

Metaphors in the perspective of argumentation

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Abstract

Based on his study of the metaphors used in Chilean parliamentary media participation, Santibáñez (2010) proposes a novel model which analyses conceptual metaphors from the perspective of argumentation. Santibáñez's analysis is significant in the sense that it reveals the vital role of metaphors in daily argumentation, which inspires us to further explore the relationship between metaphor and argumentation. In this article, we take issue with some points of Santibáñez's analysis, pointing out that it does not clearly distinguish between analogy argumentation and arguing by metaphors, nor does it clearly tell us what role conceptual metaphors play in Toulmin argumentation model, and what the overall structure of arguing by metaphors is. We then address these questions via the cases in Santibáñez (2010), with reference to Juthe (2005)'s approach to analogy argumentation, Kövecses (2010)'s analysis of conceptual metaphor and Toulmin ([1958]2003, [1978]1984) model of argumentation model.

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1. Introduction

According to Santibáñez (2010:975), although many studies “have attempted to collate all important rhetorical and argumentation concepts and figures, the phenomenon of metaphor has not received sufficient attention and it is difficult to see real efforts to include the interesting analyses that have been proposed in the cognitive sciences, especially in linguistics.” Based on this point, Santibáñez (2010) studies metaphors in Chilean parliamentary media participation, proposing a novel way to analyse conceptual metaphor from an argumentative perspective. Inspired by Lakoff's works on metaphor (Lakoff, 2004, 2006a,b, 2008), Santibáñez's analysis is essentially characterized by the integration of conceptual metaphor theory and Toulmin argumentation model.

Undoubtedly, Santibáñez's analysis is significant in the sense that it reveals the vital role of metaphors in daily argumentation, which inspires us to further explore the relationship between metaphor and argumentation. In this article, we take issue with some points of Santibáñez's analysis, pointing out that it does not clearly differentiate analogy argumentation and arguing by metaphors, nor does it clearly tell us what role conceptual metaphors play in Toulmin argumentation model, and what the overall structure of arguing by metaphors is. We attempt to address these questions via the cases in Santibáñez (2010), with particular reference to the Juthe (2005)'s proposal on analogy argumentation, Kövecses (2010)'s analysis of conceptual metaphor and Toulmin ([1958]2003, [1978]1984)'s model of argumentation.

The article is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the distinction between analogy argumentation and arguing by metaphors. Section 3 addresses the question of how to define conceptual metaphors. Section 4 analyses the conceptual metaphors in argumentation schema. Section 5 is a summary of our main points.

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2. Analogy argumentation vs. arguing by metaphors

Under the title “Analogy argumentation vs. arguing by metaphors”, [Santibáñez \(2010\)](#) makes a distinction between them, claiming that “[I]t seems that in contemporary argumentation theory the phenomenon of metaphor has been implicitly investigated in the study of argument from analogy or analogy argumentation. It is generally agreed that analogy argumentation is based on ‘similarity’” (p. 975). This conclusion is reached on the basis of [van Eemeren et al. \(2007\)](#) and [Walton \(2006\)](#)’s definition of analogy argumentation and schema representation. [Walton \(2006:96\)](#), for example, states that “argumentation from analogy is a very commonly used kind of case-based reasoning, where one case is held to be similar to another case in a particular respect. Since the one case is held to have a certain property, the other case, it is concluded, also has the same property”. In the same vein, [van Eemeren et al. \(2007:138\)](#) state that “characteristic of analogy argumentation is that in this type of argumentation someone tries to convince someone else by showing that something is similar to something else.” From these words, we can see that the argumentation models defined by [Walton \(2006\)](#) and [van Eemeren et al. \(2007\)](#) are quite similar to each other. As a consequence, [Santibáñez \(2010:976\)](#) concludes that “beyond the specific forms and terms used, both approaches agree in assuming that analogy argumentation proceeds through similarity and comparison.” Furthermore, Santibáñez spells out the real difference between analogy argumentation and arguing by metaphors, namely, “in analogy argumentation similarity is a core dimension, in metaphor it is a secondary aspect” ([Santibáñez, 2010:976](#)). What is, then, the core dimension in metaphors? [Santibáñez \(2010:977\)](#), following the ideas of [Lakoff and Johnson \(1980\)](#), states that “metaphor is not primarily related to language, but rather to the ‘mapping’ between domains.” That is to say, [Santibáñez \(2010\)](#) holds the stance that the core dimension of analogy argumentation is similarity, whereas the core dimension of arguing by metaphor is mapping.

We find Santibáñez’s distinction somewhat ineffective. First, ‘similarity’ is a vague and sweeping concept. If the terminology is used to mean that two objects are similar in many attributes or their internal structures, it would be rather difficult to distinguish similarity and mapping in nature. [Toulmin et al. \(1984:216\)](#) state that “in ‘arguing from analogy’, we assume that there are enough similarities between two things to support the claim that what is true of one is also true of the other.” [Santibáñez \(2010\)](#) intends to use this statement to prove that [Toulmin et al. \(1984\)](#) also believe that analogy argumentation is grounded on similarity. However, we should notice that [Toulmin et al. \(1984\)](#) use the term ‘similarity’ in its plural form, which suggests that they have sensed that analogy should be built on possibly multiple similarities in attribute and relation between two objects. When discussing the usage of analogy argumentation, [Toulmin et al. \(1984\)](#) employ the case of Darwin proposing evolution theory via analogy as a good example to show the importance of analogy argumentation. “In this case, the appeal to analogy was successful; the points of significant similarity far outweighed the differences” ([Toulmin et al., 1984:162](#)). They further claim:

Domestic animals change because farmers select out their breeding stock for desired characteristics, and presumably something similar accounts for the variation in natural species. Nature, or the environment, must “select” certain members of the species in preference to others, and this selection improves the adaptation of the species to the environment ([Toulmin et al., 1984:162](#)).

Although [Toulmin et al. \(1984\)](#) use the word ‘similar’, it is used to describe parallels in crucial features and internal relations between two different objects. This kind of parallel relation is akin to the mapping’s connotation in nature. Therefore, we can use the following mapping diagram to represent the relationship reflected by the word ‘similar’ in [Toulmin et al. \(1984\)](#):

farmers	=>	nature
breeding stock	=>	certain member of species
changes of domestic animal	=>	adaptation of species

Second, analogy argumentation is based on ‘mapping’, and its basic structure consists of Target-Subject (TS), Analogue (A), Assigned-Predicate (AP), elements of the Analogue ($\epsilon_1^* \dots \epsilon_2^*$), elements of the Target-Subject ($\epsilon_1 \dots \epsilon_2$), and so on ([Juthe, 2005:4](#)). Target-Subject (TS) refers to the object that analogy argumentation intends to describe. Analogue (A) means the object used to be compared with Target-Subject. Assigned-Predicate (AP) is the predicate designated to Target-Subject derived from Analogue. Elements of the analogue ($\epsilon_1^* \dots \epsilon_2^*$) which determine the Assigned-Predicate correspond one-to-one with counterpart elements in the Target-Subject ($\epsilon_1 \dots \epsilon_2$). Accordingly, [Juthe \(2005:5\)](#) defines analogy as follows:

The Analogue is analogous with the Target-Subject with regard to the Assigned-Predicate if and only if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the elements of the Analogue which determine the Assigned-Predicate and the elements of the Target-Subject.

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