

## Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The phenomenon known as metaphor is an extremely complex mental event – we cannot capture its complexity if we tie ourselves to existing standard views on metaphor. This book offers fresh insight into metaphor, updating an established theory, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), in the context of current cognitive linguistic theory, and clarifying many of the issues that researchers in the study of metaphor have raised against CMT. Starting with an introduction to CMT, the subsequent chapters set out propositions for extended conceptual metaphor theory, including a discussion on whether literal language exists at all, whether conceptual metaphors are both conceptual and contextual, and whether they are both offline and online. Providing a fresh take on a constantly developing field, this study will enrich the work of researchers in areas ranging from metaphorical cognition to literary studies.

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**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108490870](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108490870)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781108859127

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First published 2020

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data*

Names: Kövecses, Zoltán, author.

Title: Extended conceptual metaphor theory / Zoltán Kövecses.

Description: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019040754 (print) | LCCN 2019040755 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781108490870 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108796620 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781108859127 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Metaphor. | Cognitive grammar.

Classification: LCC P301.5.M48 K67 2020 (print) | LCC P301.5.M48 (ebook) |

DDC 401/.43018–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019040754>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019040755>

ISBN 978-1-108-49087-0 Hardback

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Very much belatedly . . . , to the memory of my  
little sister, Annika.

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## Preface

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In a way, this is a very personal book. It is personal in the sense that in everyone's life there comes a time when you notice you are getting a little impatient with how things are going and you want to say what's really on your mind concerning a subject matter that is important to you. I want to do exactly that as regards metaphor. I do not want to be particularly concerned with what other scholars will think or say when they read this book. I just want to lay my (metaphorical) cards on the table. I am at an age when people around you die much more frequently than before and when you realize it can happen any time to you. I feel the time has come to make this move in the game of life.

This of course is not intended as a justification for writing another book on metaphor. It can only explain some of the bold suggestions that go against "standard" views on metaphor and the sometimes very straightforward ways of writing and presenting ideas. What would be a much better justification, though, is that over the past almost forty years I have analyzed thousands or maybe even tens of thousands of metaphors in a variety of genres, modalities, ways, and situations, and that these analyses have given me a certain feel for how metaphors work and an idea of their enormous complexity. I realized, and wish to show in a clear way here, that this complexity cannot be captured if you tie yourself to existing standard views on metaphor, including conceptual metaphor theory (CMT).

At the same time, as can be expected, my starting point is what I take to be a "standard" version of CMT. I believe CMT is a theory that can provide powerful and coherent explanations for a variety of aspects of metaphor. In my judgment, no other theory is as comprehensive as CMT. It took almost forty years for CMT to reach this stage. It's been steadily developing thanks to the many great scholars who played key roles in making it what it is today. I see the present book as just another contribution to this line of development – as an organic part of all the efforts that have been put into making it better.

I am making no claim that the ideas put forward in this book are all brand new or that I am the only one who thought of them. But many of them are new and, in addition, I feel I can reasonably claim that no one has put them together



as I have in this book. This overall new view can be characterized by five bold but tentative propositions:

- It may be that there is no literal language at all.
- It may be that metonymies are, in a sense, “more primary” than primary metaphors.
- It may be that conceptual metaphors are hierarchically linked conceptual structures on different levels of schematicity.
- It may be that conceptual metaphors are not only conceptual but also necessarily contextual.
- It may be that conceptual metaphor is simultaneously an offline and online phenomenon (i.e., it is not only offline).

I will be referring to the new view as “extended conceptual metaphor theory,” or “extended CMT,” for short.

### Structure of the Book

The propositions above are discussed in five chapters of the book under the following corresponding chapter titles:

- The abstract understood figuratively, the concrete understood literally, but the concrete understood figuratively? (Chapter 2)
- Direct or indirect emergence? (Chapter 3)
- Domain, schema, frame, or space? (Chapter 4)
- Conceptual or contextual? (Chapter 5)
- Offline or online? (Chapter 6)

These five chapters are preceded by an introduction to CMT, or, more precisely, what I consider to be the “standard” view (the core) of CMT. The discussion in the five chapters is followed by two integrative summary chapters. The goal of Chapter 7 is to identify components of an emerging new theory and to outline its general framework. The goal of Chapter 8 is to assess the responses to the five questions above, together with a brief comparison of the extended CMT with its sister theory, the dynamic systems view of metaphor, as proposed by Ray Gibbs.

### Acknowledgments

No book is written in a vacuum. In addition to the vast body of published work on conceptual metaphor theory, in particular, and on metaphor, in general, a large number of colleagues, anonymous reviewers of this book, fellow researchers, students, conference participants, and just ordinary people interested in my work helped me with their ideas and suggestions in many ways.

I am thankful to them all. Special thanks go to the following people (in alphabetical order): Kathleen Ahrens, Valentina Bambini, Antonio Barcelona, Réka Benczes, Bogusław Bierwiazzonek, Anna Borghi, Mario Brdar, Rita Brdar-Szabó, Szilvia Csábi, Alice Deignan, John Douthwaite, Rachel Giora, Andrew Goatly, Patrick Colm Hogan, Robert Hoffman, Henryk Kardela, Sonja Kleinke, Francisco Ruiz de Mendoza, Andreas Musolff, Uwe-Klaus Panther, Frank Polzenhagen, Michele Prandi, Günter Radden, Elena Semino, Veronika Szelid, Elzbieta Tabakowska, John Taylor, Linda Thornburg, and Cliff Winters. I am grateful to all of them. Several of my students in Budapest and Heidelberg have helped me shape the ideas in this book: Mohsen Bakhtiar, Olga Boryslavska, Orsolya Farkas, Eszter Nucz, Orsolya Putz, and Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra. Olga Boryslavska helped me with several of the figures in the book. I am thankful to them for the many, sometimes passionate but always enjoyable, discussions. I am grateful to Helen Barton at CUP for her encouragement and support.

Two people have played very special roles in the course of my career as a metaphor researcher. Ray Gibbs has always been available to discuss various issues related to the field and he and his work gave me a huge amount of encouragement and inspiration. And last but definitely not least, without George Lakoff I could not have and would not have done any of my work on metaphor.