Call for Papers

Winged Words:
Comparative and Historical approaches to Conceptual Metaphors

Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, 30 September – 1 October, 2024

On 30 September and 1 October 2024, Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL) will host a conference on comparative and diachronic approaches to Conceptual Metaphors. The conference aims to bring together scholars working on conceptual metaphors within the fields of comparative or historical linguistics, cognitive linguistics and/or philology. It is organized as part of the research project 'Winged Words: the Prehistory of Communication Metaphors' funded by LUF (www.luf.nl) and conducted by Lucien van Beek.

Confirmed **invited speakers** are:

Alexander Forte (Harvard)
Daniel Kölligan (Würzburg)
William Short (Exeter)

Theme: Since the development of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is known that metaphors are not primarily figures of style, but characteristic of everyday speech and thought. We conceptualise abstract ideas like time, communication and emotions in terms of what is more directly accessible – for instance, body motion or manipulation of concrete objects.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory and historical linguistics may benefit from each other in several ways. A thorough knowledge of how metaphors work may help us to judge etymologies and hypothesized semantic changes. Conversely, studying conceptual metaphors in a wide variety of languages (including ancient languages) may challenge generalisations that are based on modern European languages, especially present-day English. And, last but not least: describing, analysing and reconstructing the development and change through time of linguistic metaphors yields fascinating glimpses into the conceptual worlds of speakers in different times and places – a world which may differ from our own.

The main focus of the conference is on early Indo-European languages such as Ancient Greek, Latin, Sanskrit or Hittite, but contributions dealing with modern languages or other language families are also welcomed. It is hoped that this will result in cross-fertilization between scholars working in different fields and on different languages, and thus widen and deepen our understanding of Conceptual Metaphors, and of semantic change generally.

Practical:
- The conference takes place at Leiden University on 30 September – 1 October, 2024.
- Talks will be 25 minutes plus 10 for discussion.
- Titles and abstracts are to be submitted no later than **Monday 3 June, 2024** to wingedwords@hum.leidenuniv.nl. The abstract should indicate the topic and main argument; it should not exceed 500 words (excluding bibliography).
- Notification of acceptance or rejection will be given in early July, 2024.
- A modest conference fee will be charged, which will cover coffee/tea and lunches.
- If you have any questions, please contact wingedwords@hum.leidenuniv.nl.

Possible **topics** could include the following:

- Account for variation in Conceptual Metaphors in a given target domain; the variation may occur within one language through time or across (related or unrelated) languages.
- Use Conceptual Metaphor Theory to shed light on philological problems, such as textual interpretation.
- Use observations on the typology of Conceptual Metaphors, or on directionality in semantic change, to account for semantic variation or reinforce etymological research.
- Conversely, use remarkable facts about Conceptual Metaphors in ancient (corpus) languages to contribute to their general typology.
- For Indo-European languages, reconstruct (typologically remarkable) Conceptual Metaphors as common heritage.
- When should we describe a metaphor as dormant or dead, and what does this mean?

Selected bibliography

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Forte, A. 2019. The cognitive linguistics of Homeric surprise. In: Meineck, P., Short, W. and J. Devereaux, *The Routledge Handbook of Classics and Cognitive Theory*, 39–58. Abingdon.

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Johnson, C. *et al.* 2019. Argument Structure, Conceptual Metaphor and Semantic Change: How to Succeed in Indo-European without Really Trying. *Diachronica* 36: 463–508.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors we Live by*. Chicago.

Short, W. 2013. 'Transmission' Accomplished? Latin's Alimentary Metaphors of Communication. *American Journal of Philology* 134: 247–275.

Sweetser, E. 1990. *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and cultural aspects of semantic structure*. Cambridge.

Zanker, A.T. 2019. *Metaphor in Homer: Time, Speech and Thought*. Cambridge.

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