Deliberate Metaphor Theory: Basic assumptions, main tenets, urgent issues

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Deliberate Metaphor Theory: Basic assumptions, main tenets, urgent issues

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Abstract: In response to two recent publications about Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT) in this journal, I argue that DMT advances metaphor studies into a period with new and exciting research challenges and possibilities for application between various disciplines. I will first spell out my basic assumptions about eleven core concepts in all verbal metaphor research. Then I will present the main tenets of DMT about the difference between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphor. Finally I will briefly discuss which urgent issues still need to be addressed.

Keywords: metaphor, Deliberate Metaphor Theory, intention, consciousness, attention

1 Introduction

Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT) is a theory about properties of metaphor in language use and discourse which has emerged over the past decade in a series of publications developing new ideas and interpreting existing research from that perspective (e.g., Steen 2008, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015, 2016, in press). In this paper I respond to two recent publications about DMT revealing a number of misunderstandings and problems (Gibbs and Chen 2017; Xu et al. 2016). The problems are partly due to the fact that central terms and concepts, such as “communication” and “consciousness,” are understood in different ways by different scholars, but also to the fact that DMT itself has evolved over a number of years in disparate publications. In this paper I present DMT as an encompassing theoretical framework that can bring together much of the available metaphor research in a way that allows for critical, constructive and respectful discussion.

According to DMT, deliberate metaphor concerns the intentional use of metaphors as metaphors between sender and addressee (e.g., Steen 2011b). This definition minimally implies that language users, in production or

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reception, pay distinct attention to the source domain as a separate domain of reference. That people do this is evident from various metalinguistic comments where they explicitly argue that another metaphor is needed for cancer (“it’s not like a war but like a journey”), for talking about sex (“it’s not like a baseball game but like sharing a pizza”), and so on. Deliberate metaphor is different from non-deliberate metaphor in that non-deliberate metaphor does not involve the intentional use of metaphor as metaphor between sender and addressee: when people talk about argument in terms of war they typically do not pay distinct attention to the source domain of war as a separate domain of reference.

Several clarifications are immediately needed. Most importantly, deliberate metaphor is not the same as conscious metaphor use (Steen 2011a, 2011b). Xu et al.’s (2016) discussion of DMT is problematic because it does present DMT as identifying deliberateness with consciousness, and Gibbs and Chen’s (2017) critique follows suit. The distinction between deliberateness and consciousness became clear in an earlier exchange between Gibbs (2011a, 2011b) and Steen (2011a) and will be elaborated below.

Deliberate metaphor also is not the same as deliberative metaphor (e.g., Gibbs 2015a, 2015b). “Deliberative” is a term that has never been used in DMT. The reason is simple: “deliberative” does not mean “intentional”, as “deliberate” does. Instead, it suggests concomitant careful consideration of the metaphor. Deliberate metaphor is hence a tricky phenomenon that requires careful theoretical conceptualization, description and explanation; both Xu et al. (2016) and Gibbs and Chen (2017) have misunderstood some of the previous attempts to do so.

The debate about DMT crucially involves application of metaphor studies in the real world: people’s awareness of widespread conventional metaphor use in domains such as science, education, politics, the media, organization, health and care are all dependent on attention to metaphor and the nature and function of its source domain in relation to the target (e.g., Beger 2011; Bougher 2012; Musolff 2011, 2016; Nacey 2013; Ng and Koller 2013; Perrez and Reuchamps 2014). Metaphor awareness is also the condition for metaphor evaluation, criticism and resistance in these domains, moments when language users attempt to take voluntary control over the way they use metaphor for highlighting and hiding in expression, conceptualization, and communication. These are moments when they aim to employ metaphors as metaphors in communication in alternative ways to really understand one thing in terms of something else. It is hard to see why Gibbs and Chen (2017) represent this as follows: “DMT takes us back to a Stone Age time where metaphor was ornamental, deviant, and only employed by special people with highly conscious communicative aims.” DMT has never used these terms, assumes that metaphor is precisely not ornamental,
deviant and employed by special people, and points out on the contrary that conscious metaphorical communication is a very infrequent phenomenon. “Nothing could be further from the truth” (Gibbs and Chen 2017) indeed.

I will first spell out my basic assumptions about eleven core concepts in all verbal metaphor research: metaphor, language use, discourse, and the structure-process fallacy; intentions, consciousness, and attention; and utterances, words, mappings, and the five-step framework. I will then present the main tenets of DMT about the difference between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphor and the way this distinction can be related to other aspects of metaphor. Finally I will briefly discuss which urgent issues still need to be addressed. My conclusion will be that DMT advances metaphor studies into a period with new and exciting research challenges and possibilities for application between various disciplines.

2 Basic assumptions

2.1 Metaphor, language use, discourse events, and the structure-process fallacy

Metaphor. The first main assumption of DMT is that metaphor is defined as a cross-domain mapping in thought (e.g., Gibbs 2008; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Ortony 1979/1993). One issue is whether conceptual metaphors that have been shown to exist in thought independently of language use (e.g., Gibbs 2013) can be shown to in fact drive utterance production and reception in language use by means of on-line cross-domain mapping for meaning construction (cf. McGlone 2007) – this is the main bone of contention for DMT. Even twenty years ago, Gibbs (1994) already formulated a number of alternative hypotheses to this classic cognitive-linguistic position, DMT later evolving as one elaboration of these alternative positions. The emphasis in DMT on variation in metaphor processing (in this case between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphor processing) has arisen as an elaboration of these alternative lines of research (Gentner and Bowdle 2008; Giora 2008; Glucksberg 2008). This means that the wealth of cognitive-linguistic and psychological work on metaphor is not ignored, as objected by Gibbs and Chen (2017), but given a different interpretation: not all metaphor (or perhaps even most metaphor) is not comprehended (as opposed to interpreted, see Gibbs 1994) by online cross-domain mapping (Steen 2007, 2008). In the final section I will return to this issue and offer my alternative account of existing evidence.
Language use. The second main assumption of DMT is that metaphor in language use is not just a matter of language and thought but also of communication. I adopt the definitions of language and thought from cognitive linguistics and I have added communication in a way that is at least compatible with the way in which “communication” is used in Relevance Theory (e.g., Sperber and Wilson 2008). In any situation of language use, utterances (language) are produced or received by cognizing people (thought) who are jointly aligning in their exchange (communication), whether face to face or across vast amounts of space and time. This means that all language use has a linguistic, conceptual, and communicative dimension and that all language use can be described as related to those dimensions. This is a general assumption that can be found in practice in many approaches to language use. DMT’s application of this three-dimensional model of language use to metaphor analysis must be seen as part of that same general three-dimensional paradigm in linguistics. It is fundamentally misrepresented by Gibbs and Chen (2017) when they write that DMT holds that these are three “completely separate” phenomena. DMT says precisely the opposite, emphasizing that language, thought, and communication are dimensions of one phenomenon, language use (Steen 2015). DMT has arisen as a reaction to the dominant focus on metaphor in just language and thought in cognitive linguistics and is an attempt to redress the picture by adding in the ignored third dimension of communication.

Discourse events. The third main assumption of DMT is that the various properties of metaphor in language use (linguistic, conceptual and communicative) are partly driven and constrained by the more encompassing concerns of the discourse event in which an utterance is produced and received and exchanged. Discourse events are higher-level processes of verbal interaction than language use. In contradistinction to language use, discourse may be defined as the use of text in code in context (Steen 2011c). It is a general assumption that discourse guides, organizes and constrains the structures and functions of utterances as well as their production, reception and exchange (e.g., Biber and Conrad 2009). This general assumption can be found in practice in many places in discourse studies, and its application to metaphor can be seen as part of that same overall paradigm in discourse studies (e.g., Deignan et al. 2013). This is crucial because some genre events are more prone to deliberate metaphor use than others, like text design, therapy sessions, poetry writing and reading, and so on. It is one goal of DMT to highlight this variation in metaphor in language use from the perspective of discourse. DMT’s position is therefore not at odds with Gibbs and Chen’s (2017) when they say that “too often, metaphoricity (or even deliberateness) is in the eye of the beholder, and arises as an emergent product of the coordination among different dynamical
constraints in experience and not as the starting point for how people speak or act in the metaphoric ways they do.” DMT focuses precisely on the mechanisms of when, how and how often this happens, in particular because of genre expectations. For instance, such emergence may follow in top-down fashion in poetry reading, turning a metaphor deliberate ‘in retrospect’, after the bottom-up click of comprehension has been achieved in what may be non-deliberate metaphor processing (I called this “metaphoric processing” in Steen 1994). Meanwhile we happily note that Gibbs now acknowledges that deliberateness can be distinguished as a bona fide issue for metaphor research.

Structure-process fallacy. The fourth main assumption of DMT is that metaphor, language use and discourse can all be approached in two fundamentally different ways: as structures abstracted from reality by researchers, or as observable processes in human verbal behavior. What is a metaphor in linguistic, conceptual or communicative structure is not necessarily a metaphor in linguistic, conceptual or communicative processes, whether these are approached as individual psychological processes or interpersonal social processes. The theoretical definition of metaphor as a cross-domain mapping in thought does not mean that metaphorical structures in language use are always processed by online cross-domain mapping: they may be the result of historical processes that have given rise to metaphorically motivated target domain structures in language and thought, which however do not need on-line cross-domain processing anymore in individual language reception (cf. McGlone 2007). Conflating these issues leads to the structure-process fallacy (Gibbs 2006; Steen 2007). DMT follows Gibbs’s call to prevent such a structure-process fallacy and raises the question when metaphors in linguistic, conceptual and communicative structures are processed as metaphors, that is, by cross-domain mapping (cf. Gentner and Bowdle 2008).

2.2 Intentions, consciousness, and attention

Intentions. The fifth main assumption of DMT is that both language use and discourse are intentional verbal activities. For language use, this has been a generally accepted assumption in linguistics, pragmatics and psychology (e.g., Clark 1996; Gibbs 1999; Levelt 1989; Sperber and Wilson 1995): people intend to say that something is or is not the case, to build a declarative or imperative sentence, to use it for direct or indirect speech act purposes, and their addressees intentionally align with them and are allowed to take them up on those intentions as manifested in their language use. For discourse, it is generally assumed that people’s engaging in discourse events is typically intentional in
the sense of being goal-directed: examples include writing an email, reading a
newspaper article, watching the news, engaging in a conversation, being in a
business meeting or lecture, and having a chat or skype session. These discourse
events are commonly organized by genre (Steen 2011c; Stukker et al. 2016):
people have default genre knowledge and expectations for their action plans
for producing, receiving and exchanging text in code in context. It is clear that
more local action plans for language use (producing, receiving and exchanging
utterances) must be guided and constrained by these global action plans for the
encompassing genre event. Language use and discourse are hence both inten-
tional, and discourse intentions typically constrain intentions for language use.
The emphasis on intentions in language use and discourse events in DMT is a
response to the general neglect of intentions in cognitive linguistics and the
discourse studies of metaphor that have been inspired by it. It has made it
possible to advance the above claims that all metaphor use is intentional, but
that some metaphor use is deliberate (intentionally used as a metaphor in
communication) while most of it is not.

Consciousness. The sixth main assumption of DMT is that language use and
discourse are typically not conscious (cf. Gibbs 2011a) yet this depends on how
consciousness is defined. DMT presents the following account. For all language
use and discourse, unconscious processes lead to mental representations of
language use in discourse in working memory (e.g., McNamara and Magliano
2009). On the one hand people can be aware of properties of these resulting
mental representations but on the other they can also know that they are aware
of these properties (Graziano 2013; cf. Dehaene 2014). Consciousness is knowing
that you are aware, while awareness itself is the content of what is in people’s
window of attention. People are generally aware of details of language use and
discourse during production, reception and exchange, including of language use
that happens to be metaphorical, whether deliberate or non-deliberate. But
people only seldom know that they are aware. They only become conscious of
details of language use and discourse in special circumstances. This may hap-
pen when they carry out special tasks (for instance when they are composing a
beautiful poetic line) or when language and discourse exhibit special properties
(for instance being extremely deviant, ill-formed, difficult, or humorous). This is
how language use and discourse are not conscious, even though people are
aware and pay attention when using language and doing discourse. One pro-
blem is that consciousness and awareness or attention are often conflated, both
in metaphor studies (like the first version of DMT in Steen 2008, 2011d) as well as
in discourse studies (e.g., Chafe 1994).

The power of the cognitive turn in metaphor research around 1980 was that
it rightly went against the then prevailing idea in philosophy, linguistics and
psychology that all metaphor was an example of such strong deviancy or
difficulty in language use and discourse. Since then, our view of metaphor in
the structures as well processes of language use has dramatically changed,
turning metaphor into a phenomenon that is not deviant or difficult and hence
does not require consciousness – it is presented as unconscious and automatic
in most cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics, and DMT does not differ.
Where DMT does differ, however, is in its critical response to the general
tendency in contemporary metaphor studies to see all metaphor like this: what
is overlooked or denied is that some metaphors in fact are deviant, ill-formed,
difficult, complicated, overtly in your face, and so on. DMT holds that some
metaphor hence does require awareness or attention (and sometimes even
consciousness) on some occasions. This raises new questions about the struc-
tures and functions as well as processes and effects of these metaphors and how
they relate to other metaphors.

Attention. The seventh main assumption in DMT is therefore that uncon-
scious processes result in mental representations in our window of attention
held in working memory, representations with properties that people are aware
of in the sense of awareness just defined. Cognitive linguistics has built a
complete theory of language use that focuses on attention in this way (e.g.,
Langacker 1987; Talmy 2000): elements get profiled in linguistic expressions in
order to end up as details of mental representations in working memory that
language users attend to. The presumed functional nature of such linguistic and
conceptual profiling in linguistic expressions is at least partly related to inten-
tions in most variants of linguistics (Butler 2003). For metaphor, the question
raised by DMT is whether there are differences between metaphors such that
some metaphors require attention as metaphors in working memory whereas
others do not. DMT holds that there are: deliberate metaphors are those meta-
phors that draw attention to their source domain as a separate detail for atten-
tion in working memory, whereas non-deliberate metaphors do not (cf. Steen
2011b, 2013). This means that these source domain details function as separate
referents, as for ‘summer’s day’ in Shakespeare’s “Shall I compare thee to a
summer’s day”. This DMT proposal is a novel distinction in metaphor studies,
capturing at least some insights in classical rhetoric about differences between
classes of metaphor.

2.3 Utterances, words, mappings and the five-step framework

Utterances. The eighth basic assumption of DMT is that metaphor, language use
and discourse as well as intentions, consciousness and attention come together
in the production, reception and exchange of utterances: these are the moment
to moment actions that language users undertake in relatively voluntary and
controlled fashion. Psychological research has shown that utterance production
and reception involve the construction of multiple mental representations that
lead to one integrated whole in working memory (McNamara and Magliano
2009). In particular, utterances can be seen as basic units of discourse (Steen
2005): they are intentional entities with attentional properties in working mem-
ory that feed into people’s encompassing discourse representations (which are
higher-level intentional entities). Utterances build and maintain a surface text, a
text base, a situation model and a context model (McNamara and Magliano
2009). This implies that elements of utterances exhibit concomitantly multiple
functions, which in linguistics are typically described with reference to for
instance words (surface text), concepts (text base), referents (situation model),
and topics and perspectives (context model). This emphasis in DMT on the
multiple dimensions of metaphorical utterances and their elements reveals and
highlights a generally acknowledged distinction between concepts in text bases
versus referents in situation models. However, this distinction has been largely
neglected in contemporary metaphor studies, in spite of its compatibility with
the well-known semiotic triangle going back to Ogden and Richards (1923), while
it is crucial for the identification of deliberate metaphor: a metaphor-related
concept in the text base does not necessarily project a metaphor-related referent
in the situation model. This distinction throws a new light on all metaphor use.

Words. The ninth basic assumption of DMT is that within the boundaries of
utterances and their production and reception, metaphor as studied in cognitive
linguistics and psychology is typically all about the meaning of words (again
defined or utilized in a specific way, cf. Pragglejaz Group 2007; Steen 2007).
Words in English are typically polysemous with wide-spread metaphorical rela-
tions between distinct senses. This has been the basis for the cognitive-linguistic
explosion of research on conceptual metaphor and its reflection in conventional
language use: the tradition has led to metaphor identification procedures such
as MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007) and MIPVU (Steen et al. 2010a) and their reliable
application in the world’s largest corpus of natural language use annotated for
metaphor (Krennmayr and Steen in press). This has led to novel empirical
findings about patterns of metaphor use in relation to registers and word classes
(Steen et al. 2010b), including the discovery of the importance of the distinction
between direct and indirect metaphor in language use: their spectacularly
different distribution (indirect metaphor comprises some 99% of all metaphor)
has led to the crucial independent but associated distinction between deliberate
and non-deliberate metaphor in communication (Dorst 2011; Herrmann 2013;
Kaal 2012; Krennmayr 2011; Pasma 2011; Steen et al. 2010b). It is to this level of
metaphor in language use and discourse that DMT primarily wants to make a contribution: the level where words (in a surface text) activate concepts (in a text base) that may or may not turn into source-domain referents (in a situation model) that are used as perspective changers in a context model. This is an innovative approach to metaphor that is well-grounded in various research raising new questions that will be addressed below.

Mappings. The tenth basic assumption of DMT is that theoretically defining metaphor as a cross-domain mapping does not mean that metaphor must exhibit a cross-domain mapping in all of its processes of use. With Gibbs (1994, 2006) and with the Career of Metaphor Theory (Bowdle and Gentner 2005), DMT holds that metaphors may be visible in the polysemous lexical structure of a language. However, with Bowdle and Gentner (2005) and others, this does not mean that these metaphors necessarily require cross-domain mapping to get from the source domain meaning to the target domain meaning of the metaphor related-word in the utterance in every instance of its use. Instead, conventionalization of metaphorical senses (senses presumably produced by cross-domain mappings in the historical processes of language use) allows for lexical disambiguation processes to by-pass doing conceptual cross-domain mappings. In such cases, matching of competing activated metaphorical and non-metaphorical senses against the context for relevance frequently allows for direct access to the target domain sense of a metaphorically used word (Giora 2008). Occasionally, that sense may even be the most salient sense and the one that is accessed strongest and fastest (Giora 2008). It is therefore possible that much metaphor is not processed via online cross-domain mapping but via simple lexical disambiguation. This eventually produces a paradox of metaphor (Steen 2008). DMT therefore asks the question when metaphors are processed as metaphors, and DMT is not alone in posing this question (e.g., Bowdle and Gentner 2005; Glucksberg 2008). The answer of DMT is that it may be deliberateness that offers the key to addressing this question, and that deliberateness reveals a new dimension of metaphor in language use (communication) while also raising new questions about existing research (Steen in press). This is not to deny a wealth of research about metaphor, as is held by Gibbs and Chen (2017), but to look at it from a different perspective (for instance, cross-domain mappings may be post-comprehension processes triggered by genre conventions that induce post hoc deliberate processing) and to pull to the fore competing research that has a different take on how metaphor might work.

The five step framework. The relation between utterances, words and mappings has been formalized in the five step framework for metaphor analysis (Steen 1999, 2009, 2011b, 2013). This framework evolved over the years from a
formalism helping to reconstruct cross-domain mappings from utterances (Steen 1999, 2009) to a formal framework identifying and analyzing metaphor in language, thought and communication that is closely aligned with the four discourse dimensions of utterances (surface text, text base, situation model, context model) (Steen 2011b, 2013). We will demonstrate its use in the next section but emphasize here that this includes the identification of deliberate metaphor (cf. Reijnierse et al. submitted a). The gist of the framework is that it analyzes utterances as analogies between source and target domain states of affairs that can be read as situation models involving either target domain referents or target and source domain referents together, which then may lead to different implications for context models (Steen 2011b). A successful application of this approach has recently been published by Musolff (2016), while Steen (2011b) is not discussed by Xu et al. (2016) or Gibbs and Chen (2017).

I have presented eleven assumptions about metaphor in language use that are basic for DMT. These assumptions cover the central concepts for DMT and present them as embedded in mainstream metaphor, language and discourse research. DMT aims to be an encompassing theory of the properties of metaphor in language use and therefore needs to address all existing relevant research. In the next sections, the most important aspects of this endeavor will be discussed.

3 Main tenets

3.1 The basic picture

The main tenet of DMT is that some metaphors in language use require on-line cross-domain mapping between referents while others do not, and that this difference resides in the deliberate production, reception or exchange of metaphors as metaphors. By way of aside, this clearly does involve a dichotomous decision: observing whether or not cross-domain mapping occurs is the key to all metaphor research and in principle has nothing to do with the “continuous, graded, nature of metaphoricity in both thought and expression” (Gibbs and Chen 2017). Yes, its presence or absence may be affected by it, but that is precisely what DMT aims to study. Let us take one example and show how this may be achieved: “DMT takes metaphor studies back to a Stone Age time”.

DMT would make the following statements about this example, respectively based on the default assumptions about metaphor in language use and discourse presented above:
1. This example involves several metaphor-related expressions, that is, linguistic forms and meanings that can be related to conceptual cross-domain mappings: *takes back to, Stone Age*.

2. This is an example of language use in which one utterance is elaborated by another utterance elaborating details of how the Stone Age works for metaphor studies: “where metaphor was ornamental, deviant, and only employed by special people with highly conscious communicative aims.”

3. The language use is guided and constrained by the discourse event in which two scholars (Gibbs and Chen) present a written argument against a theory of metaphor (DMT) as discussed by three scholars (Xu and colleagues) in the forum section of a scholarly journal (Intercultural Pragmatics).

4. The example can be read as a semiotic structure and function, as the result of a psychological process of writing, as the input for a psychological process of reading, and as the material means by which an utterance is exchanged between a writer and an audience; the structural reading does not map one on one on to the process readings.

5. The language use and discourse event are intentional, that is, production, reception and exchange processes are under the control and volition of the authors as well as the audience, as are their role in the production, reception and exchange processes of the text in this code in this context.

6. Whether the language use and discourse event are conscious cannot be determined without locating them in place and time and studying the authors or the receivers when they process the utterance.

7. The language use and the discourse event guide and focus attention on relevant language and discourse properties involved, both for the authors as well as for the audience.

8. All of the above comes together in the utterance “DMT takes metaphor studies back to the Stone Age time” and its multi-level mental representation in reception (but presumably also in production) in a cognitive surface text, text base, situation model and context model, with the situation model held to be the typical end product in working memory.

9. In this multi-level cognitive representation of the utterance, the lexical expressions of the cross-domain mapping listed under (1) require multidimensional analysis as part of one or more metaphors (cross-domain mappings in thought).

10. The multidimensional analysis of these lexical expressions must lead to the reconstruction of some form of cross-domain mapping for thought and the decision whether this is used deliberately as a cross-domain mapping between interlocutors in communication.
11. An informal five step analysis of 8 through 10 is presented in Figure 1. From Step 3 on, two distinct cross-domain mappings are at for the same utterance, *take back to* (non-deliberate, target domain referents only) and *Stone Age time* (deliberate, target and source domain referents together).

DMT then zooms in on the question whether the source domains of the metaphor-related words require separate attention in the situation model for the utterance. Based on regular language and discourse analysis, I submit that *take back to* does not have source domain referents in the situation model of the utterance, having to do with motion, whereas *Stone Age* does. In other words, when people process “DMT takes metaphor studies back to the Stone Age time,” they arguably set up a situation model in which there is a dominant referential domain that is about a theory (DMT) and the way it reminds academic

<table>
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<th>Five step analysis</th>
<th>“DMT takes metaphor studies back to a Stone Age time”.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1 (surface text):</td>
<td>DMT takes metaphor studies <em>back to a Stone Age time</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of metaphor related words</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2 (text base):</td>
<td>P1 <em>(TAKE-BACK-TO DMT METAPHOR-STUDIES TIME)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of metaphor related concepts</td>
<td>P2 <em>(MOD TIME STONE-AGE)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Identification of open comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor 1: Derived from P1: SIM (f E, x, y, z)</td>
<td>(F DMT METAPHOR-STUDIES TIME) (\gamma_{target})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TAKE-BACK-TO x y)</td>
<td>(TAKE-BACK-TO x y)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MOD TIME b) (\gamma_{target})</td>
<td>(MOD TIME b) (\gamma_{target})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MOD x STONE-AGE) (\gamma_{source})</td>
<td>(MOD PERIOD STONE-AGE) (\gamma_{source})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4 (situation model): Identification of analogy and referents (in bold)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metaphor 1: Derived from P1: SIM</td>
<td>(REMINOF DMT METAPHOR-STUDIES TIME) (\gamma_{target})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TAKE-BACK-TO sb stk)</td>
<td>(TAKE-BACK-TO sb stk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MOD TIME b) (\gamma_{target})</td>
<td>(MOD TIME b) (\gamma_{target})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MOD PERIOD STONE-AGE) (\gamma_{source})</td>
<td>(MOD PERIOD STONE-AGE) (\gamma_{source})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5 (context model): Identification of implicatures etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metaphor 1: the author wants the reader to understand that</td>
<td>DMT reminds us of some kind of metaphor studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor 2: the authors want the reader to understand that</td>
<td>the academic-historical value of DMT is to be compared to the general</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>historical value of the Stone Age as a period in history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Figure 1:** Five-step analysis of “DMT takes metaphor studies back to a Stone Age time”.
practitioners of a previous period (take back ... to ... time), on the one hand, and an alien referential domain that has nothing to do with academic history but is about the Stone Age in general history, on the other. The mapping that needs to be constructed on line is about an age in which people made their tools and weapons from stone, on the one hand, and the way this is related to DMT reminding of a previous period in academic history on the other (see step 4 in the five-step framework). This is because take back to has a conventionalized sense for reminding of (take back to) that presumably gets activated when the surface text and text base are constructed, so that it is directly available for inclusion in the situation model as already accessible referents. By contrast, Stone Age does not have such a conventionalized potential target domain sense, is a novel metaphor, and therefore needs to be interpreted by on-line cross-domain comparison between two referential domains.

3.2 Comments and elaborations

At this point, various comments should be added to this basic picture. The “Stone Age” metaphor, deliberately drawing attention to an alien referent from a different conceptual domain, involves a perspective change produced by the writer: it takes the reader away from the history of metaphor studies into a general period in history where people made weapons and tools from stone. This sets up a perspective from a very simple and crude period in human history that suggests a devastating value judgment on the part of the authors on the present-day metaphor theory DMT that is being criticized.

The “Stone Age” metaphor counting as a deliberate metaphor hence induces a perspective change. This perspective change is the product of the authors’ production process, which is an intentional move in an intentional discourse activity. That this is intentional (voluntary and controlled) can be shown by the fact that it will be hard to deny for the utterance’s producers that this is the point they wanted to make. The structure and function of the non-deliberate metaphors are also the product of the author’s intentional production process, even though by their structure and function they do not count as deliberate metaphors. That this is different in terms of intentions can be shown by the fact that it will be possible to deny for the utterance’s producers that the meaning “reminding of the past” is based in an intended comparison with motion – “it is just the way to say this.”

The structure and function of the deliberate “Stone Age” metaphor, by general cognitive-linguistic and pragmatic principles, are meant to draw the recipient’s attention to the source domain as a distinct referent. The recipient
needs to include this distinct referent as such in the situation model and then interpret it via some cross-domain mapping between the Stone Age and theories of metaphor. If neither of these processes happen, the recipient cannot be said to have understood the utterance. None of this applies to the non-deliberately metaphorical expression takes back to whose meaning is limited to the target domain and is probably processed via lexical disambiguation where nothing is lost.

Cross-domain mapping for deliberate metaphors (the cognitive processing of the structure set up in step 4 of the five-step framework) may take place via analogical inference or local structure mapping as explained by for instance Gentner’s Structure Mapping Theory (Gentner and Bowdle 2008). It may recruit independent conceptual metaphors if they exist and are relevant. It is not true that DMT denies that this type of process may be at play in deliberate metaphor processing (contrary to what Gibbs and Chen (2017) say with reference to some lines by Pablo Neruda). It is even possible that deliberate metaphor may represent one level of cross-domain mapping in attention whereas non-deliberate metaphor may represent another but in unconscious processing (cf. Musolff 2016), which would presumably then have to be the text base (but how this would work is not clear). Yet DMT is careful about when and how which presumed metaphorical mapping can play a role in which process of building an utterance representation, and DMT is skeptical whether unconscious cross-domain mapping is needed and even takes place in the way held by many cognitive linguists. These are empirical issues and they are dependent on many contextual factors.

For deliberate metaphor, cross-domain mapping via analogy must take place online in order to integrate the alien referent of the source domain in the encompassing referential frame of the target domain. For non-deliberate metaphors, DMT raises the question why mappings would still be needed, given that non-deliberate metaphors are always conventional metaphors (the reverse does not hold). With conventional metaphors, entrenched metaphorical meanings for words are available and can be directly accessed, so that online meaning construction by means of cross-domain mapping from some conceptual source domain to some target domain is not needed. It is possible that source domain senses and concepts do get activated at the beginning of utterance processing, during surface text construction and text base construction, but then die out because these source domain senses and concepts are not needed for the construction of the situation model meaning via cross-domain mapping, simply because there is a short cut available to relevant target domain senses via lexical disambiguation (Lai and Curran 2013). This means that a lot of metaphor
may not be processed metaphorically in this sense, which would produce the paradox of metaphor (Steen 2008).

Neither producer nor recipient need to know that they are aware of the source domain for the metaphor in the utterance to work as a deliberate metaphor: conscious metaphorical cognition is not needed for deliberate metaphor use. It is, however, possible for production to exhibit such a conscious search for source domains or source domain properties. There is a funny beer commercial for Bavaria beer that shows the members of the Austrian band Opus on such a conscious search for an appropriate metaphor for life (ending up in failure and resulting in the tautology “life is life”). And the longer people ponder over a deliberate metaphor in an utterance after the click of comprehension has been reached, the more likely it is that they do become conscious that they are somehow ‘doing metaphor’. Deliberate metaphor can hence afford conscious metaphorical cognition (Steen 2013). This would in fact be a situation where they might conclude ‘Oh, this must be a deliberate metaphor’, as has been evidenced in think aloud work on metaphor processing (Steen 1994; Šorm and Steen 2013). But this certainly does not have to be judged beforehand, it is certainly not the norm, and in all it comprises a rather different picture than the one drawn by Gibbs and Chen (2017).

There may be more than one factor at play in turning a metaphor into a deliberate metaphor. In the present example, the metaphor is not just deliberate because the application of “Stone Age” to metaphor studies is novel; it is also deliberate because it is deliberately hyperbolic and a form of word play. As for hyperbole, it is clear that the value judgment by Stone Age intentionally exceeds the measure of criticism appropriate for this academic dispute (Burgers et al. 2016). For instance, when Gibbs engaged with Relevance Theory, which is much further removed from cognitive-linguistic and psychological findings on metaphor than DMT, he never used metaphorical overstatement like this (Tendahl and Gibbs 2008). Intentional exaggeration in selection of the source domain probably draws attention to the source domain as a distinct domain of reference, which would be another factor in the metaphor’s deliberateness. As for word play, Gibbs knows that my last name “Steen” means “stone”, which turns Stone Age into a pun that must be appreciated as such by readers who share this knowledge. Word play, too, draws attention to the source domain as a separate domain of reference outside the target domain because it hinges on the contrast between two word senses (common noun versus proper name) and arguably has the same effect of inducing deliberateness. Equating DMT’s “Steen Age” with “Stone Age” is a brilliant stroke of critical genius that may be appreciated by many.
This makes our Stone Age metaphor deliberate on three counts: it is novel, hyperbolic, and a form of word play. DMT suggests that it is possible that multiple deliberateness properties may increase the prominence of the source domain. It may hence raise its incongruity as a separate domain of reference with the non-metaphorical target domain environment for the addressee. This multiple recruitment of attention (novel, hyperbolic, and word play) might increase chances of recognition of the “alien” status of the source domain or the mapping. It may also stimulate recognition of the expression as a metaphor or something related (indirect language use, comparison), and hence subsequent conscious metaphorical cognition.

When deliberate metaphors give rise to separate representation of the source domain in the situation model, the receiver will be aware (but not necessarily conscious) of one thing that is used to understand something else. This may lead to metaphor recognition, interpretation and appreciation (Steen 1994), which can all be included in the context model for the discourse: such an expression is a distinct communicative device in the text, it may therefore afford interpretation after the click of comprehension, and it may elicit a value judgment. Think aloud data show that all of these processes occur in discourse processing (Steen 1994; cf. Šorm and Steen 2013). In this context model, receivers could ask questions about the goals of the authors in utilizing such a depreciating metaphor, with such exaggeration, and with such negative personal reference to the name of the originator of the theory. Readers might even think about the boundaries of appropriate register for academic debate because of the personal use of negative humor. These are questions for further research about the role of deliberate metaphor in the situation model in relation to the context model, and they should be contrasted with how this works for non-deliberate metaphor—none of the above questions are predicted to arise for “take back to.”

These are theoretical proposals that were impressionistically supported by previous empirical work on metaphor processing in thinking out loud before the notion of deliberateness had been coined (Steen 1994). Empirical work explicitly motivated by DMT in recent years has been initiated in two ways. Firstly, in corpus-analytical research, we have developed a method for reliable deliberate metaphor identification, which builds on both MIPVU as well as the five step method for metaphor analysis (Reijnierse et al. submitted a). Application of this method to the VU Amsterdam Metaphor Corpus has yielded new insights into the distribution of deliberate metaphor across four registers (academic texts, news texts, fiction, and conversation) and the major word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and others) (Reijnierse et al. submitted b): whereas non-deliberate metaphor use is most frequent in academic texts followed by news and fiction, deliberate metaphor use is most frequent in fiction
and news, while it is hardly present in news and conversations. Moreover, most deliberate metaphor is expressed by nouns and adjectives, while non-deliberate metaphor is more evenly distributed across all major word classes. Both of these findings clearly suggest that deliberate metaphor is a different phenomenon than non-deliberate metaphor, serving different functions in language use and discourse. This work builds on previous ideas about deliberate metaphor identification in Krennmayr (2011) and deliberate metaphor distribution in Beger (2011). If it is accepted that distinct linguistic structures profile particular language, conceptual and communicative properties for attention, as is held in cognitive linguistics and the grammatical concordance hypothesis in Bowdle and Gentner (2005), then these studies in deliberate metaphor add to our empirical knowledge about important patterns of metaphor in language use and discourse.

Secondly, experimental work was undertaken to test whether particular linguistic forms of deliberate metaphor exerted different effects in reading (Krennmayr et al. 2014; Steen et al. 2014; Reijnierse et al. 2015). I agree that this is still modest, but on the one hand DMT was only recently formulated in its corrected form with reference to consciousness and attention as well as its connection to multiple discourse representations (Steen 2011b, 2013, 2015, in press); and on the other hand, it may take some time for experimental research to catch on to theoretical proposals like these. For instance, it took over ten years for cognitive-linguistic experimental research on metaphor to take off; and experimental work on relevance-theoretical as well as systems-dynamical approaches to metaphor is just as scarce as in DMT (cf. Tendahl and Gibbs 2009; Gibbs and Cameron 2008). Yes, experimental testing is needed, as I have implied and encouraged throughout my work (cf. Steen 2007); but it needs to be based on solid theoretical models and predictions, or it will produce quick experiments that lead to hasty and incorrect conclusions (Gibbs 2015a; Steen 2015). By comparison, Musolff (2016) has successfully applied DMT in his recent study of cross-cultural variation in deliberate metaphor interpretation.

The starkest objection in this context formulated by Gibbs and Chen (2017) is not just that DMT has barely done any empirical work but more importantly that “DMT also ignores all the experimental work on verbal metaphor understanding that explicitly investigate the range of conceptual and pragmatic inferences drawn when people encounter verbal metaphors in discourse.” I have argued above that this is simply not true: DMT includes all of this work but raises critical questions about its interpretation (cf. McGlone 2007) while aligning in various ways with other experimental work that proposes alternative models, such as Gentner and Bowdle (2008), Giora (2008), Glucksberg (2008), and
Sperber and Wilson (2008). As we will see in the next section, Steen (in press) presents an alternative interpretation of much of this work, thereby questioning how “people readily infer cross-domain mappings for a wide range of metaphorical language, contrary to what DMT claims.”

4 Urgent problems

In their positive presentation of DMT, Xu et al. (2016) focus on the role of consciousness and of communication as a third dimension in language use. Unfortunately their reading of consciousness is mistaken and misleading, and the present article has attempted to present a more accurate picture of what is at stake here. Xu et al. (2016) also draw attention to the work by Glucksberg on categorization, which is then also connected with consciousness. In the present contribution, the connection between categorization and consciousness is not made for the above reason, while the work by Glucksberg on categorization itself has been presented as one source of inspiration for DMT (Steen 2008) and its interest in variation in metaphor processing in language use. As a side comment, categorization is a deep conceptual process, on a par with comparison, involving mappings between conceptual domains, not word senses. It may only apply to “A is B” metaphors. There may be a more frequent alternative for most regular non-deliberate conventionalized metaphor use: lexical disambiguation, which does not have to go to the level of conceptual mapping, whether by categorization or comparison (Steen 2008). The final section of Xu et al. (2016) on metaphor generation is based on these prior misunderstandings and hence unfortunately problematic from the point of view of DMT.

According to the final sentence of Gibbs and Chen’s (2017) abstract, “the new alternative is a regressive attempt to take metaphor studies back to the stone ages of scholarship in which only certain verbal metaphor really reflect true metaphoric thinking.” DMT does indeed raise the question whether certain verbal metaphors really reflect true metaphoric thinking, depending on how “true metaphoric thinking” is interpreted. If “true metaphoric thinking” is seen as an informal rendering of metaphor involving an online cross-domain mapping between referents in people’s individual production and/or reception, then DMT indeed raises the question when verbal metaphor does involve this. This is one of the four possible positions distinguished by Gibbs in 1994 (cf. Steen 1994: 16–18). As noted, this is a question that has been raised by other metaphor scholars as well, even as recently as 2008 in Gibbs’s own Handbook of Metaphor and Thought, when DMT was launched too. Theirs is the research that DMT also

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includes and opposes to the cognitive-linguistic and psychological research that Gibbs and Chen base their position on.

So how does DMT look at existing evidence for the cognitive-linguistic position that metaphor processing typically involves cross-domain mapping? An important issue is that both online and offline experimental research offering evidence for the classic cognitive linguistic position can be shown to depend on the presence of deliberate metaphor in the stimuli (Steen in press). Before the advent of DMT, the distinction between deliberate versus non-deliberate metaphor use was not made yet, but lots of the experiments adduced by Gibbs (2011c) as evidence for the cognitive linguistic position turn out to use deliberate metaphors in their materials. For instance, Read et al. (1990) studied metaphor in political rhetoric by examining the effect of four text-initiating metaphors and their associated passages on people’s memory as well as on their attitudes. Here are the text-initiating metaphors:

1. Giving loans to Zaire was like offering crates of whiskey to an alcoholic.
2. Passage of the tax bill was like feeding time for the hogs.
3. This investigation into government wrongdoing is run like the Salem Witch Trials.
4. My Congressional opponents are like spoiled children.

All of these metaphors set up explicit analogical cross-domain comparisons that must be represented as such in the situation model. The reader is deliberately instructed by the utterances to set up a cross-domain mapping including a separate role for the source domain as the referential meaning of the sentence in each case. These studies show comprehension and framing effects of deliberate metaphor, not just metaphor. Whether it, in fact, can also be seen as evidence for CMT depends on the question whether the related conceptual metaphors affect text processing for text versions without any deliberate metaphor and only non-deliberate ones.

According to Gibbs and Chen (2017), “people readily infer cross-domain mappings for a wide range of metaphoric language, contrary to what DMT claims.” The present discussion has narrowed down the difference of opinion. Some of the evidence for the general metaphor effect claim turns out to be dependent on deliberate metaphor use, which is compatible with DMT, while other evidence may involve revitalizations of metaphor into deliberate ones because of their task or context, which is also compatible with DMT. DMT’s suggestion is that cross-domain mappings are not inferred to produce online comprehension for non-deliberate metaphors since these may be typically handled by lexical disambiguation; however this does not exclude the possibility that such processes may continue in post-hoc cross-domain mapping as part of subsequent
interpretation processes (which in regular language use and discourse are optional). That such metaphorical representations may also be connected with postulated conceptual metaphors is self-evident and not denied by DMT – inasmuch as conceptual metaphors have been established independently in behavioral research and can also be reconstructed as local online reconstructions by language users.

The recent publications of Xu et al. (2016) and Gibbs and Chen (2017) have been useful in prompting the current updated sketch of DMT. In conclusion, DMT offers an encompassing view of metaphor in language use and discourse that aims to be maximally compatible with current paradigms of metaphor, language use and discourse research while at the same time revealing new dimensions, aspects, and issues. It has pulled to the fore the role of intentions and attention, has demarcated them from consciousness, and can apply them in specific ways to distinct dimensions of language use and discourse. It has led to new analytical categories and tools that have driven empirical research on corpora revealing new patterns. It is suggesting new questions for experimental research that are beginning to be explored. And it formulates alternative interpretations of existing research in such a way that these can be examined experimentally as well.

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References


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