CHAPTER 1

METAPHORICAL DISCOURSE – HOW TO TELL THE WOODS FROM THE TREES

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present theoretical and empirical arguments for an analytic distinction between metaphorical discourse and conventional metaphor. Traditionally, in linguistics and anthropology, the formal approach to metaphors is to decompose them into conventional units of meaning, e.g., analytic predications. However, when dealing with everyday discourse, an analyst confronts many perspectives that affect the ways in which verbal signs are composed. The processes involved when either composing metaphors in discourse or decomposing them out of context demands radically different points of view, i.e., negotiations between several perspectives versus predications of one of them. Therefore, two types of metaphorical expressions must be acknowledged, i.e., metaphorical discourse versus conventional metaphor.
1. Introduction

There are conflicting trends in recent years of research on metaphors. Cognitive linguists, e.g., Lakoff (1987) and Sweetser (1990), consider metaphors as important units of reasoning and categorisation. In opposition to the linguistic view, anthropologists, e.g., Fernandez (1991) have remarked that metaphors belong rather to the realm of language performance. For example, in her studies on American conceptions of marriage, Quinn (1991) argues that metaphors do not constitute any coherent patterns of thought and that they are used in ad hoc ways. Lakoff (1986) doubts the validity of empirical studies, and thinks that metaphor analysis demands a formal approach that takes the competence of “idealized speakers” into account. This conflict is disturbing because of the lack of distinction between theory and method. It becomes impossible to talk about metaphors in general terms if it is only defined with respect to an analytic method in use.

The aim of this article is to draw an analytic distinction between metaphorical discourse and conventional metaphor. By “metaphorical discourse,” I am referring to metaphorical expressions in everyday discourse. In contrast, “conventional metaphors” are manifest in formal analysis of the conventional and systematic meanings of metaphors, i.e., the Saussurian attempts to establish the definite and conventional meanings of words and signs. According to Quinn (1991), in everyday discourse, metaphors lack a formal character, they are rather discursive in their forms. Now, before we accept that there are no important metaphors involved in everyday discourse, or conclude that discourse analysis is inappropriate to deal with metaphors, as Lakoff (1986) believes, we ought to consider the possibility that this lack of formal character depends on the verbal material that is being analyzed. I will argue that because everyday discourse involves many perspectives and negotiations of meaning, there is no room for formal representations of metaphors. Contemporary theorizing on metaphor relies mainly on a formal tradition, and we ought not take for granted that we can apply the notions developed from this
Metaphorical Discourse – 19

tradition to oral discourse, e.g., the ideas of definite and conventional meanings.

I will support my theoretical arguments with a number of empirical examples from my research on Swedish discourse on nature and forest. This research is focused on cultural contexts and metaphorical discourse in the form of perspectives and metaphorical clusters of words. Humans acquire perspectives of their environment when interacting with it. Since such interactions always involve cultural and social aspects, perspectives include an understanding of the cultural and social experiences involved. Even if we analyze linguistic expressions which appear to be static, e.g., texts, as in this study, they should rather be seen as discourse-dependent on such contexts. This may sound obvious to any pragmatically oriented scholar, but when it comes to our understanding of metaphors, it has not been so evident. Therefore, I want first to discuss in detail some of the consequences that the traditional and formal focus on sentences and meaning out of context has had on our reasoning about metaphors, and thereafter present an alternative view.

2. Sentences Without Context – Conventional and Definite Meanings

Despite a general acceptance of the dependency of discourse on context, sentences are still considered to have conventional meanings out of context. This would seem to imply that sentences do not belong to discourse, but form our abstract and universal competence. As a consequence, when naming equivalent units of discourse, one adopts the notions of utterance or expression (Lyons, 1977). By taking the sentence as the point of departure in an analysis, it forces us to look at discourse as built upon “conventional compositions,” e.g., sentences or propositions. With a Saussurian approach, a discourse is a sequence of conventional expressions.

Judgements of what constitutes a sentence, its grammatical or logical form, are usually based on expressions that have
clear predicative structures, that is, structures involving a formal subject and a formal predicate, e.g., NP + VP. This is not only a matter of form, but also of function. To predicate a subject is to “say” something conventional and definite about the subject. From a formal point of view, such predications are basic verbal acts in discourse. Contexts will only come into the picture when there is a need to resolve ambiguities. For example, the exclamation “There she is!” involves a conventional and definite meaning that is represented by ‘a predication of a location of a female subject.’ The context resolves what the subject and the location are, but the conventional meaning, the predicative structure, is not affected by any context. Pragmatically oriented scholars (e.g., Givón, 1990; Silverstein, 1985, 1976) doubt the generality of this kind of functional analysis but do not question its central importance to discourse. When it comes to metaphors, formal representations become very problematic. Since they contradict analytic definitions, there seems to be a lack of logical or formal coherence. They break conventions. For example, when economists say that “forests are lumber-factories,” they gladly admit that “forests are not really lumber-factories.” If metaphors were true predications, like facts and analytic definitions, people would hold onto them more than they do.

No doubt, there are, and have been, many different views about the exact nature of the metaphorical process, but in semantics, metaphors are fundamentally seen as complex predications. For example, if someone is “a tiger,” he/she is not “really” a tiger, but has at least one “real” tiger-property, e.g., aggressive. Metaphors become abbreviations of several predications. Opinions mainly differ in what ways complex expressions constitute transformations of analytically acceptable and conventional predications. As a semantic process, this kind of transformation has been described, for example, as “mappings” (Lakoff, 1987; Sweetser, 1990), as “inferences” (Levinson, 1983; Sperber & Wilson, 1987), as “comparisons” and “interactions” (Black, 1979; Cohen, 1979), as “similes” (Basso, 1976), as “chains of metonymic relations” (Eco, 1985; Sapir, 1977), as “symbolic knowledge directed by semantic break-downs” (Sperber, 1975) and as “implicatures” (Strecker, 1988), but the varying theorists do not question the
very fundamental method, i.e., reducing metaphorical expressions to, deriving them from, or explaining them through, predications. The main problem is the traditional assumption that verbal expressions are fundamentally conventional and definite in their character and it is thus only a matter of decomposing complex expressions into their analytic components, i.e., into some analytic re-definitions. Actually, no arguments suggest that predications compose and form metaphors in everyday discourse. There remains the possibility that we use more holistic and relativistic judgements when it comes to creating “complex” expressions.\(^1\)

The predicative structure may well be a common way to organize verbal expressions, but to organize something is a function very different from the usually assumed one, that is, to formally predicate something conventional of a subject. Contextual and holistic judgements are continuously being made during discourse, for which reason, complex expressions demand complex judgements. The argument so far can be exemplified with two Swedish expressions, which have been translated word for word:

Sw. “Virke växer i skogen.” versus “Skogen ger virke.”

Eng. “Lumber grows in the forest.” versus “The forest gives lumber.”

Sometimes, these metaphorical expressions occur together, especially in texts dealing with the economic value of forests. In the context of forestry, their meanings have strong connections. Due to the practical relationships between trees and lumber, they practically imply each other. Depending upon a given interest, a tree gives lumber, and a certain volume of lumber makes a tree. If we try to derive the expressions from some more conventional sentences, formal problems will arise. First, the grammatical subject can be either “growing lumber” or “forests of lumber,” and the choice will be arbitrary with respect to the empirical material.

\(^1\)The idea of holistic judgements of metaphors came to my mind when reading Margolis (1987).
Second, if arbitrary choices of the subject and the predicate are made, relations of meaning become closed systems of predications independent of the cultural context. Thereby, cultural foundations and conflicts of meaning are ignored. Third, people do not state metaphors as facts or definitions; the forest does not really give lumber, humans produce it. Formal representations demand analytic definitions, but actually, in everyday life, conventions serve cultural life.

In formal representations of metaphors, cultural meanings are transformed into conventional objects and formalized subjects, and this creates empirical problems. If we define verbal expressions formally by specifying a subject, it becomes very difficult to explain why expressions, like the ones above, lose their connection out of context. If one lacks cultural experience, be it non-verbal or verbal, verbal conventions and a productive language concerning some topic will also be lacking; cultural contexts constitute connections in meaning. For this reason, analytic coherence in the form of predicative structures cannot be a sole concern in an analysis if one wants to unravel the meanings involved in complex expressions, such as metaphors. Because of the great problems of taking analytic predications as primitive units when dealing with discourse in empirical ways, I agree with Tobin (1990, p. 29) that it is better to take the verbal sign as the primary unit of analysis rather than the sentence:

the sentence and its component words and parts of speech ... have become preconceived ‘logical’ categories which do not belong to language per se and often allow us to ignore or disregard the actual signs – the signals and meanings...

A formal representation of a metaphor involves an attempt to establish its truly conventional meaning, e.g., its analytic meaning, but such conventions cannot be taken for granted. Signs are units of meaning that must be used and negotiated by people to acquire, maintain or change their meanings, and consequently, conventions of meaning reside in patterns of cultural and verbal interaction, not in the words themselves (Voloshinov, 1985). In the following, the verbal signs of
interest will be choices of words that relate to cultural contexts of forest.²

3. Cultural and Negotiated Meaning in Discourse

People use words to express meaning and to give impressions of meaning, and some temporary context is always involved in the continuous elaboration of discourse. Words have meanings because people continuously recreate and negotiate them by interacting with each other (Hodge & Kress, 1988). Even if some abstract quality enables people to use words rather independently of a particular context, the actual manifestation of words are at the same time dependent on temporary contexts of social and cultural kinds. Instead of taking some potential structure of words as the basic discursive unit of discourse, e.g., the sentence, the focus is on verbal signs that correspond to cultural and social contexts. This is in accordance with studies in interpersonal communication that stress social negotiations in cultural contexts when dealing with everyday discourse, e.g., Markovà and Foppa (1990).

Many verbal signs form markers of context, i.e., indices. The meaning of temporal morphemes, definite noun phrases and deictic expressions are relative to their situation of use. Depending on the particular language, social relations, status and personal qualities are grammaticalized or get expressed by the words actually chosen (Levinson, 1983). Indexical signs “point to the presence” of something essential to a verbal event, and their function is to contextualize discourse and to order it, i.e., to frame it (Ochs 1990, 1988). They demand more global considerations of the cultural or the social context.

²I do not claim that everyday discourse lacks formal qualities, but I do mean that formal predications presuppose truly conventionalized uses of words. However, words, like “forest,” occur in many and conflicting social and cultural contexts, for which reason there are several conflicting patterns governing its use. It is very difficult to establish the conventional meaning when people use words in accordance with several cultural values.
Through indices, temporary contexts frame discourse. Obviously, indices are part of discourse, but so far, they have played a marginal role, if any, when analyzing temporal or discursive relations between words. However, there are reasons for suspecting that indexicality penetrates even this realm of language.

Not only are contexts indicated in the form of isolated signs, but the choice of words in discourse results partly from considerations of cultural and social contexts. There are many concrete examples in the Swedish forest-discourse. A woodland may or may not be a forest depending on perspectives. If it is a cultivated forest, for some people, it forms “a fine forest,” for others, it qualifies as “a piece of land with trees on it,” but not as a real forest. An ecologist remarked in a Swedish television program that “cultivated forests are not true forests.” Likewise, a forester claimed that “primeval forests are fictions,” that all forests have been influenced by human activities. Another example; if a fire has burned trees in a forest, a forester might consider it as “damage to the forest,” whereas an ecologist can experience the fire as “a natural event in the forest.” These expressions exemplify how divergent perspectives meet and affect each other in discourse. When there is a complaint that “the cultural forest is not a forest,” in a formal sense, there appears to be an analytic contradiction, but actually, we are dealing with two different cultural objects, i.e., the cultural versus the natural forest. The word “forest” occurs in two different and conflicting cultural contexts, and “culture” and “nature” indicate them. Such discursive indications of cultural contexts could be considered metaphorical expressions, because they indicate which perspective among several alternatives is in view, what a forest appears to be. By shifting between “culture” and “nature,” “forests” become different and conflicting things.

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3 In these examples, the perspectives involved when talking about forests get expressed quite explicitly, but this need not be the case. In contrast to face to face interaction, a reader of a text must usually recover or construct some cultural context for himself/herself.

4 When dealing with social indices, scholars have focused on the ways in which phonemes, intonation, words and grammar codify elements in and aspects of discourse events (Saville–Troike, 1989; Brown &
We need to manage contexts and discourse simultaneously. Otherwise, meaning would be impossible to identify. There are probably as many specific ways to manage discourse as there are specific encounters between people. However, there are general processes going on in discourse, e.g., indexicality, that mediate between the specific flows of words and general structures of knowledge. Consequently, when dealing with everyday discourse, we need to recognize that we are actually dealing with two different things at the same time. On the one hand, we document verbal negotiations of meaning in everyday discourse, on the other, we formalize conventions. The documentation could go on for ever since there is no end to verbal arguments and conflicts resulting from divergent cultural experiences. In contrast, when we stop looking for variation and start to formalize some convention, we identify the convention with the formalization, not with the patterns of cultural and verbal interaction. Naturally, it then appears definite and coherent, but that depends on a contextual displacement. The representation is made by a transformation of patterns of verbal interaction into systems of definitions and predications concerning words. It is an open question to what extent our formalizations actually capture the conventions involved in everyday discourse.\(^5\)

4. Metaphorical Clusters in The Swedish Forest-Discourse

We will now take a closer look at the Swedish forest-discourse, and discern metaphorical clusters of words that

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Levinson, 1987; Gumperz, 1982; Hudson, 1980). Such codes form cues of contextualization which give particular events their proper place in a larger cultural context. By indicating contexts with indices, people introduce contexts into discourse. In parallel, metaphorical expressions are indices in the form of metaphorical choices of words.

\(^5\)I want to emphasize that no formal predication is without cultural and social meaning. Even definitions in dictionaries dissolve. For example, when equating forests with ecosystems, the notion of “a physical place where trees grow” is suppressed.
give the forest several cultural meanings. The Swedish forest-discourse manifests many interests and conflicts. Swedes have a long history in forestry, and nowadays, the forest fulfils several important cultural and economic roles for the nation as a whole, e.g., it gives raw material to industry, it enables extensive forestry, recreation and scientific work. The forest has characterized the Swedish cultural and natural landscape for a long time. Since a total account for all cultural context is beyond the scope of this article, only relevant interests and parties will be presented as the analysis proceeds. Naturally, I have chosen empirical examples that clearly demonstrate my argument. This kind of representation creates an illusion of formal coherence in everyday discourse, but there is no alternative way to represent them if they should be understood for what they are, i.e., indications of perspectives.\(^6\)

In general, “a forest” refers to some kind of space with a certain content.\(^7\) Expressions like “in the forest,” “forest border,” “forest area” and forests as “life rooms” or “woodlands” abound in the texts analyzed and point jointly to some kind of wooded space. Spatial descriptions may seem to be quite literal ways to represent forests, but since such expressions often replace the word “forest” itself, e.g., “woodland” or “area of forest,” the spatial dimension is

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\(^6\)I follow the tradition in representing metaphors as systematic, but I use italics to emphasize that we are dealing with choices of words in discourse. Metaphors are primarily connected to cultural and social use of words, not to systems of formal predications. Metaphors are presented mainly in the form of metaphorical clusters, i.e., out of the original linguistic contexts. It would take too much space and time to go through the details. Possibly, some doubts may arise concerning the metaphorical status of the expressions. Are they really metaphorical? Since linguistic judgements and intuition depend on cultural and social experience, I can only state from where my own intuitive criteria come, e.g., Lakoff (1987); Leach (1976).

\(^7\)“Skog,” the Swedish word for “forest,” does not codify a distinction between a wooded area and a forest. Furthermore, “skog” refers to forest as both an object and a substance. “Forest” will be used in the following as the English equivalent. Despite problems when translating between languages, I present no Swedish expressions, only the English translations. The focus is on cultural contexts and metaphorical clusters and it is then more important to dwell on cultural meanings.
strongly expressed. All interested parties seem to be concerned with the spatial distribution of forest. Geographic attributions locate forests nationally and regionally, e.g., “the Swedish forest” or “the Nordic forest.” Metaphors like “the forest walked into the land,” and others remarking on present and changing locations, are common. Spatial expressions form a metaphorical cluster used by all parties without any profound difference in attitude. Swedes seem to have a rather strong and general impression of the forest as a wooded space. As we proceed with the analysis, we will see that this spatial meaning forms the basis for further metaphorical elaborations and extensions of it.

Spaces have borders delimited by humans, and in this respect, interested parties end up in conflicts. Not only do parties differ in their opinions about how much of the Swedish forest should be cultivated, reserved for recreation or for its environmental values, but also in the ways they verbally and practically delimit the wooded space. To an ecologist, it is the living organisms that matter, whereas the trunks are more important to an economist or a forester. Conflicts between the interested parties concerning the forest seem to originate in the diverse social and practical activities in the forests. These activities, in turn, seem to be the main sources of semantic conflicts between metaphorical clusters.

One set of metaphorical expressions, which we can call the industrial cluster, links the forest with its economic value to society. They are used primarily by economists and owners of woodland.

Forests are lumber factories, places of work.
They produce and yield lumber.
We can construct, treat, run and restore forests.

This cluster structures the forest as a production unit, and the wooded space is then delimited by some working space. Another word tied to this cluster and used very often connects forests to both work and accomplishment, that is, “avverka.” This Swedish word is a compound consisting of the two senses mentioned and used whenever one fells forests for economic reasons. Due to the widespread and frequent use of
these expressions, the industrial cluster manifests a well-established conception of forests as products of human work.

Economically oriented articles on forests and foresting often involve phrases like “stands of lumber” and “volumes of lumber.” Since “damage to the forest” is seen as affecting the lumber, “the forest” implies things made by industrial work. The following expressions reveal the homogeneous substance in forests:

- *Volumes of lumber* blew down.
- *Lumber* grows in forests.
- Wood is a natural *resource*, a raw *material* and a primary *product*.

By standardizing forests as essentially involving work with lumber, they obtain a place in the economic market, and economic models and theories can be applied more easily. Forests can be measured by counting volumes of lumber or the number of trunks. There is then an economic view supporting this metaphorical cluster and influencing meaning in discourse globally, but in an economic direction. Words like “damage,” “treatment,” “growth” and “area” are but a few of all the expressions that get coloured by the industrial view. “Growth” implies more lumber, not necessarily that some forest grows higher, even if there is a correlation. In the following, I will discuss several perspectives that affect discourse in the same way.

Another group of metaphorical phrases concerns forestry and afforestation, the forestry cluster. By looking at the forest as a cultivation, the focus is on the soil and the plants in the wooded space. There is a close connection in theory between these metaphors and the cluster above because of economic interests, but in practice they differ in that they create different perspectives. The view changes from a focus on lumber to a concern with the soil, the plants and the trees.

- Forests are *plantations* and *cultivations*.
- They are *fertilized, cleared, thinned, sown* and *reaped*.
- A forest can be *mature for harvesting* and be *rich in wood*.
In forestry, soil and planted trees play the continuous roles, both practically and theoretically. When there is “damage to a forest,” it affects them. For example, “an acid forest,” something of great concern to foresters, means that the acidic soil affects the quality of wood. Both soil, plants and trees delimit a wooded space, but no doubt, the soil is the primary criterion. A tree can be adapted to some kind of soil, but not vice versa, something practically taken into account in forestry. Differences in focus, lumber versus soil, might explain why opinions diverge about “optimal forests.” In the industrial view, one should optimize the quantity of lumber, whereas in forestry, the soil sets limits to the quality of wood. Despite this difference in view, it is shallow in comparison to the following metaphorical expressions that form an ecological cluster.

The ecological cluster departs radically from the above views. No doubt, ecological metaphors cohere strongly, and the perspective figures very explicitly. To an ecologist, forests are nature. Therefore, metaphors of both forest and nature become relevant to an analysis of the ecological cluster.

Nature is a *machine*, it is *constructed* out of *material*. Nature consists of *ecosystems*. Nature *lives* and *dies*. Nature and forests have *continuity*, and they may not *tolerate interference*.

There can be *foreign elements*, plants and animals in nature and forests. Forests are *nature types* and these differ with respect to how *vulnerable, stable* and *resistant* they are.

These metaphors indicate the presence of some kind of mechanism, but the interesting part comes with the combination of “machine” and “life.” It would not be proper to look at nature as only a machine or only as a matter of life, since machines lack the power of life, and living beings vary so much in kinds of relationship as there is no limit to what to include in an ecosystem. Materials, energy flows and certain biological relations are included, i.e., more or less mechanical aspects, but other qualities of living beings are excluded, e.g., emotions. Nature and forests should function in particular ways, but then, the material and their connections must also fit in a certain way. By combining a “machine” with “life,” we
get a practical and balanced level of observation when investigating nature.

The wooded space contains a machinery of living things and other materials. It is not delimited by the trees or the ground alone, which is the case in the views above. A delimitation is made through a forest type, i.e., the plants and the animals that form “a web of mutual dependencies.” In the industrial and forestry views, forests can vary in form as long as there is lumber to be felled or soil capable of bearing stands of trees. When it comes to ecology, physical forms by themselves become much more important. The ecological view implies that forests contain nature types, i.e., they are ecosystems and webs, and these vary in materials and energy flows, but have fixed functional relations.

There are concrete forms of forests that primarily relate neither to documentation of organisms and materials nor to measures of lumber or wood. Landscape architects picture the forest by assessing it visually, and this activity creates a landscape cluster. From a doctoral thesis by a landscape architect (Axelsson Lindgren, 1990), a single cluster has been formed because of its special character. The thesis deals with recreational aspects of forests, and how we should take these aspects into account when planning a woodland. Experiments, which were aimed to evaluate how different wooded environments are visually experienced by people, form the basis of her discussions. However, despite a breadth in procedures, forests are viewed in quite a consistent way, which the following phrases indicate:

> Forests are visually complex structures, they offer different types of visual environments. There are visual qualities inherent in wooded spaces. Forests can have or be given esthetically optimal levels of visual complexity.

The following metaphorical compounds are also important to the perspective indicated: “esthetics of forests” and “interiors of forests.”

Since there is no single metaphor that can be used to summarize this cluster, it may first strike one as lacking conformity. However, if we consider what is meant by
qualities in this context, we get signs of a more uniform view. To measure the visual experience of forests, eight qualities were used by Axelsson Lindgren (1990) as dependent variables. These were: “pleasantness, complexity, totality, spatiality, intensity, social status, effect and originality.” When I first read about these qualities in isolation, I did not suspect any metaphorical core, but when considering the results, i.e., particular descriptions of wooded environments, it began to sound like the discourse of an art critic. As spaces, forests are places of recreation, but their contents are pictures. As with art, there are good and bad forests. Types of forests are something one creates through visual assessments, and a good forest should contain varying visual types.

As in the ecological view, varying forms of forests are stressed, but in the landscape cluster, visual qualities are the primary aspects when discussing the forest, not physical materials. Theoretically, it is interesting to note that the landscape cluster seems to be supported by a rather coherent perspective, but this relates to practical activities, i.e., visual assessments, not to explicit formulations of them. In contrast, the industrial, forestry and ecological clusters consist of verbal expressions that formulate the corresponding perspectives more coherently.

The analysis so far shows that it is possible to document metaphors by relating clusters of words to cultural contexts without considering formal or analytic coherence. The metaphorical clusters should not be seen as several verbal conventions because they are not shared among the people involved, they depend on cultural and social experiences. In practice, people treat the forest in different ways, and the metaphorical clusters presented relate to such practical experience with forests. By calculating the economic value of forests, economists treat them as production units at a rather abstract level. Since such calculations must be based on well-defined objects, the forest is represented as work with lumber. In contrast, when concerned with esthetic qualities, the focus is on some local and physical aspects of the environment. In visual assessments, the forest is made concrete as, and divided into visual scenes. In ecological research, the forest is treated as an ecosystem by investigating it as a physical self-
supporting and closed system. Such a verbal and practical activity fuses a physical environment with the verbal and practical knowledge used to investigate it, to treat it. Metaphorical clusters are projections from such fusions of verbal and practical experience. Practical treatments of forests connect words in accordance to the values, the interests and the practical knowledge involved, e.g., economic calculations and treatments organize the industrial cluster.8

5. Perspectives versus Metaphorical Clusters

So far, clusters of metaphorical expressions have been considered as corresponding to perspectives. To make this argument clearer, there is a need to elaborate and explicate the ideas of cluster and perspective. According to Rommetveit (1990) and Graumann (1990), perspectives are essential for understanding how people verbally categorize things in their everyday environment. Perspectives and language are interdependent because they are embedded in the process of attention. When someone observes his/her environment, he/she will always apprehend aspects of some object in view, but never experience the object in any complete and absolute sense. Verbal categorizations are then always made with some perspective in mind determined by the perceived aspects. Interests in and concerns for our environment direct what aspects we focus on, that is, what perspectives we have. These theoretical considerations and the analysis of the Swedish forest-discourse jointly point to some practical knowledge involved in perspectives, that is, a capacity to handle the environment in accordance with certain ends. Economics, cultivation, esthetics and ecological research are not only defined verbally, but also involve techniques, practical methods and instruments. Practical knowledge is used when interacting with the environment, and such knowledge forms a part of any perspective.

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8Keesing (1990) has observed such relationships with respect to magic, ritual and processes of grammaticalization.
In the Swedish forest-discourse, there is a correspondence between words, metaphorical clusters and perspectives. People use language to enforce their interests and to influence one another, and therefore, language and perspectives get intertwined. But in a sense, everyday discourse lives a life of its own. Perspectives “travel” faster in discourse than in practical experience. Skills in forestry are acquired over a long time, whereas learning to talk about forestry can be managed rather rapidly. Consequently, there is a difference between having a perspective that includes skills, interests and attitudes and expressing it. One does not have to adhere to a perspective to understand it. Perspectives are also constructed in discourse, which demands that words cannot stand in a direct correspondence with perspectives. They must be mediated by cultural practice and social negotiations. The word “forest” is subject to social negotiations between several cultural and social groups that make the forest into several and conflicting cultural objects.

Because of the differences between discourse and other forms of experience, I want to maintain a strong distinction between discourse and perspectives. With respect to the present analysis, in discourse, words cluster due to the holistic character of perspectives, and thereby, perspectives become embedded verbally. People form impressions of some perspective whenever clusters are partly expressed, but these impressions are naturally more superficial than perspectives founded in all sorts of experience. Certainly, people do also state their perspectives, but such statements are secondary with respect to the cultural and social contexts of words. First, there are verbal negotiations of the meaning of words that statements must conform to. Second, to place discourse and perspectives in a direct correspondence implies that discourse would lack the capacity of creating new perspectives, since every word would express old ones. Third, if every word was dependent on statements of perspective,

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9By stressing practical knowledge as fundamental to perspectives, I diverge from scholars that regard the relationship between language and perspectives as a rather direct one (Marková & Foppa, 1990). In their view, perspectives are expressed explicitly in the form of statements and propositions. But then the foundations of perspectives in cultural and practical experience is forgotten.
34 – The dynamics of metaphor

perspectives would rule the use of words, but this is not the case.

6. Discursive Indications in the Swedish Forest-Discourse

Many words in the forest-discourse are apprehended in several and conflicting ways due to the perspectives discussed. Let us begin with the very fundamental idea that forests have borders. To some extent, humans create the borders themselves. In Sweden, there are laws regulating woodland and its distribution that take different interests into account, which in the opinions of several interested parties make the law vague and watered-down. Borders of forest are not just discovered in an environment but are created by humans in accordance with some interest. Even if “border” as a verbal sign has an abstract meaning, this meaning is not enough to understand expressions involving both “forest” and words like “border,” “area,” “surface” and “land.” Such constellations of signs demand the employment of some more concrete criteria of the spatial dimension of forests. The metaphorical clusters in the forest-discourse relate to perspectives concerned with what aspects should be taken into account when dealing with forests. They imply more concrete structures of forest than the general notion of borders and can then provide more abstract things with a more concrete context. If the forest is a “visual scene,” in accordance with the landscape cluster, “borders” correspond to visual assessments, both in discourse and in practice. Contexts make the forest-discourse concrete, and going from abstract to more concrete conceptions is a typical aspect of metaphors. Perspectives then create metaphorical discourse, they make concrete the meanings of many other expressions than the local signs that indicate the meanings.

There is a multitude of expressions demanding some perspective to be properly understood. If the forest mainly produces lumber, “damage to a forest” will be seen as affecting lumber. In contrast, relative to the view of forests
as ecosystems, “damage” may concern energy flows or organisms of different kinds, and “damage to lumber” may actually be natural events in a forest. A “rich” and/or a “healthy” forest is also dependent on a perspective. The forest that is rich in visual experience need not necessarily be rich in organisms or lumber. The following words are but a few more fragments of context dependent expressions concerning forest: “new,” “age,” “fine,” “dead,” “element,” and “content.” To a forester, when many trees die, “the forest” may die too. In contrast, from the perspective of an ecologist, dead trees make the forest alive. Knowledge about perspectives seems to be necessary for managing the forest-discourse, otherwise no one would know what people were talking about. When people do not share each other’s perspectives, metaphorical expressions are ways of gaining knowledge about perspectives. The holistic character of perspectives is constructed or recovered by metaphorical expressions because of a capacity to give a somewhat holistic impression of some perspective. No doubt, this capacity is mediated by other cognitive structures, e.g., larger metaphorical clusters, but metaphorical expressions form the simple channels to perspectives. The verbal sign is the point of departure in elaborating meaning in discourse. Thus, a metaphorical expression indicates some perspective, and other verbal expressions can then be coloured by that perspective.

Metaphorical expressions usually interact in complex ways, and then they are very difficult to analyze as there are several perspectives involved. There is one common and explicit conceptual conflict between representatives of the forest industry and ecologists. The former often say that “the forest is a home for animals and plants.” In opposition to this formulation, ecologists remark that “the forest is the animals and the plants.” Not only does this semantic conflict figure frequently in the texts analyzed but also in interviews on Swedish TV and radio. Why is this distinction so seemingly important? In correspondence to a metaphorical cluster, there is an idea of the forest as some kind of functional structure, i.e., the forest as constituting a factory, a plantation, a picture or a machine. Each one implies a perspective that excludes or competes with the others, e.g., lumber factories.
are not ecosystems, and vice versa. Since “home” is a notion centred around human beings, to talk about forests in such terms conforms to the functional structure related to the forestry and the industrial clusters. By “making” a forest into “a home,” we get an impression of a human forest, of a perspective on forests as cultural life. The forest becomes a cultural space. In contrast, when dealing with ecosystems, no human constitutes any part of the networks of organisms and energy flows. Nature should not be affected by the surrounding culture. In this example, the semantic conflict arises not only from two opposed perspectives but also from further verbal elaborations of them in discourse. With respect to the notion of home, the perspectives are made into questions of culture and nature. Verbal elaborations depend on complex symbolic experience, involving both perspectives, clusters and discourse.

7. Conclusions – Metaphorical Discourse versus The Conventional Metaphor

A transference of concrete meaning to abstract concepts is a typical feature of metaphors (Sweetser, 1990), but in discourse, it is not a definite transference between conventional concepts but it relies on perspectives. Without the possibility of presenting and changing cultural contexts, discourse would become very inflexible, i.e., only one perspective would rule a discourse (a situation very difficult to imagine in the Swedish forest-discourse). For example, “stock-taking of forests” means different things to different people. To a forester, the phrase would mean something like “to check and to count trees in a stand,” but according to the ecological view, one is referring to all kinds of living organisms. If a forester and an ecologist want to discuss their methods, there must be means in discourse to manage the different perspectives. They should be able to manage alternations and changes of perspectives in discourse.

If metaphors in actual discourse were conventional predications, they would simply be a matter of assimilations or re-
jections in discourse. As complex expressions, they would end up as analytically acceptable or unacceptable predications. But the Swedish forest-discourse reveals more relativistic and holistic qualities than such predications would imply. Once a perspective has been indicated, another can replace it. For example, in a particular text, there can be many alternations between cultural and natural aspects of forest. Still, metaphorical clusters demonstrate opposed conceptions. For example, it would sound paradoxical to equate “lumber factories” with “ecosystems,” and vice versa. However, such a semantic conflict is controlled by cultural, social and practical knowledge, not determined by formal rules of verbal signification. That a factory is not an ecosystem does not follow from any verbal convention but from environmental activities. When one treats a woodland as a factory, it does not constitute an ecosystem, and vice versa. How well a perspective is formalized by verbal conventions is a question beyond an empirical analysis of discourse. Discourse analysis must first deal with the actual perspectives involved, and thereafter, it is up to the researcher to represent them in an acceptable manner, but that does not necessarily include considerations of the conventional meanings as in formal and analytic representations.

If we change our views about the internal structures of verbal expressions and accept that there are many functional layers (Silverstein, 1985, 1976), of which indexicality is one, metaphors in the form of discursive indications of perspectives may perhaps explain how cultural contexts manifest themselves in everyday discourse. Since metaphorical choices of words give impressions of cultural perspectives, they contextualize discourse in an effective way. Surely, metaphorical expressions may perform other functions as well, e.g., transmitting new information, but their metaphorical status does not seem to be tied to some local knowledge, that is, definitions or facts. In this respect, metaphorical expressions take on an almost ritualistic character. Introducing contexts and changing them must continuously be reiterated in discourse. Perspectives in discourse have a temporary character because there are many perspectives involved, but by combining words in accordance
with some perspective, verbal interactors continuously reintroduce them into discourse.

By stressing metaphorical clusters of words, this study of forest-discourse is partly in accordance with the idea of cognitive models (Lakoff, 1987) or semantic domains (Sweetser, 1990), but at the same time, by putting emphasis on cultural objects and perspectives, it relates more to Quinn's (1991) view. Models fixate connections between words, which excludes the process of cultural and social negotiation of meaning. Now, this is necessary to investigate analytic coherence, but the formal systems that come out of such analyses, i.e., the conventional meanings, are not appropriate as models of everyday discourse. Metaphorical expressions are discursive relations between words dependent on cultural contexts, e.g., perspectives, and contexts are "environments" patterned by cultural and social experience (Scharfstein, 1989). Perspectives are not conventions because they are not shared among all members of a speech community. Humans live in a "cognized environment" (Laughlin et al, 1990), a symbolic world, that consist of both verbal signs, material symbols and other forms of symbolic behaviour. Since discourse is part of the general interaction between human beings and this cognized and symbolized environment, we cannot build closed models of verbal reasoning. We need to take practical knowledge, interests and attitudes into account when dealing with metaphorical expressions in discourse.

It is remarkable that there seems to be no real interest in the methodological consequences when choosing between discourse versus formal analysis of metaphor. There are negotiations and several perspectives involved in an interview, whereas a formal analysis presupposes the intuitive judgements of conventions and analytic coherence. The kind of planning involved differs in the two cases. The verbal forms of a discourse stem from cultural/social interactions and negotiations (Mishler, 1986; Tyler, 1987), whereas formal representations of discourse presuppose truly conventional uses of words, no perspectives in conflict, for which reason, verbal forms are fixated (Rommetveit, 1986; 1990). Therefore, we should not expect conventional metaphors to correspond to metaphorical discourse, and vice
versa; metaphorical discourse demands judgements of cultural and social meanings, whereas formal judgements of metaphors involve predications of their conventional meanings. Contextual and formal judgements of meaning are better seen as complementary analytic methods than as theories in conflict.