to operating on complex forms of representation and computation generated from the “inside”*<sup>20</sup> Taking this into account, recent theories of “situated cognition” argue that the environment itself should be thought of as an integral part of the cognitive process. There is holistic cognition and holistic content but the question is why we do not use all holistic beliefs to define a certain meaning. *In general, evolved creatures will neither store nor process information in costly ways when they can use the structure of the environment and their operations upon it as a convenient stand-in for the information-processing operations concerned. That is, know only as much as you need to know to get the job done.*<sup>21</sup> Hochstein (2007),<sup>22</sup> quoting Solomon (2007: 415),<sup>23</sup> precisely defines holistic cognition and meaning recognition. *Cognition is always situated. It is always concretely instantiated in one way or another. There are no disembodied cognitive achievements.* The question then is in what kind of system our beliefs fit. Our beliefs come from the environment and embodied mind and therefore help us navigate in the meaning-understanding process. Everything is understood as action – environment – context – belief process. There is a contextually-sensitive cognition and therefore there is a situated belief holism meaning recognition. *It would be a mistake to think that all our beliefs must fit into one system in order for them to be meaningful. Much smaller holistic systems of beliefs, which are context specific, can provide beliefs with the meanings they need for us to navigate that particular environment. Situational and environmental cues can trigger a small system of beliefs that is useful for dealing with that environment. We reduce our cognitive workload and get past the computation problem by using the environment to help in the selection of small computationally manageable systems of beliefs. As long as these contextually sensitive pockets of beliefs are effective in helping us navigate and solve contextual problems, it doesn't matter whether the pockets themselves are part of a connected whole that links all our*

<sup>20</sup> Quoted after J. Friedenberg, G. Silverman, 2006, *Cognitive Science: An Introduction to the Study of Mind*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications: 444.

<sup>21</sup> A. Clark, 1998, *Being There*. MIT Press: 46-47.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> M. Solomon, 2007, *Situated Cognition*, [in:] *Philosophy of Psychology and Cognitive Science*, P. Thagard (ed.), Amsterdam, North-Holland.

*beliefs together*.<sup>24</sup> Summing up, we use holistic sets of beliefs according to contexts. For example, in a metaphoric text *love* might be expressed as *a belief or concept of suffering, losing one's head, getting flurried* whose meanings are inclusive of love. In fact, once somebody experienced this particular feeling or has a belief that somebody else might have had it or not. One would assume it to be about generic death but metaphorically it might mean the death, for example, of love. Beliefs are that love is sinking, love is falling down, love is plunging, immersing. This situational metaphorical meaning does not relate directly to the general concept of love, which is generically positive. Here the idea of situated holism helps explain the case. Meaning recognition, in this case, is a process of metaphorical situational holistic context matching, harmonizing or adjusting. Another example is when we talk about dreams that are born. In this context of new, fresh ideas that come to mind we can metaphorically describe dreams as living creatures coming, being delivered to this world. The meanings as such can be interpreted according to situated holism or context holism. Holistic cognition and meaning recognition seem indispensable in metaphorical language. Metaphors root from human beliefs. What is more, our beliefs do not exist in isolation from one another. Beliefs make sense only in relation to the other beliefs of a holistic system of cognition.

#### 4. Are semantic properties in metaphors of dreams and emotions holistic?

The primary tool for any further analysis of metaphor is the theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Sweetser 1990, Turner 1991, 1996 and others)<sup>25</sup> where metaphor is to be understood as any mapping ( it is a tool to point to all the possible relations and dependencies of words' meanings: definitely a holistic approach) between separate conceptual domains. The purpose of mapping is to structure

<sup>24</sup> Quoted after Hochstein (2007: 9) E. Hochstein, *Situated Cognition and Situated Holism*, Paper draft presented at: Conference on Cognition: Embodied Embedded, Enactive, Extended, <http://situatedholism.pdf> (27.05.2015).

<sup>25</sup> G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, 1980, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press; E. Sweetser, 1990, *From Etymology to Pragmatics: The Mind-as-Body Metaphor in Semantic Structure and Semantic Change*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; M. Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science*, Princeton 1991, Princeton University Press; M. Turner, *The literary mind: The origins of thought and language*, Oxford 1996, Oxford University Press.

an abstract, unfamiliar, or unstructured domain (the *target*) in terms of one that is more concrete, familiar, or structured (the *source*). Mapping is done, as suggested above, on the basis of situated holism. Also this mapping would constitute Pagin's (1997, 2002)<sup>26</sup> totality of relations, the whole extension and interdependence of concepts or beliefs. Kalisz (2001)<sup>27</sup> writes about the *interaction metaphor theory* which was the closest theory to the conduit metaphor theory developed by cognitive linguistics. The interaction theory of metaphor treats relations between the domains similarly but there is no distinction between the target and the source domains. The interactions between the domains are equal and almost transitive. There is the possibility of changing the domains or the process of one domain e.g. the source serving as the target and in the development of looking for the correspondences between domains, the target may serve as the source. Furthermore, if it is possible, the above combinations can serve as a holistic domain and the *unidirectionality principle*<sup>28</sup> is violated. For example, in the metaphor *love is a journey* we can talk about *journey as love* or *love as journey* in holistic analysis when structure, function, process, context are the features to be considered:

<i>the source: journey (concrete)</i>	<i>the target: love (abstract)</i> <sup>29</sup>
and	
the source: love (abstract)	the target: journey (concrete)
objects of love	destinations to reach
force	power to move
opponents to overcome	difficulties on the way
magic	pleasure experienced
unity/bond/closeness	means/way of travelling
affection/lack of	progress/lack of
physical love	act of travelling
love game	choices to make
heat/fire	admiration for the destinations

<sup>26</sup> P. Pagin, *Are Compositionality and Holism Compatible?* [In:] *Olismo*, Massimo dell'Utri (ed.), Macerata 2002, Quodlibet; P. Pagin, *Is compositionality compatible with holism?* "Mind & Language" 1997, 12:11–33.

<sup>27</sup> R. Kalisz, *Językoznawstwo kognitywne w świetle językoznawstwa funkcjonalnego*, Gdańsk 2001, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego

<sup>28</sup> In relation to the idea of unidirectionality I need to clarify that Traugott and Hopper were the creators of this idea with reference to the regularity of the types of syntactic constructions and it was Kövecses (2000) who made relations to this theory in his works on metaphors and domains.

<sup>29</sup> Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical introduction*, New York 2002, Oxford University Press.

These correspondences, relations or interdependences are based on situational holism of beliefs. Another example relates to the fact that we can talk about *journey as life*. Here is the analysis:

the source: life (abstract)	the target: journey (concrete)
humans/animals	travellers
life cycle	vehicle
events in life	journey itinerary
progress in life	distance
difficulties in life	obstacles encountered
life choices	decisions – where to go
goals of life	destination

Source does not always have to be concrete and target abstract. If we restrict metaphor meaning to the holistic doctrine of meaning, content holism can define a particular thought, belief, propositional attitude. Holism requires from a speaker that he or she can understand any expression only if there is a set of expressions with specific other interpretations that he or she also understands. Domains consist of nodes which have meanings in the network which is language. Meanings-nodes are different functional roles in cognition. So content and meaning holism of a dream, for example, is a network of co-dependent beliefs and thoughts. The holistic approach to dreams and emotions also means that everyone does not have the same thoughts and beliefs but everyone can refer his/her thoughts to certain meanings that he/she has or others might have or not of which he/she has or has not beliefs. In a metaphor we can say that if *love is a journey* and *life is a journey* then we can say that *love is life*. Both source and target domains are abstract. Love and life are abstract concepts. The answer is that both might be understood on the basis of correspondences in mappings. There is still another explanation which is offered by the analysis of emotions. It claims that, according to Kövesces (2002),<sup>30</sup> emotion is a force / usually a moving force. Moving force is in every emotion and love is a basic emotion. Then *love* and *life* are explained through this feature. *Life* and *love* operate on the same target and source. The combination of these two can be called a kind of a holistic domain. Some of the main arguments for my discussion here are, as holistic theory holds it, that cognitive abilities, one of which is language, cannot be studied independently

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

of other cognitive abilities because they play a vital, conclusive and pivotal role in semantics and linguistic competence. These abilities are definitive cognitive tools such as categorization (Rosch 1975)<sup>31</sup>, mapping, image schemas, domains or ICMs etc. (Lakoff 1980). Their application in the process of explanation of holistic basis for the understanding of dream and emotion metaphors seems indispensable. Another example of that is the metaphor – *love is happiness* which is an abstract metaphor. It can be explained by the process of mapping to achieve a concrete understanding of these abstract concepts. The source domain is *love* and the target domain is *happiness*. Both are abstract domains. The whole meaning of the sentence/structure is primary to the parts. As a result of the mapping *love* is understood metaphorically as *children, sex, physical attraction, wife or husband* etc. while *happiness* can mean money, power, success, etc. Then a concrete metaphor e.g. *physical attraction is money* can be made. Mapping does not pose any limits to the semantic choice of concepts. Mapping allows for certain features to be derived from one concept onto the other, e.g. form, function, structure, etc. and these represent human beliefs. If *physical attraction* brings *happiness*, *money* does too. Still not every feature is mapped. There are hidden features but there are also entailments that help in revealing underlying attitudes about which we have beliefs. For example, we are aware that *good comes always along with bad, happiness with unhappiness* or *love provokes into doing bad* or *doing bad provokes love*. Some features can be inclusive. If it were not for emotions, however, one would not know what to desire, want, wish. It is not mathematical logic either at all, as Damasio (1994)<sup>32</sup> claims. He proposed a mechanism by which emotions guide or bias human behavior and decision-making. He also posited that rationality requires emotional input. Again this proves the need for holistic approach to the explanation of cognition of dreams and emotions in scholarly dimension. Emotions enable us to make complex decisions. Discoveries in cognitive science and neuroscience by Damasio (1994)<sup>33</sup> prove that no one can be rational in desires and wishes if one does not recognize emotions. Without emotions one is irrational. Metaphors express emotions as passions, actions or states and these are features we dream about in general. Metaphor still seems to

<sup>31</sup> E. Rosch, 1975, *Family resemblances: studies in the internal structure of categories*, “Cognitive Psychology”, 7.

<sup>32</sup> A. Damasio, 1994, *R. Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, Putnam Publishing, Putnam, revised Penguin edition, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

be the best type of expression in language to constitute, blend and conceptualize dreams.<sup>34</sup>

Happy is up. Happiness is being in heaven. Happy is light. Happy is warm. Happiness is health. Happiness is insanity. Happiness is a fluid in a container. Love is a nutrient. Love is a journey. Love is closeness/unity/bond. Love is fire. Love is force. Love is a game. Love is magic. Love is a valuable object. Pride is economic value.<sup>35</sup>

And others (compiled by the present author):

A credit card is your friend. Happiness is a quick – starting car. (Esso) Home is a real fire. (coal company) Guinness gives you strength, refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach. (Heineken) You meet the nicest people on a Honda. When your shoes shine, so do you. (Kiwi shoe polish) America's storyteller (dreamsteller) (Kodak) Lucozade aids recovery. (Lucozade) A car and a man is a successful relationship. Love is an oriental breeze. Money sprouts. Or dreams are: a sea of happiness; a chimera to follow; a desire is an empty glass; a desire is a long-distance run; a dream is an inner exhilaration; a dream is an uncontrollable wave of thoughts; a wish is an endless waiting; a desire is a colorful, picturesque sleep; a desire is a sweet melody; a dream is a flight in the clouds.<sup>36</sup>

Domains are, in general, shared for all these emotions and dreams. A dream can be a creation of abstract thoughts and the abstract source might be the basis for its understanding or vice versa. The metaphorical process does not always go from the concrete concept to the abstract as discussed before. In metaphors of dreams, for example, there are more possibilities: concrete - abstract, abstract - concrete, abstract - abstract or concrete - concrete in domain principle.

<sup>34</sup> The holistic approach to metaphor and metonymy analysis forces their continuous compilation and their distinction is complementary, they use transformation, create a new discourse, but also operate in order to consolidate the existing discourse according to R. Jakobson, 1964, *Dwa aspekty języka i dwa typy zakłóceń afatycznych*, [in:] R. Jakobson, M. Halle, *Podstawy języka*, Wrocław.

<sup>35</sup> Z. Kövecses, 2000, *Metaphor and Emotion*, Cambridge: CUP.

<sup>36</sup> Most of the examples of metaphors and sometimes metonymies come from advertisements, blogs, lyrics, etc. Tagging words on the internet, for example, seems to be an excellent idea for a business success for many corporations. It is a great way to find out what people dream about, what they are interested in, what they simply need. The more often the word is typed in the more its physical meaning's representation is desired, namely the product to be sold. Holistic approach to meaning creation and comprehension allows for the excellent catchy phrases or metaphors to be first created and then successfully used commercially. It is therefore linguistics that makes the world go round. See the following web pages for examples: [www.43things.com](http://www.43things.com), [www.adv.pl](http://www.adv.pl), [www.marzymy.pl](http://www.marzymy.pl), [www.emarzenia.info](http://www.emarzenia.info), [www.zlotarybka.pl](http://www.zlotarybka.pl), etc.

The meaning of these metaphors is constituted by expressions' inferential relations in the source - target domains which was already considered one holistic domain. Whether abstract or concrete, the meaning of an expression - metaphor is constituted by all of its inferential relations and by all of its role in a language. Every possible verification with a holistic belief applies to the explanation of dream and emotion metaphors and valuation/validation is especially important as dreams manifest themselves in everyday metaphors most often and are inclusive of emotions. Any inference that is accepted as valid must come out as valuable and valid for the meaning assignment. According to Krzeszowski's (1997)<sup>37</sup> study on valuation both positive and negative emotions or desires are present in the human system of values. In metaphors we can provide links between distinct beliefs. If one dreams about a *purpose in life* which is a *destination*, a *destination* then is not only a place but it might be *love*, *career*, *work*, *house*. Emotions accompanying possession, hunger for, having, gaining or being a certain concept stay the same; they have stability over time. This suggests that figurative linguistic expressions that speakers use to talk about their emotions and dreams derive from a largely shared conceptual system. This system consists of experiences gained through narratives and frames (Fillmore, 1976; Fauconnier, Turner, 1996)<sup>38</sup> and proves that it is always the case that background has holistic effect on figure. The idea is that we think in frames and images that are present in our minds. Once they enter the brain world they are there as a holistic image. It is also the whole that decides how the parts behave. A metaphor cannot be understood without the primacy of the whole. It is an idea exemplifying more general holistic ideas which states that there is some whole with semantic significance that has priority of the semantic parts – individual linguistic expressions. Another claim is that we cannot separate an abstract system of language from perception and processing issues. Neither can we do it with embodied mind or epistemological cognition. The key to the holistic approach to the cognition of dreams

<sup>37</sup> T.P. Krzeszowski, 1997, *Angels and devils in hell: elements of axiology in semantics*. Warszawa: Energia

<sup>38</sup> G. Fauconnier, M. Turner, 1996, *Blending as a central process of grammar*, [in:] *Conceptual structure, discourse, and language*, A. Goldberg (ed.), Center for the Study of Language and Information, distributed by Cambridge University Press; Ch.J. Fillmore, 1976, *Frame semantics and the nature of language*, [in:] *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences: Conference on the Origin and Development of Language and Speech*, New York. Volume 280: 20-32.

and emotions is the feeling of fundamental truth of human experience and it is true if and only if it corresponds to reality (Tarski 1956)<sup>39</sup>.

Examples:

A dream is fuel, money, a picture of our wishes. Dreams are safety, love, help, sense of being, the lack of psychological coldness/hurt soul, directions of activities, education, travels, a fridge (reasons are behind epistemological cognition), people – family, husband, children, grandchildren; thoughts about concrete frames, pictures, narratives and situations; entertainment. Dreams strengthen, lighten, warm. Sea of dreams is a wish.

To understand these examples means to be able to relate the parts to the whole which they constitute and to the truth they represent. We experience the world in holistic content and refer it to the holistic semantics. We do not experience the table as a divided object consisting of legs, table top and a drawer, for example, but as a table in a holistic dimension. By saying the word *table* one pictures *a table*, *a holistic table* in one's mind. It is analogous to the comprehension of metaphors. Holism in metaphors of e.g. dreams and emotions is about the representational contents of perceptual experience corresponding to reality, even if this cannot always be expressed in separate words it is in metaphors that it does. To summarize, this holistic meaning is based on the idea that the meaning of an expression must include all the possible meanings corresponding to reality in possible worlds (Carnap 1947, Lewis 1973, Stalnaker 1985, Kaplan 1995, among others)<sup>40</sup>, although only one of them is used in a particular expression. Humans do not have only one thought or belief. Humans have all thoughts and beliefs that come from their experience if and only if a particular experience has entered the content of their knowledge. Therefore a speaker can attach an experience to a meaning and vice versa. It is the whole that we comprehend first, then if needed we move to the explanation of parts.

<sup>39</sup> A. Tarski, 1956, *Logic, Semantics and Mathematics*. Oxford: Calderon Press.

<sup>40</sup> R. Carnap, 1947, *Meaning and Necessity: a Study in Semantics and Modal Logic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; D.K. Lewis, 1973, *Counterfactuals*, Harvard University Press; revised printing Blackwell 1986; R. Stalnaker, 1985, *Possible worlds and situations*, Stanford; D.B. Kaplan, 1985, *A Problem in Possible World Semantics*, [in:] *Modality, Morality, and Belief*, W. Sinnott-Armstrong et al. (eds.), Cambridge.



Also, semantic holism is a principle of *determination* of meaning:

the meanings of expressions in a language L are determined together, by a totality of relations between expressions in L. (...) First, if some particular non-semantic property A, or relation R, is relevant for determination of meaning, then the theory must specify the whole extension (as far as L is concerned), of A, or R. The whole extension, and not just some selected subset, is relevant for meaning determination. Second, the meanings get determined together. They get determined together because assignments of meanings to different expressions are interdependent. What meaning expression  $\alpha$  can have depends on what meaning expressions  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  can have, and vice versa. Many combinations of meaning assignments are excluded. In the extreme case no two expressions of a language can have their meanings determined independently of each other.<sup>41</sup>

The holistic approach to the explanation of meaning metaphors makes it possible for people to understand novel metaphors that enter our linguistic lexicon of expressions. That is why there is no problem for modern society to produce and understand metaphors such as these :

love with no tomorrow, stripped dreams, fallen everyday life, win-win strategy, reason has time off, to dream is to cross the gates of reality, transported with joy, stop/freeze/immobilize time, step out from the wardrobe, scatter/dispel dreams, virtual friend, Nobel for artificial intelligence, stay on these roads (milky way), dreams are cheap/free entertainment, goal setting community -(internet portal for people who define their dreams), dreamliner, dreamlinux, dreamweaver, dreamlifter, dream juggling, You I breathe, dreams are fuel, etc.<sup>42</sup>

Metaphorical language poses a hope for a successful movie, record or computer game. Metaphorical language does not say directly what is meant and this space in between is all that interests cinema, business or music/literary world. Metaphorical language of dreams and emotions touches the hidden, secret, magical world so omnipresent in popular culture and business world per se.

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted after P. Pagin, 2002, *Are Compositionality and Holism Compatible?*, [in:] *Olismo*, Massimo dell'Utri (ed.), Macerata: Quodlibet; P. Pagin, 1997, *Is compositionality compatible with holism?*, *Mind & Language*, 12: 3, 11–33.

<sup>42</sup> See footnote 29.

## 5. Conclusions

The holistic approach to the explanation of e.g. metaphors of dreams and emotions proves that the function between sets of beliefs and meanings is not one-to-one. The function involved is many-to-many situation permitting. From a practical perspective, this study provides guidance to linguists for further metaphor or metonymy examination.<sup>43</sup> The holistic approach to cognitive analysis of metaphor and metonymy is a source of valuable applications for disciplines such as translation studies. From a theoretical perspective, another cognitive theorem is presented here to help understand human mental activities such as recognition, comprehension, inference, interpretation, judgment and imagination. The theorem helps understand how processes of cognition work when we want to test and analyze human mental abilities involved in metaphor comprehension. Finally, the cognitive theory which holds that in order to understand human action, we must postulate such entities as perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, desires, intentions, values and emotions. It is true that several ways of describing the facts are undesirable in a scientific theorem however, the existence of the various types of explanations leads to clarification, analysis and in consequence results in credible conclusions. The best known motivation for semantic/mental holism involves the doctrine of confirmation holism, according to which *our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body*.<sup>44</sup>

### Abstract

The study is to argue for a research framework for analysing the contents of linguistic expressions which is to suggest its holistic character. Each concept representation in a linguistic or mental system depends semantically on every other representation in the system which is a language. Everything we use in a language has meaning. It has meaning because it is either related to our bodily experience (concrete domain) or because it is built on other meaning-bearing elements (abstract domain). Thought then, is the embodiment of concepts from direct and indirect experience. At the same time, thought is imaginative because those concepts that are not directly grounded in bodily experience are created by imaginative processes such as metaphor. So, concepts grow

<sup>43</sup> Author does not focus on the basic analysis of kinds of metaphors by a classical type systematization since it has been done repeatedly for the sake of formal analysis elsewhere.

<sup>44</sup> W.V. Quine, 1953, *From a Logical Point of View*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 41.

out of either bodily experience or are created in mind through abstract reasoning and are understood in terms of those. Therefore cognition of dreams and emotions is holistic. At this point of research, the implications of holism about the meaning and understanding or expressing of dreams and emotions are explored and supported by empirical evidence.

**Keywords:** holism, cognition, metaphor

## HOLIZM, POZNANIE I METAFORA

### Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu jest analiza treści wyrażen językowych, która ma na celu zbadanie jej holistycznego charakteru. Każda reprezentacja pojęcia w systemie językowym i umysłowym zależy semantycznie od każdej innej reprezentacji w tym systemie, którym jest język. Wszystko czego używamy w języku ma sens ponieważ jest zarówno związane z naszym doświadczeniem ciała (domena źródłowa: konkretna) lub dlatego, że opiera się na innych znaczeniach elementów (domena docelowa: abstrakcyjna). Myśl jest więc ucieleśnieniem pojęć z doświadczenia bezpośredniego i pośredniego. Jednocześnie te pojęcia, które nie są bezpośrednio zakorzenione w doświadczeniu ciała są tworzone przez poznawcze i mentalne procesy, takie jak metafory, metonimie i idiomy. Tak więc pojęcia wyrastają z obu doświadczeń ciała lub są tworzone w umyśle poprzez abstrakcyjne rozumowanie i są rozumiane w tych kategoriach. Dlatego poznanie przykładowych tu marzeń i emocji jest holistyczne. Implikacje holistyczne dotyczące znaczenia i rozumienia lub wyrażania marzeń i emocji są omawiane w tym artykule i poparte empirycznymi przykładami. Podejście holistyczne do kognitywnej analizy metafor i metonimii jest źródłem cennych wniosków dla dyscyplin takich jak na przykład studia nad przekładem.

**Słowa kluczowe:** holizm, poznanie, metafora