‘Metaphor’ is the phenomenon whereby we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else. In this book Elena Semino discusses metaphor as a common linguistic occurrence, which is varied in its textual appearance, versatile in the functions it may perform, and central to many different types of communication, from informal interaction to political speeches. She discusses the use of metaphor across a variety of texts and genres from literature, politics, science, education, advertising and the discourse of mental illness. Each chapter includes detailed case studies focusing on specific texts, from election leaflets to specialist scientific articles. Also included is a detailed consideration of corpus (computer-based) methods of analysis. Wide-ranging and informative, this book will be invaluable to those interested in metaphor from a range of disciplines.

ELena Semino is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University. Her previous publications include Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis (2002, edited with J. Culpeper) and Corpus Stylistics: Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation in a Corpus of English Writing (2004, with M. Short).
Metaphor in Discourse

Elena Semino

Lancaster University
To Jonathan, Emily and Natalie
Contents

List of figures ix
Acknowledgements x
List of abbreviations xii

1 Introduction: studying metaphor in discourse 1
   1.1 Some preliminaries 1
   1.2 Metaphor in language 11
   1.3 Metaphor and ideology 32
   1.4 The structure of this book 35

2 Metaphor in literature 36
   2.1 A preliminary example: metaphors for migraine in a novel 36
   2.2 Metaphorical conventionality and creativity in literature 42
   2.3 Literature and variation in metaphor use 54
   2.4 Case study 1: Elizabeth Jennings’s ‘Answers’ 66
   2.5 Case study 2: metaphor and character contrasts in Joanne Harris’s Chocolat 71
   2.6 Summary 79

3 Metaphor in politics 81
   3.1 A preliminary example: Tony Blair’s ‘reverse gear’ 81
   3.2 Metaphor and persuasion in politics 85
   3.3 More on metaphor, discourse and ideology 87
   3.4 Source and target domains in politics 90
   3.5 Metaphorical choices and patterns within and across texts in politics 106
   3.6 Case study 1: the Middle East ‘Road Map’ 109
   3.7 Case study 2: an anti-immigration leaflet by the UK’s British National Party 118
   3.8 Summary 123

4 Metaphor in science and education 125
   4.1 A preliminary example: consciousness as ‘fame in the brain’ 125
   4.2 Science and metaphor 130
   4.3 Metaphor from expert discourse to science popularizations and the media 140
   4.4 Metaphor in educational materials 148
   4.5 Source domains in scientific metaphors 153
   4.6 Case study 1: ‘regulatory T cells’ in specialist scientific articles 157
viii  Contents

4.7 Case study 2: the immune system in an educational text 163
4.8 Summary 167

5 Metaphor in other genres and discourses: two further case
studies 168
5.1 Introduction 168
5.2 Metaphor and advertising 168
5.3 Metaphor and illness 175
5.4 Summary 190

6 Corpora and metaphor 191
6.1 A preliminary example: the metaphorical uses of the adjective ‘rich’ 191
6.2 Choosing corpora and finding metaphorical expressions 196
6.3 Corpus-based approaches to metaphor 199
6.4 Case study: the metaphorical construction of communication as
physical aggression in the British press 207
6.5 Summary 216

7 Conclusions 217
7.1 Final reflections on metaphorical creativity 219
7.2 Final reflections on topic-triggered and situationally triggered
metaphors 222

Glossary 226
References 231
Index 244
Figures

3.1 Cartoon by Steve Bell
3.2 Front page of election leaflet by the British National Party
4.1 Kosslyn and Koenig’s (1992) octopus network
5.1 Lucozade advertisement
6.1 Sample concordance of ‘rich’ in the British National Corpus
Acknowledgements

I have greatly enjoyed writing this book. In large part, this has been because my ideas have developed in the course of many conversations and collaborations with friends and colleagues at Lancaster University and around the world. I cannot mention everybody here, but a few people deserve special thanks.

Over the last eight years, I have benefited from many hours of discussion with the other nine members of the ‘Pragglejaz’ metaphor group. I am particularly indebted to Gerard Steen for originally creating the group and inviting me to join.

More concretely, John Heywood patiently read the whole manuscript, made many invaluable comments and, on several occasions, saved me from potential embarrassment. Maria Bortoluzzi, Alice Deignan and Veronika Koller gave me some useful feedback on individual chapters. Sofia Lampropoulou transcribed the radio programme discussed in chapter 5, and Gerard Hearne helped me with the final stages of proofreading. Ben Barton at Billington Cartmell went well beyond the call of duty in order to ensure that I obtained permission to reproduce the advertisement discussed in chapter 5.

The book was completed in reasonable time thanks to a Research Leave grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (grant number: AH/E503683/1). I am grateful to Andreas Musolff for his help with the application process.

Helen Barton at Cambridge University Press was exceptionally helpful and supportive at all stages in the development of the book.

Although I enjoyed working on the book, I enjoyed even more taking breaks from it in order to spend time with my extended families in Italy and England, and especially with Jonathan, Emily and Natalie. The girls, in particular, make sure that I never take myself too seriously by being healthily unimpressed with the ‘boring’ things I write. I will, of course, make it my mission to try to change their minds. In the meantime, I sincerely hope that the readers of this book will disagree with my daughters.

The author and publishers are grateful to the following for permission to reproduce copyrighted materials: Carcanet for permission to reproduce in chapter 2 the poem ‘Answers’ from: Elizabeth Jennings (1979), Selected Poems
Acknowledgements

(Manchester: Carcanet, p. 32); Steve Bell for permission to reproduce the cartoon discussed in chapter 3; Lucozade for permission to reproduce the advertisement discussed in chapter 5.

Every effort has been made to secure necessary permissions to reproduce copyright material in this work, through in some cases it has proved impossible to trace or contact copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include appropriate acknowledgements in reprinting and in any subsequent edition.
Abbreviations

BNC  British National Corpus
CMT  Cognitive Metaphor Theory
MIP  Metaphor Identification Procedure