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## X IS A JAIL

A pilot study from a hybrid theoretical point of view\*

### Abstract

In this paper my aim is to highlight the strengths and the weaknesses of a recent theory, called hybrid theory (Tendahl 2009) through the analysis of metaphors of the type X IS A JAIL. By providing sample analyses, my aim is thus to demonstrate, how different metaphors of the type X IS A JAIL can be described in a hybrid theoretical framework. My further aim is to show what possible solutions hybrid theory can provide for problems of conceptual metaphor theory and relevance theory, both serving as its sources.

*Keywords:* conceptual metaphor theory, relevance theory, hybrid theory

### 1 Setting the scene

In this paper my aim is to highlight the strengths and the weaknesses of a recent theory, called hybrid theory (Tendahl 2009) through the analysis of metaphors of the type X IS A JAIL. Hybrid theory is an integrative model, combining the classical version of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1993) and the theory of ad hoc concepts in relevance theory (RT) (Carston 1996, 2002, Wilson & Carston 2006, 2008). By providing sample analyses, my aim is thus to answer the following question: How far is Tendahl's theory able to handle and possibly solve at least some of the problems considered to be the weaknesses of the two theories serving as its source?

As a starting point I take the observation of Tendahl that one of the deficiencies of RT is that it cannot account for 'emergent qualities', i.e. what knowledge is activated while constructing the ad hoc meaning of metaphorical expressions such as

(1) *It was a long and rough road.* (describing a love relationship)

to yield the superordinate category *ROAD*\* meaning LOVE RELATIONSHIP<sup>1</sup>. Nothing in our knowledge about roads points to it being applicable to the duration of a relationship. Although the category of *ROAD* can be expanded to a significant extent, it will never have the property of durativity. However – Tendahl argues – if we presume that there is a predetermined relationship

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<sup>1</sup> All mental contents, i.e. conceptual domains, conceptual regions, image schemas, conceptual metaphors are in capitals. Lexical concepts are in italicized capitals and ad hoc concepts are in italicized capitals with an asterisk.

between the domains of ROAD and LOVE in the mind, i.e. if conceptual metaphors exist, then there is a ground which can be drawn into the interpretation of metaphorical expressions.

Therefore, it is clear that it is the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY with the help of which the ad hoc, contextual interpretation of ROAD\* is possible. That is, Tendahl rejects the thesis of relevance theory according to which metaphors play an unimportant role in the interpretation process. Instead, he argues that relevance theory benefits from integrating the system of conceptual metaphors into the knowledge system that is assumed to be essential in the interpretation of utterances. *The question, of course, is how it is possible to integrate conceptual metaphors into a relevance theoretical framework.*

On the other hand, while cognitive metaphor theories come up with significant results in spotting metaphorical systems, they fail to give an answer to the question relating to the mental processes that provide a basis for the way the mind applies these metaphorical systems in a given speech situation while processing a metaphorical phenomenon. Tendahl assumes that this deficiency of conceptual metaphor theory can be eliminated with the help of the mechanisms borrowed from relevance theory. Namely, relevance theory concentrates precisely on how given meanings are constructed in given speech situations. *Therefore, the question that arises is, how ad hoc meaning construction processes from relevance theory can be integrated into a version of the conceptual metaphor theory.*

Tendahl's theory can be treated as an integrative approach that seeks an answer to the complex question of how, on the one hand, mental phenomena, i.e. metaphor- and knowledge systems, and inferential schemes which are prerequisites for the mind to process a metaphorical expression, can be united in a single model and, on the other, how contextually relevant factors given in a discourse which definitely influence the mental processing of metaphorical expressions can be described.

In the forthcoming sections, first the basic concepts of Tendahl's theory will be introduced followed by the exemplification of the advantages of the model with the help of analysing metaphors of the type X IS A JAIL. Finally, I will highlight some critical points of the theory and further possibilities for research.

## **2 The conceptual apparatus of Tendahl's hybrid theory**

Tendahl's hybrid theory is a combination of certain elements taken from cognitive metaphor research and relevance theory, the aim of which is to describe the processing of metaphorical phenomena in one model. In order to assess the workability of the theory correctly it must be made transparent what elements are combined with each other and how this happens, according to Tendahl's ideas.

### **2.1 Conceptual domain and mental spaces**

The cognitive architecture of the hybrid theory distinguishes conceptual domains and mental spaces. The two similarly sounding terms refer to two phenomena with very different status, although both originate from the conceptual apparatus of cognitive meaning construction. Conceptual domain is one of the key concepts introduced by conceptual metaphor theory and is defined by Croft and Cruse (Croft & Cruse 2004: 15). Conceptual domains are considered stable mental representations stored in long-term memory that contain information belonging to the same experiential domain organized in a system (Tendahl 2009: 198-199). Mental space is one of the basic concepts of blending theory (closely related to conceptual metaphor

theory) and unlike conceptual domains it is a cognitive space constructed in the process of on-line meaning construction, in which the representations, i.e. meaning structures, have particular values based on the situation.

In other words, while conceptual domains store context-independent information and are part of long-term memory, mental spaces are cognitive spaces where situational valid, i.e. context-dependent, information is processed and constructed (Tendahl 2009: 131). Another difference is that while conceptual domains typically contain information relating to one particular experiential domain (e.g. JOB, HEALTH, LOVE, JAIL), mental spaces may unite more than one conceptual domain at a time through the structures originating from these: My *JOB\** is a *JAIL\** (Tendahl 2009: 135).

## 2.2 *Lexical concepts and the reinterpretation of ad hoc concepts*

The cognitive architecture considered by Tendahl (2009) to be generally relevant is further differentiated below the level of conceptual domains. Taking the cognitive linguistic conception of conceptual domains as a starting point, he considers the domains as configurations of concepts. These informational units are identified by Tendahl as lexical concepts, and – since they are the building blocks of conceptual domains – he regards them as stable and context-independent informational units. The meaning created as a result of situational meaning construction he labels as ad hoc meaning following Carston’s notation. Its main source is, of course, the lexical concept, out of which an ad hoc meaning fitting the situation emerges as a result of the interplay of different factors. However, unlike Carston he denies that it would be possible even in principle for a lexical concept to appear in an utterance without any further modification: “every lexical item requires pragmatic modifications and is therefore understood in the form of an ad hoc concept” (Tendahl 2009: 195). According to Tendahl, every utterance eventually contains ad hoc concepts, thus in the hybrid theory we encounter a more radical notion of ad hoc concepts than in Carston’s conception.<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider the following example. We have received a letter from an aunt at whose house we spent many summer holidays.

(2) *November has passed. The **leaves** in the park have already fallen from the trees.*

The lexical concept *LEAF* associated with the word *leaf* supposedly contains the linguistic information that retains the morphological and phonological properties of the word. These properties are basically context-independent, or at least are context-sensitive only to a minimal extent. In the same way, what role the concept *LEAF* can assume in a sentence is also context-independent. Nevertheless, in the present context our world knowledge pertaining to leaves is also part of the lexical concept. A leaf, as part of a plant, has its own biological morphology (stem, leafstalk, veins etc.), its own size and pattern and is presumably green. Such a leaf does not occur in nature, of course, since it is not specified to which plant it belongs. These essential features comprising the lexical concept *LEAF* are subjected to an adjustment process in a given context, the point of which is that the essential features of the lexical concept assume the concrete meaning fitting the context, i.e. the ad hoc concept *LEAF\** emerges.

<sup>2</sup> Recently Carston has also modified her views on ad hoc concepts, but still argues that contexts are possible where the lexically encoded meaning is sufficient. See Carston (2010: 159, especially fn. 4 citing the literature on the question).

In our case the context-independent concept *LEAF* is shifted in a certain direction, namely in the direction of the leaf of a tree, more precisely to that of a fallen leaf of a tree (*LEAF\**). This leaf has already some sort of shape, size and it – since it is autumn – will not be green, but rust-colored. The hearer arrives at the ad hoc meaning of the word *leaf* as a result of the interplay of the following factors: the expectations of the hearer motivated by the context and the section of his encyclopedic knowledge about the world that is relevant in the context; it is also part of this knowledge that the speaker's behaviour makes it obvious that the utterances at hand are relevant for him.

The production of ad hoc concepts is a fast, automatic and unconscious inferential process, though it can be made conscious. According to the hybrid theory, there has to be a mental structure that facilitates this process. In other words, a structure that opens up lexical concepts to stimuli from the context, and – vice versa – a structure that is responsible for ensuring that the stimuli from the context affect the context-independent information stored in the lexical concept in a pre-channeled and synchronized way so that the ad hoc concept fitting the discourse can evolve. Tendahl calls this mental structure the conceptual region, and by this he practically extends the relevance theoretic conception of lexical concepts.

### 2.3 Conceptual region and free slots

The notion of conceptual region is a central category of the hybrid theory and it is defined by Tendahl as follows:

A conceptual region is a context-independent unit related to a particular word. Therefore, conceptual regions are accessed and ad hoc concepts are constructed on the basis of conceptual regions. Thus, conceptual regions are the structures which constitute lexical semantics. However, *in a particular discourse situation we automatically and directly create a contextually modulated version of a conceptual region, i.e. an ad hoc concept* (italics added – P. Cs.). This process is studied in cognitive pragmatics. The conceptual region provides us with some lexical information plus procedural information about how to create the ad hoc concept. In that sense, conceptual regions are blueprints for ad hoc concepts. (Tendahl 2009: 200)

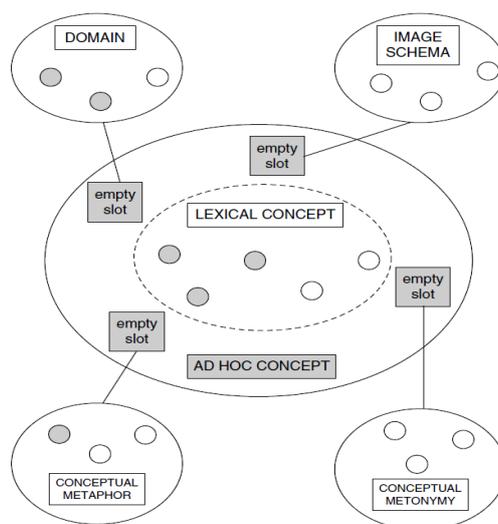


Figure 1: Tendahl (2009: 203)

Thus, the notion of conceptual region includes – beyond the basic features of the lexical concept – those pieces of information which are already available in relation to how ad hoc concepts can be constructed from lexical concepts that are at the core of the conceptual region. These informational “spots” function as free slots within the region, providing access to other external knowledge structures via a connector element in order to be able to establish a connection with another conceptual region.

The words in an utterance (more precisely the conceptual region activated by them and their role in the clause structure) play the role of the stimuli that activate knowledge structures functioning as connectors. A connector may connect to a free slot because there is a previously given connection of some kind between the conceptual region and the external knowledge structure containing the connector (for example a conceptual metaphor). These are labeled by Tendahl ‘entrenched free slots’.<sup>3</sup>

(3) *Ruude is a tree.* (Tendahl 2009: 212)

This utterance is used by a speaker in a conversation about football players to characterize the striker’s advantages. It means Ruude is a tall player with excellent heading skills. The word *tree* in (3) is used in a metaphorical sense. In Tendahl’s analysis, it is this word in utterance (3) that serves as a connector element. It points to a free slot of the conceptual region TREE and has the function of establishing a connection with PEOPLE ARE PLANTS within the domain of conceptual metaphors. This free slot is entrenched, because *X is a tree* exemplifies a conventional metaphorical structure. It is this knowledge about conventional metaphors that exerts contextual pressure on the activation of the conceptual region TREE and contributes to the construction of the metaphorical ad hoc concept *TREE\**.

It has to be stressed that the knowledge structures appearing in the free slots are not part of the lexically coded conceptual meaning and, though they are not part of the conceptual region either, the connection may, in some cases, (for instance, in the case of collocations) be very strong. According to Tendahl, these knowledge structures comprise image schemata, conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymies, knowledge structures that are stored in the long-term memory.

In summary it can be stated that ad hoc concepts are constructed so that on the one hand the conceptual region is activated by the context, which simply means that an element of the utterance exerts sufficient cognitive pressure on the hearer to activate a conceptual region. On the other hand, due to the underdetermination of the activated conceptual region the aim of the interpretation is that the free slots of the conceptual region should be filled by the interference of some kind of external knowledge structure in a manner relevant to achieving the intended effect. As a result of this conceptual modulation, an ad hoc concept emerges that is modified with respect to its features and which fits the context but at the same time still keeps the source activated so that it can be traced back (Tendahl 2009: 201).

In the following I try to show how a metaphorical mapping comes about in this model and how conceptual metaphors can participate in the construction of ad hoc meanings fitting the context.

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<sup>3</sup> But it may well be the case that the free slot of the conceptual region is not entrenched at all. In this case we can talk about an ‘ad hoc free slot’ (Tendahl 2009: 195) and it will be the context that entirely defines what enters the free slot of the conceptual region, i.e. which sources of information are used as a base for constructing the ad hoc conceptual meaning.

### 3 Analyses: *Love is a jail.*

Let us consider first the following example:

(4) *Love is a jail.*

Our starting point is the connection between two conceptual regions in an utterance whose formal structure is a nominal predicate. From a semantic point of view, both expressions activate two separate conceptual regions whose cores are each constituted by a lexical concept. These concepts have context-independent semantic properties that serve as the basis enabling the ad hoc meaning in the utterance to fit together. Let us first consider the concepts and their elements, and then how the interpretation which we assign to the utterance emerges, i.e. that love is a state one cannot get out of without further struggle.

The lexical concept of *LOVE* would be very difficult to define exhaustively, but this definition is not necessary in Tendahl's model. It is sufficient to posit a minimal definition in order to start the analysis. We assume that the lexical meaning constituting the core of the conceptual region *LOVE* contains the following basic features with certainty: it is typically an emotional state of a person in which a strong – spiritual and bodily – attraction (desire, affection) towards, and idealization of, another person manifest themselves. The lexical concept of *JAIL* can be described as follows: it is typically a confined space where people stay for a certain amount of time against their own will.<sup>4</sup>

By connecting the two conceptual regions in the utterance, they become each other's mutual linguistic context whose structure is determined by the clause structure (subject + predicate). Hence the clause structure imposes a constraint such that a free slot of the activated conceptual region *LOVE* has to be filled by one or more elements of the conceptual region *JAIL* as a connector. If there is no element that can function as a connector, the processing of the utterance will be void of sense for the hearer from a cognitive point of view. Let us consider the following example:

(5) *Love is a swimming cap.*

If, during the processing of this utterance, the hearer wants to relate the conceptual regions of *LOVE* and *SWIMMING CAP* to each other, presumably he or she has to make a serious effort from a cognitive point of view, since they cannot – or only with difficulty – find an element that they can fit into one of the free slots of the conceptual region *LOVE* from the conceptual region *SWIMMING CAP*.

In the case of *Love is a jail* we need to posit the question of what it is that ensures that an element of *JAIL* can function as a connector in the construction of the ad hoc meaning of *LOVE\**. Tendahl assumes that in order to construct the ad hoc meaning, it must be ensured that the conceptual regions *JAIL* and *LOVE* be related to each other. The possibility of this

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<sup>4</sup> It is easy to see that we do not need the concept of *JAIL* in order to describe a very general, underdetermined concept of *LOVE*. This is important to point out, since according to the traditional version of conceptual metaphor theory the concepts of emotions, for instance, can only be understood metaphorically, i.e. the mind is dependent on conceptual metaphors when it represents the concept of *LOVE*. Though Tendahl does not touch upon it, one important consequence of his theory is that it enables us to make the distinction between how we talk about love (with the help of ad hoc concepts) and how the mind represents the concept of *LOVE* (with the help of conceptual regions). In addition it does not exclude the assumption that with the help of conceptual metaphors we can facilitate and specify what we intend to say, and – vice versa – by the same token conceptual metaphors stored in our long-term memory can be of help in processing metaphoric expressions.

connection is provided by conceptual metaphors which are stored in the long-term memory. The question arises what kind of connection obtains between the system of conceptual metaphors and the different conceptual regions.

However, it is a considerable difference in relation to traditional conceptual metaphor theory that Tendahl does not assume conceptual metaphors whose content is finely elaborated, but, by accepting Grady's distinction between primary and compound metaphors (Grady 1997) he starts out from the assumption that it is primary metaphors that function as connector elements and bring about the metaphorical ad hoc meaning by connecting the two conceptual regions. At the same time, since traditional conceptual metaphor theory is not concerned with the emergence of metaphorical ad hoc meanings, Tendahl considers the mental spaces of blending theory to be the terminological apparatus which helps to describe on-line metaphorical meaning construction.<sup>5</sup>

According to the assumption of the hybrid theory, in the metaphor *Love is a jail*, the primary metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS has the role of the connector which henceforth connects the regions of JAIL and LOVE. The conceptual metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS is thus neither part of the lexical concept of JAIL nor that of LOVE, but is an external knowledge structure that is, however, very easily accessible during the use of these lexical concepts, since we find among the basic features of JAIL that it is a PLACE and among the basic semantic features of LOVE that it is a STATE. And if we activate both, the conceptual metaphor capable of connecting them will be naturally activated too. If this relationship occurs repeatedly and with sufficient frequency, it gets stored in long term memory in the form of a conventionalized metaphor.

Before we address the question of what advantages this procedural model may have, let us take a look at two readings of another example.

- (6) *'Szabadságra megyek' – szokták mondani az emberek, amikor egy ideig nem mennek be a munkahelyükre. Különös dolgot sugall ez: mintha a munkahely börtön lenne. Pedig a munkának, amelyet a felnőtt végez, jó esetben nem kellene tehernek lennie, inkább olyan foglalatosságnak, amely örömet is okoz.* (Tóth & Valaczka: 110)<sup>6</sup>

In this example, too, it is the connector STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS that links the two conceptual regions. Among the basic features of the lexical concept belonging to the conceptual region JOB we find a strong connection of different conceptual domains via connector elements: the place (WORKPLACE) where people (WORKER) work (WORK), that is, where they MAKE MONEY, and where they SPEND a certain amount of TIME. However, we need to take into account the fact that here we do not encounter a STATE, as we do in the case of LOVE, because STATE is not a basic feature of the lexical concept JOB. Therefore, we can assume that, in this case, the relationship between the conceptual region of JOB and the

<sup>5</sup> For the theory of primary and compound metaphors see especially Grady (1997) and Lakoff & Johnson (1999: 57-58). Grady proposed that most fundamental image schematic metaphors, such as ACTIONS ARE MOVEMENTS, REASONS ARE PHYSICAL FORCES, HAPPINESS IS UP, SEEING IS GRASPING, GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS etc., should be treated separately, since these metaphorical schemata are universal, and presumably compound conceptual metaphors are also based on them. Primary conceptual metaphors are universal, since they reflect elementary experiences that can be traced back to the biological and physical conditions of the human species. Compound metaphors are built upon these primary metaphorical schemata. Such a compound metaphor would be LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

<sup>6</sup> English translation: 'I'm going on holiday [lit. I'm going on liberty/freedom] – people often say, when they do not attend their workplace for a while. This implies a strange notion: *as if a workplace were a jail*. But ideally, the job done by an adult should not be a burden, but an activity that also pleases one.'

conceptual metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS is not as tight and direct as in the case of LOVE. But, there is an indirect connection between JOB and JAIL. The conceptual region JOB is naturally connected to the conceptual domain of WORK, too, since one of its central features is WORKPLACE, i.e. the place where work has to be done by a person (WORKER). The lexical concept *WORKER* is also part of the domain WORK, one of whose basic features is that workers have some kind of EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP with their workplace. This relationship can be either positive or negative. In the case of the metaphor MY WORKPLACE IS A JAIL, the negative attitude is elaborated by the conceptual metaphor FREEDOM OF ACTION IS FREEDOM OF MOTION: the work activity is mostly connected to a specific location, and the employees cannot leave their workplace at any time. In order for us to be able to describe one's mental attitude as being in a certain place, we use STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS as a basis. At the same time, it is a second, different metaphor that specifies whether this attitude is a negative or a positive one.

It is as a result of the contextual pressure that the word *workplace* appears in a metaphorical construction whose structure is X IS A JAIL, i.e. it is a location. Since we assume – even if we are not aware of it – that the speaker intends to convey relevant information, the process of interpretation does not break down because it would be rather meaningless to state that a location is nothing else than another location (except if we are comparing physical places). The mind, in order to achieve the greatest cognitive effect possible (with the least effort) looks for the closest and most satisfying interpretation, which will be that the worker conceives of work as a burden, and the workplace as a treadmill.

- (7) *I get along with my colleagues, the atmosphere is calm, and there are no surprises. We work fixed ours, the twelve-hour-shifts are exhausting sometimes, but at least no one loses his job here. My boss is a warden who keeps an eye on everybody and everything. We don't have many problems with the inmates. **My workplace is a jail**, but I don't feel bad about it, and I do not need to keep it secret from my friends. (my constructed example – P.Cs.)*

This example can demonstrate that here, as a result of contextual pressure, an interpretation comes about that requires only a minimal modification of the lexical concept: based on the lexical concept *WORKPLACE* the ad hoc concept *WORKPLACE\** (with the meaning the place where I work) eventually emerges, and jail gives a minimal description of this place: the place where inmates are kept.

If we take a look at example (8) out of context, then both readings – the metaphorical and the literal – can be simultaneously active:

- (8) *My workplace is a jail.*

The simultaneous presence of both readings is possible because, according to the model, the metaphorical reading is one of the primary readings. More specifically, although the conceptual metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS is not part of the lexical concepts *WORKPLACE* and *JAIL*, both conceptual regions contain certain free slots which automatically give rise to conceptual metaphors. The use of the relevant conceptual metaphors is restricted just in case the state is interpreted as a physical location (i.e. a correctional institution). If there is no contextual pressure favouring any of the readings, both readings will be active. (The same does not hold, however, of the metaphor LOVE IS A JAIL.)

## 4 Advantages of the hybrid theory

In order to interpret metaphorical expressions, the hybrid theory relies on relevance theory, as it adopts the minimalist concept of meaning, the principles of ad hoc expressions, the principle of optimal relevance,<sup>7</sup> and borrows various terminological items including “conceptual region”, “conceptual modulation”, and “pressure of context”. Furthermore, the hybrid theory utilizes conceptual domains and conceptual metaphors from conceptual metaphor theory, more precisely from the theory of primary and compound metaphors developed by Grady (Grady 1997).

### 4.1 *The on-line model of metaphorical expressions*

Tendahl’s theory deserves credit for modeling the on-line processing, i.e. the construction and comprehension of metaphors. A further remarkable achievement is that in this theory the status of conceptual metaphors is much more clarified as in the classical version of conceptual metaphor theory. Tendahl considers conceptual metaphors as external knowledge structures which do not belong to conceptual regions, or more precisely, to our lexical concepts that constitute the core of these conceptual regions and function as storage tools of our knowledge.

### 4.2 *Conceptual metaphors as procedural and as declarative knowledge*

Although Tendahl assumes that conceptual metaphors are a distinct area in the mind, he does not undertake to differentiate between primary and compound metaphors. In my opinion, in the hybrid theory one encounters the distinction between “knowing that” and “knowing how”, which was introduced by Gilbert Ryle (1949/2009) in analytical philosophy. While “knowing that” is equivalent to declarative knowledge, i.e. something that can be put into exact words and involves lexical knowledge, “knowing how” cannot be easily explained in words. Most of us can ride a bike but we would hardly manage to explain how to do it in a subtle form and to impart these skills purely as lexical knowledge.

In Tendahl’s theory, conceptual metaphors are forms of knowledge which can be connected to conceptual regions in the process of meaning construction. But the domain of conceptual metaphors is not so homogenous as Tendahl assumes. The primary metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS/CONTAINERS is a procedural metaphor, that is, it connects a conceptual region (*LOVE*) and a conceptual region (*JAIL*). As a result, *LOVE IS A JAIL* is no more a primary but a compound metaphor, and it can be treated as a knowledge structure that is different from primary metaphors. It is not a kind of procedural knowledge that serves as a the basis for the connection between different mental content, but the result of a metaphorical mental operation and it is stored in the mind as a kind of knowledge about the connection of concepts in the form of a compound metaphor.

### 4.3 *The systematic nature of conceptual metaphors*

Tendahl (2009) also refers to the fact that the systematic nature of conceptual metaphors requires that they should be considered as independent knowledge structures. However, this does not necessarily mean that certain conceptual metaphors that refer to the same conceptual domain, (*LOVE* can be *JOURNEY*, *WAR*, or *BUSINESS*) have to be coherent with each

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Sperber & Wilson (2012)

other. When constructing *ad hoc* concepts, it will be the context that finally determines which conceptual metaphor should connect a certain conceptual domain that is based on the lexical concept of *LOVE*.

#### 4.4 *Extension of data sources*

Compared to traditional conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff 1993), a further advantage of the hybrid theory is that its data sources are not restricted to linguistic data, since this theory also relies on psycholinguistic experiments (Gibbs & Tendahl 2006). In the light of these findings, the assumption that conceptual metaphors represent independent knowledge structures seems to be provable, given that in the course of on-line meaning construction the mind needs the same amount of time to process metaphorical and non-metaphorical expressions.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4.5 *Responses to the criticism of conceptual metaphor theory*

Despite the fact that the Invariance Hypothesis in Lakoff's theory has been widely criticized (Grady, Morgan & Taub 1996, Murphy 1996), Tendahl considers this principle to be provable. The Invariance Hypothesis states that during the metaphorical mapping the cognitive topology of the source domain, to be precise its structure, is preserved in the target domain. According to the conceptual metaphor *LOVE IS A JOURNEY*, *LOVE* can be conceptualized as a *JOURNEY* because the mind creates systematic correspondences between these two conceptual domains by mapping the inner structure of the source domain onto the target domain.

Criticism of the Invariance Hypothesis has mainly focused on the issue of how various conceptual metaphors are able to structure the target domain at the same time, provided that the inner structure of the target domain is already structured by other conceptual metaphors (e.g. *LOVE* can be *WAR*, *BUSINESS* or *HUNGER*). This phenomenon – when there are several source domains and only one target domain – poses a problem because all further metaphorical mappings should necessarily be coherent with the metaphorical, cognitive topology that has been previously structured by other conceptual metaphors. Consequently, these projections are not coherent with each other.

In response to this criticism the present theory claims that these projections need not be coherent at all; thus, the Invariance Hypothesis only states that in the process of mapping the structure of a certain source domain is preserved in the target domain. Hence, various conceptual metaphors concentrate on a single aspect of the target domain and consequently have to be compatible not with each other, but at the most with the already existing image schematic structure of the target domain. Moreover, it can also happen that the source domain overrules the basic structure of the target domain. Even in this case it is not the Invariance Hypothesis that is violated but the structure of the target domain which undergoes certain changes. In such cases it is again the principle of relevance that determines whether these changes are effective in a given communicative situation. Examples such as *This is actually the old theory, just in a new cloak* or *just repainted* prove that when expressing something unusual, i.e. that the theory is actually is not new, it is just attempting to appear so, we rather opt for using non-conventional metaphorical expressions that do not pertain to physical buildings. It is once again the principle of relevance that helps us to explain a phenomenon

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. <http://mixingmemory.blogspot.hu/2004/09/lakoffs-view-of-metaphors.html>  
 This article provides a brief and easy-to-read summary of the critical aspects of Lakoff's classical theory.

which traditional conceptual metaphor theory cannot because it concentrates on structural correspondences and not on meaning constructions.<sup>9</sup>

Traditional conceptual metaphor theory cannot explain why a systematic mapping is not coherent and why certain elements are not transferred to the target domain. The theory seems not to impose any restrictions in this respect. For instance, several elements are mapped onto the target domain from the conceptual metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS:

(9) *We have **to construct** a new theory.* (Kövecses 2002: 30, 83-84)

However, buildings have windows, doors, cellars and attics etc. No references to these parts can be tracked, which could be explained by their incompatibility with the inner structure of the target domain as this structure is actually determined by buildings. Tendahl argues that the Invariance Hypothesis basically refers to what structures *have to be* transferred and not to what content elements *can be* transferred to the target domain. In consequence, Tendahl uses the Invariance Hypothesis in a stricter sense than Lakoff and states that the question of which elements are transferred from the source domain to the target domain is a contextual one. Thus, in some cases we could say that *This part of the theory is the theory's panic room*. In this case, the speaker determines in a given communicative situation if transfer and elaboration of a particular element is relevant or not. In other words, in this respect it is RT that backs CMT, as it is the principle of relevance that restricts which elements are elaborated in the process of the meaning construction of a metaphorical expression.

#### **4.6 Integration of imagistic qualities into the theory**

Relevance theory cannot really account for metaphors such as *Oliver is a bulldozer* because when constructing the *ad hoc* concept of a bulldozer, a kind of visuality emerges besides the characteristic features (Carston 2002: 356, quoted by Tendahl 2009: 145). Nevertheless, this cannot be conveyed in the form of propositional information. Therefore Tendahl considers that we should explore how such visual information can also be integrated (Tendahl 2009: 145-148).

#### **4.7 The question of metaphorical motivation**

In connection with the very same example Tendahl also points out that relevance theory cannot explain why it is particularly physical features which underlie psychological ones. In the example *Oliver is a bulldozer*, there are underlying physical features: strength, which is associated with the figure, psychological feature of strength, as well as relentlessness in a physical sense and relentlessness in a psychological sense. Cognitivist theories would claim that this derives from the conceptual metaphor PSYCHOLOGICAL FORCES ARE PHYSICAL FORCES. Such primary metaphors hold a special position in Tendahl's theory; however, this example shows that a hybrid model could handle questions that relevance theory fails to.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Tendahl (2009: 121)

#### 4.8 *Advocating the continuity hypothesis*

Tendahl accepts the relevance theoretical assumption regarding the homogeneous processing of meaning, i.e. there are no differences between literal and metaphorical meanings, since for the types and modes of the processing of meaning: “literal expressions, conventional and novel metaphors, category crossing and category modification metaphors all work similarly” (Tendahl 2009: 246). The hybrid theory is a model which does not have to assume metaphorical mapping as a separate mechanism in the on-line construction of meaning. Nevertheless, it states that due to frequent usage, relationships between the conceptual domains are generated automatically and these relationships are stored in knowledge structures of compound conceptual metaphors and the contextual pressure makes the mind activate these relationships.

### 5 **Concluding remarks**

Relying on Tendahl’s hybrid theory, which sets out from the compatibility of relevance theory and conceptual metaphor theory, the following conclusions can be drawn in connection with the two questions, stated at the very beginning of this paper.

The system of conceptual metaphors is integrated in the hybrid model as procedural and declarative knowledge. One type of conceptual metaphors, i.e. primary metaphors can function as connector elements between conceptual regions and external conceptual domains. On the other hand, compound metaphors can function as external knowledge structures, although their status is not clarified in every detail. Are they distinct conceptual domains of metaphorical origin or are they simple labels for connected conceptual regions and conceptual domains, or probably both?

The other question concerning the integrability of the assumptions of conceptual metaphor theory and relevance theory is a metatheoretical one. Conceptual metaphor theory is based on a genuine holistic theory of the mind, whereas relevance theory has a massive modular conception. Whether the contradiction between these two conceptions of the mind can or cannot be resolved is a very difficult question. However, this question can be answered by a theoretical reconstruction carried out in a metatheoretical conceptual framework, which is an aim not pursued here.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This is one of the starting points of Stöver’s (2010: 166-183) criticism of Tendahl. Stöver (2010) also argues for a hybrid theory which is, however, pointedly modular in structure.

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