



10th IPB Erasmus Week

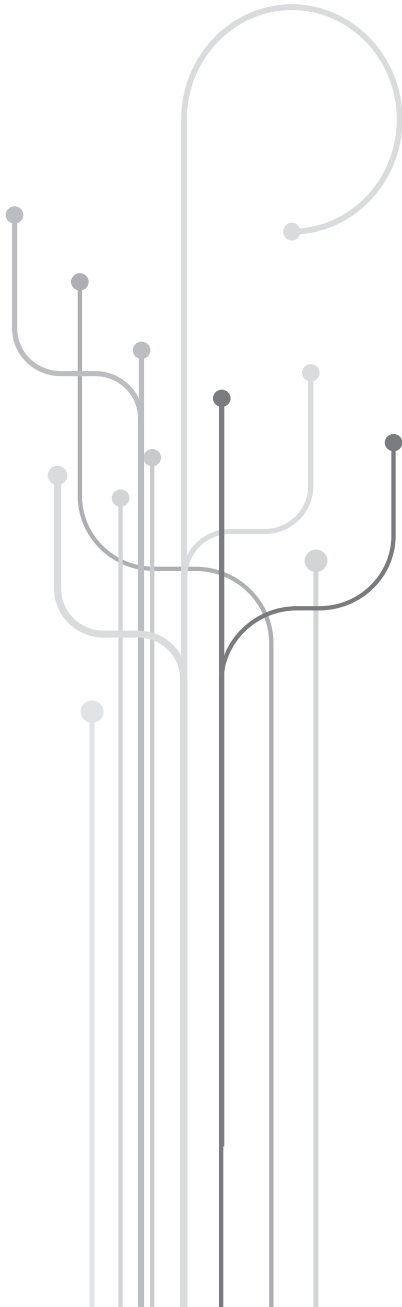
Teaching Crossroads

Edited by

Elisabete Silva

Clarisse Pais

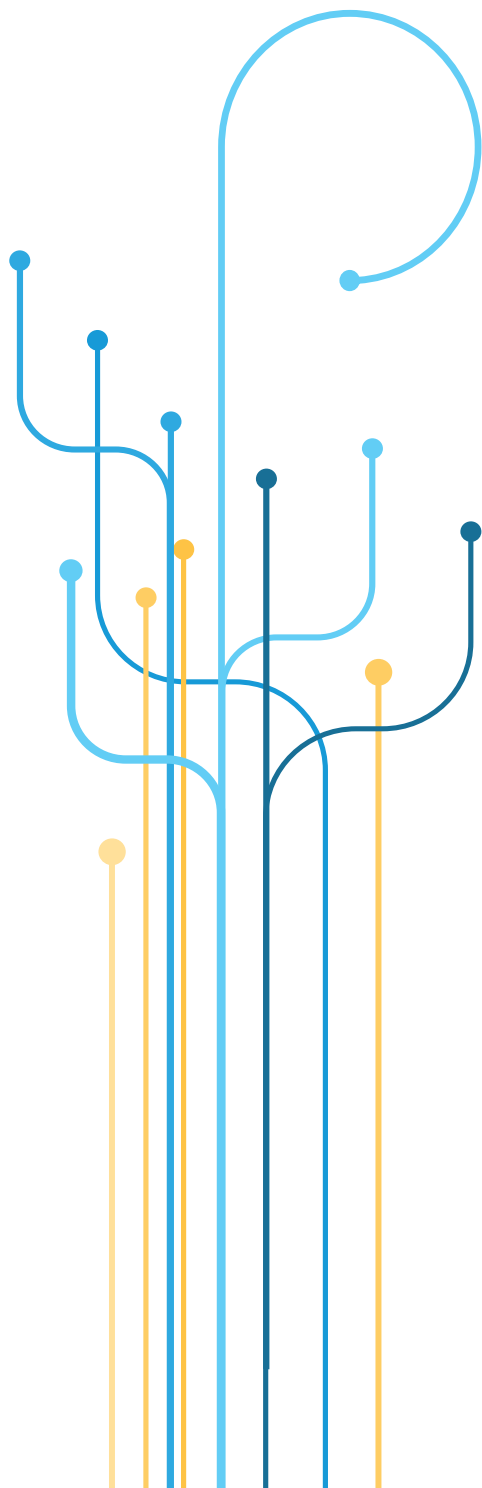
Luís S. Pais



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Título: Teaching Crossroads: 10th IPB Erasmus Week
Editores: Elisabete Silva, Clarisse Pais, Luís S. Pais
Edição: Instituto Politécnico de Bragança · 2015
5300-253 Bragança · Portugal
Tel. (+351) 273 303 200 · Fax (+351) 273 325 405
<http://www.ipb.pt>
Execução: Serviços de Imagem do Instituto Politécnico de Bragança
Capa: Soraia Maduro
Tiragem: 50 exemplares
ISBN: 978-972-745-186-9
Online version: <http://hdl.handle.net/10198/11289>



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Water in our mouth:¹ Food metaphors in the Portuguese language

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Abstract

This article intends to demystify the conventional approach to metaphors, which have been traditionally regarded as a mere poetic and imaginative device, as well a means for rhetorical flourish. In order to achieve this purpose, we focus on some basic considerations about figurative language (versus literal language) and the tropes, namely the simile, the synecdoche and the metonymy. From this, we introduce the approach of cognitive linguistics, especially that represented by Lakoff & Johnson (1980), that highlights the importance of metaphors in structuring and organising our thoughts and actions, enabling at the same time to understand extralinguistic reality. Having established the theoretical context, we put forth a set of metaphorical expressions in Portuguese, related to the conceptual domain of food, which are analysed in terms of their meaning and the identification of their underlying metaphor and are provided with a context taken from the Portuguese newspaper *Público*. Therefore, we aim at proving that even the most basic of areas of life, such as food, are fraught with metaphors.

Keywords: *cognitive linguistics; figurative language; tropes; conceptual metaphor theory; food metaphors.*

Introduction

Metaphors have been traditionally regarded as an instance of literary language, a trope or figure of speech in line with metonymy, synecdoche or personification. Due to the figurative and subjective nature of metaphors, they were shunned from serious linguistic concerns for many centuries. From the mid-20th century onwards, it was granted research attention and thus various disciplines have studied its role in language and culture, shedding new light on this device. Among these theories, Miguens (2002, pp. 73-74) mentions the following: linguistic theories (e.g. prototype theory, relevance theory, cognitive linguistics), aesthetic approaches (aiming to study the voluntary and artistic composition of words and other symbolic materials), cognitive (focusing on the functioning of the brain), ontological (highlighting the importance of conceptual creation by humankind) and deconstructionist theories (directed to revealing arbitrary decisions present in the conception of thoughts and concepts).

It is then worth looking at the etymology of the word itself in order to grasp its meaning and functioning. The word ‘metaphor’ stems from the Greek word *metaphora*, which means to transfer, transport or move to a certain place, involving a set of linguistic processes according to which specific elements or features are transferred from one object to another, in a way that the second object works as an extension of the first one. From Miguens’s (2002, p. 76) viewpoint, the word *metaphora* is in itself a metaphor, a request for borrowing movement, so that a metaphor is literally a word out of place. Nietzsche (cit. Miguens, 2002, p. 76) shares the same view, upholding that all language is metaphorical by nature and thus is naturally and potentially out of place.

It is due to this heavy tradition that Scheffler (in Dormael, Spoelders & Vandamme, 1987, pp. 117-122) puts forth the 10 myths that summarise the criticisms towards metaphors:

- 1) the myth of falsehood – only literal propositions are true and only the scientists tell the truth;
- 2) the myth of embellishment – metaphors are mere rhetoric devices that can be made without and are also cognitively empty;
- 3) the myth of emotivity – metaphors are highly emotional and with no cognitive content;
- 4) the myth of suggestiveness – metaphors stimulate the association of ideas that might lead to the truth;
- 5) the myth of communication – communication of a purely literary thought requires the use of metaphors or it might be enabled in this way;
- 6) the myth of ownership – only the author of the metaphors has right over them, thus metaphors are under the author’s control;
- 7) the myth of metaphorical truth – related to literal truth, which reflects the difference between poetic and scientific propositions, respectively;

- 8) the myth of constancy – all discourse is metaphorical and each word belongs to a metaphorical lineage, which means that the literal is void of meaning;
- 9) the myth of the formula – according to which there is a formula to decode metaphorical expressions;
- 10) the myth of the objectualism – metaphorical description involves the comparison of objects.

We intend to be able to refute these erroneous misconceptions about metaphors throughout our article, which will be organised into three parts. The first will deal with different approaches to the mechanisms of figurative language (versus literal language), as well as a possible view on the traditional tropes. On the second part, we will focus on the perspective of cognitive linguistics, namely in line with the work of Lakoff & Johnson and their renowned work “Metaphors we live by” (1980), their conceptual metaphor theory and the types of metaphors they put forth. At last, attention shall be placed upon the actual instances of metaphorical expressions about food in the Portuguese Language. These were gathered from numerous resources online, cross-checked with paper reference works, so as to achieve the list in Annex 1. From this list, 10 expressions were selected and analysed according to their meaning and explained in view of conceptual metaphor theory principles.

Figurative Language and Tropes

As mentioned above, metaphors are included in the context of figurative language as opposed to literal language. Despite being rather complex and evasive concepts, it is commonly accepted that the meaning attached to literal language arises from general language words used by speakers on a daily basis, whereas figurative language deliberately interferes in the literal system by means of transference, which aims at reaching a new meaning, both broader and more precise. Therefore, speakers first and foremost access the literal meaning of a word or sentence and only then do they activate the non-literal meaning, when “there is a mismatch of literal meaning with context” (Giora, 1999, p. 920), being thus optional.

The idea of transference and its various forms are termed tropes or figures of speech. Fontanier (cit. Santos, 1998, p. 190; cit. Contenças, 1999, pp. 44-45) supported the idea that the metaphor is the one-word trope, opposed to the other multiple-word tropes. In line with the idea of tropes, Hawkes (1972: p. 5) distinguishes metaphor from three similar tropes: simile, synecdoche and metonymy. In similes, the transference has already been achieved, i.e. the transfer of meaning is explained by means of “as” or “like” in English and *como* in Portuguese. For instance, “as light as a feather” = *leve como uma pena*; “eat like a horse” = *comer como um porco*². In this process, the relation between the words involved becomes more visual and, due to this, it is often regarded as a lesser form of metaphors, because

it merely expresses an analogy or moves the name of an object to something that is closely associated with it.

In relation to synecdoche, this is generally seen as a lexical or lexical-semantic process based on meronymy (part-whole relationship), while metaphors and metonymies depend on different types of synonymy. If the synecdoche results from a possessive process (i.e. it has/ it possesses), the metaphor entails an intense relational process, where an identity is established. Notice the synecdoche “head of department” that in Portuguese becomes *representante/coordenador de departamento*, losing thus its metaphorical nature.

In terms of the metonymy, Halliday (1991, p. 319) argues that body parts are frequently used with a metonymical function, in which the relations established are of varied nature, such as cause, source or instrument. Kövecses (2002, p. 145) understands metonymy as a cognitive process in which a conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides the mental access to another mental entity, the target, within the same cognitive domain. The entities of vehicle and target are metonymically related, because they are close to each other in the cognitive space. Metonymies result in the transference of the name of an object to take the place of something else that is associated with it. An example is “We need a new glove to play third base”, which means that a new baseball player is necessary, represented by one of the items that make up this sport’s equipment – the glove.

As a result, Kövecses (2002, p. 147) considers that metonymies are not used to understand a domain, but, in fact, to mentally and cognitively gain access to a more abstract target by means of a more concrete vehicle that is available in the same domain, because the relation is one of contiguity, as is shown in figure 1.

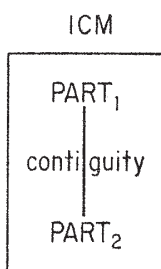


Figure 1: Representation of the metonymical relation (Kövecses, 2002, p. 148).

On the other hand, the same author (Kövecses, 2002, p. 147) states that the metaphorical process is established between two concepts that belong to different conceptual domains. The entities that are related in a metaphor establish a relation of similarity, which can be originated in a real resemblance or correlations perceived in experience. The main function of a metaphor is to enable to understand something in terms of something else, which means that one conceptual domain is

regarded in relation to another conceptual field, by creating systematic mappings between the elements of the source and the target (see figure 2).

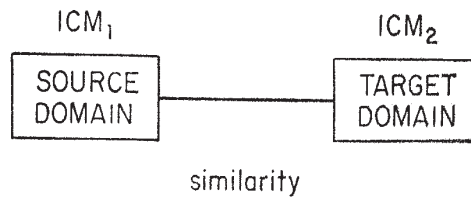


Figure 2: Representation of the metaphorical relation (Kövecses, 2002, p. 147).

Therefore, as Martin (cit. Silva, 1992, p. 314) puts it, the metaphorical relation consists of the identity established between at least one of the semes in two different sememes³ and the derived sememe is comparable, analogous and similar. On the other hand, the metonymical relation corresponds to the reappearance of the basic sememe in the derived sememe. The distinction between the relation of correspondence, connection and similarity will refer to metonymy, synecdoche and metaphor, respectively.

Consequently, metaphors are a means to take language from within literal language and establish a relation between two objects through the use of words with a figurative meaning, different from the traditional lexicographical meaning, thus Vilela's idea that (2001, p. 174) polysemous language stems from the metaphorical use of words. Hawkes (1972, p. 71-72) upholds that the difference between figurative and literal language is more of degree than of type of language.

Language can be defined as an organic and autonomous system that separates and classifies speakers' lives and creates reality at their own image. This is a transfer process, because language in itself is necessarily metaphorical by virtue of this replacement of reality, as Nietzsche (cit. Miguens, 2002, p. 76) points out. Hawkes (1972, p. 59) stresses that metaphors are not something special or exceptional in linguistic use or a deviance in literal language, but rather a function of language, the way in which language works. This is what Richards, quoted by Honeck (in Hoffman & Honeck, 1980, p. 31), calls "the omnipresent principle of language", since the verbal metaphor is the most basic product of the metaphorical apprehension of the world.

Metaphors appear as a way to experience facts, a way to think and live, an imaginative projection of truth. This is the distinguishing feature of cognitive linguistics, namely Lakoff and Johnson's approach, that metaphors are inseparable from language which is virtually all metaphorical, and that reality results from the metaphorical interaction between words and daily life.

Conceptual metaphor theory

In the words of Vilela (1996, pp. 324-325), Cognitive Linguistics does not intend to focus on the history of metaphor, but rather on the definition of metaphors from a linear perspective, in their relation to metonymy and synecdoche, demonstrating that these three tropes are essential for human language for putting forth new creations and as a means to enrich the processes of organising reality. As a result, cognitivists gave new life to information that was no longer new: on the one hand, linguistic structures and units make up and depend on the conceptualisation of reality, and, on the other hand, they influence this conceptualisation, which is done through the establishment of prototypes, stereotypes and similarities. There is then continuity and a relation of dependence between language and the remaining cognitive skills, e.g. conceptualisation, categorisation, memory, attention, among others.

It is in this context that Lakoff & Johnson developed their metaphor theory: they studied metaphors in light of the cognitive contributions related to the nature of the mind, being opposed to the myth of objectivism and Chomskyan linguistics. Therefore, in the words of Miguens (2002, p. 86), metaphors no longer come up as accidents with a residual interest, but metaphoricity is omnipresent and systematic in natural languages.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980, pp. 3-5) sustain that metaphors have been traditionally regarded as a tool for poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish, being an issue of figurative language. However, apart from being a linguistic issue, metaphors are ultimately a question of thought and action, since metaphors are involved in all aspects of life, language, thought and cultural acts. Our conceptual system, according to which we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical. Because communication is based on our conceptual system, language comes up as a strong evidence of this system. The essence of metaphors is based on the understanding and experience of one thing in accordance to another, thus concepts and activities are structured metaphorically, as is language.

In line with Lakoff & Johnson, Vilela (2001, pp. 174-175) believes that the meaning of words is not equivalent to an objective set of events or entities; our cognitive system relates such a set in a systematic manner. Linguistic categorisation does not depend on the distinctions observed in the world, but on the metaphorical and metonymical structuring of our world perceptions. It is this conceptual organisation of knowledge and the world that shapes the categorisation and lexicalisation of the human language.

Vilela (2001, pp. 175-178) elaborates on this by stating that the cognitive structure of human understanding first conceives the universal lexicon of space, which will then acquire time meanings. Knowledge is structured according to the extralinguistic reality and not randomly scattered. Accordingly, metaphors show up as the main engine in semantic change, working between domains, between vision and knowledge, between space and time, and this crossing between one domain

and the other is achieved through cognitive mappings. Metaphors are conceptual sources that are essential for the explanation of semantic analysis, both synchronic and diachronic.

Categorising and conceptualising the extralinguistic world and human feelings and behaviour imply the lexicalisation of processes that are established as physical objects. For instance, some psychological states are explained by means of the vocabulary of the human body, which is, for Silva (1992, p. 317), a powerful means for metaphorical expansion and attraction, as the Portuguese philologist Boléo states in his work “A Metáfora na Língua Portuguesa Corrente” (1935).

Lakoff & Johnson (1980, pp. 7-9) offer other examples: for instance, “Time is money” (*Tempo é dinheiro*), because both money and resources in general are limited, thus providing a way to conceptualise time, which is inevitably connected with a specific cultural understanding. Despite the fact that metaphorical structuring is systematic, by allowing us to understand one concept in relation to another, it highlights certain aspects and necessarily hides others that might be inconsistent with the metaphor in use; otherwise, the concept would not be understood according to another, but it would be the other.

Another example Lakoff & Johnson (1980, pp. 66-67) refer to, which is related to the previous one, is “Work is a resource” (*Trabalho é um recurso*). Neither example is felt as metaphors, because they naturally result from the way the western industrial culture and society regard work in their obsession with quantifying everything and reaching well-defined targets. These two structural metaphors are complex, making use of two simple ontological metaphors that enable work and time to be quantified, regarded as spent and wasted and to which one attributes money value. These features inherent to time and work highlight aspects which are central in our culture, hiding others not so relevant.

The abovementioned examples introduce two of the types of metaphors Lakoff & Johnson (1980) put forth: on the one hand, ontological metaphors allow to group, identify, quantify and rationalise data coming from human experience, some of which may be concrete objects and, on the other, structural metaphors are grounded in systematic correlations within our experience, which enable to “conceptualize what a rational argument is in terms of something that we understand more readily, namely, physical contact” (p. 49). These metaphors provide the opportunity for approaching concepts and abstractions as if they were manageable entities. Vilela (1996, p. 324) presents the example of the container-metaphor, according to which objects and concepts are projected as being inside or outside.

On the other hand, Vilela (1996, pp. 329-330) also explains orientational metaphors, which enable to organise concepts through their basic spatial relations inside their own conceptual system, offering them a space orientation and, from this physical element of the orientational metaphor, create a set of transferences and applications to other domains. Notwithstanding, these spatial orientations are

not arbitrary; they are based on the cultural and physical experience of individuals, because they inevitably vary from culture to culture.

As far as the English language is concerned, table 1 shows the cultural implications of the following metaphorical spatialisations according to Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 14):

UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conscious ■ Good ■ Happy ■ Having control or force ■ Health and life ■ More ■ Rational ■ Virtue 	DOWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bad ■ Being subject to control or force ■ Emotional ■ Less ■ Sad ■ Sickness and death ■ Unconscious
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Table 1: Examples of orientational metaphors according to Lakoff & Johnson (1980:p.14).

In terms of the Portuguese language, Vilela (2002, p. 75) also presents some examples, such as *o atleta está no pico da forma* (“the athlete is on top form”), *o atleta está em baixo/fora de forma* (“the athlete is out of shape”), *ele está agora em queda livre* (“he’s in free fall”), *ele anda sobre as nuvens* (“he’s got his head on the clouds”), *ele está no sétimo céu* (“he’s on the seventh sky”).

Lakoff & Johnson (1980, pp. 25-26) uphold that understanding experiences according to objects and substances enable to select specific aspects of reality and regard them as uniform entities and thus the most basic of human experiences lead to the development of orientational metaphors. The same happens with ontological metaphors, since people’s experiences with physical objects offer the basis for a variety of these metaphors, i.e. for different ways of facing events, activities, emotions and ideas. Ontological metaphors allow to consider, for example, inflation as an entity that can be quantified, has a cause, can be understood or acted upon, e.g. “Inflation has robbed us of our savings” (*A inflação roubou-nos as poupanças*).

In other words, ontological metaphors approach human experiences in a rational manner, in such a way that they are not felt as being metaphorical. Lakoff & Johnson (1980, pp. 27-31) refer to the container-metaphors that encompass land areas (because land-ownership is a basic human instinct, each person is a container, whose surface is surrounded and understood as inside/outside), visual field (what one sees is inside the visual field, supporting the concept of land-ownership), events and actions conceptualised as objects and activities and states as substances. The following try to illustrate the container-metaphor: “The ship is coming to view”; “I couldn’t do much sprinting until the end”; “He entered a state of euphoria”.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 10) also mention the conduit metaphor, according to which a speaker places ideas or objects into words that work as containers that are then sent through a conduit to a listener that retrieves these ideas/objects out

of the words/containers. An example of this type of metaphor is “linguistic expressions are meaning containers”.

Considering the omnipresence of metaphors in conceptualising and structuring reality, as well as in shaping the language accordingly, the concepts of structural, ontological and orientational metaphors become of the utmost importance in the analysis of linguistic instances, which we shall attempt to achieve while looking into the Portuguese food expressions.

Portuguese food metaphors

In this last part, we intend to analyse a set of Portuguese metaphorical expressions that focus on food. The first step was to gather these instances from various resources available online (e.g. NaturaPúblico, a corpus online based on the articles about environmental issues taken from the Portuguese newspaper *Público*) and cross-check them with Barata (1989) dictionary. After listing approximately 90 expressions, they were organised into categories, namely physical states, cooking spaces, ingredients, culinary states, actions, body, objects and dishes/meals. To these expressions, some proverbs were also added from the abovementioned corpus online, which will not be the object of our analysis, but are identified as such in Annex 1.

From our initial list, we selected a group of ten expressions to illustrate the metaphorical load that characterises Portuguese food expressions, frequently used in contexts different from the ones that created them. Their meaning is defined, in accordance to Barata (1989), and contexts are provided, which were taken from the Portuguese corpus online CETEMPúblico. These contexts intend to demonstrate that these expressions, though initially only used to refer to food, have evolved in such a way that acquired vitality and flexibility, being productively used in general language.

batata quente nas mãos (hot potato on one's hands)

- meaning: have a difficult issue in hands or pass it on to someone else (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext6270-pol-93a-1]⁴ “Se tal acontecer, e tudo indica que sim, Londres ficará com uma batata quente nas mãos – a implementação do texto saído das negociações em Hong Kong, à revelia dos legisladores locais.”
- metaphor: structural metaphor, because the physical effect of having a hot potato on one's hands is used to conceptualise a thorny situation.

comer/ dar/ vender gato por lebre (eat/give/ sell cat for hare)

- meaning: be deceived by appearances or be tricked by someone (Barata, 1989).

- contexts: [par=ext27057-pol-94a-1] “Se os independentes querem fazer política, o que é saudável e bem-vindo, então não devem começar por copiar o pior que têm os políticos, não podem começar por tentar vender gato por lebre.”; [par=ext75858-soc-98a-1] “A este propósito, Jorge Figueiredo, responsável pela entidade certificadora, referindo-se à fraca qualidade de alguns queijos produzidos na região, afirmou que «o principal responsável do `gato por lebre` são os industriais», acrescentando que há quem faça queijo com leite que chega de Espanha, ao qual adiciona leite em pó.”
- metaphor: structural metaphor, since the situation of being fooled by things or people is understood by means of a swap of animals.

cuspir no prato que deu de comer (spit on the plate that feeds you)

- meaning: be ungrateful for something that was given to you (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext977730-pol-92a-2] “Se é difícil conter a indignação perante o tom e a substância das declarações do ministro australiano – um autêntico «cuspir no prato do anfitrião», como lhe chama o socialista José Lamego nesta página –, já o lançar de culpas sobre Deus Pinheiro se afigura excessivo e injusto.”
- metaphor: structural metaphor that enables to conceptualise being ungrateful in terms of the physical action of spitting onto a plate of food.

dar/crescer água na boca (make your mouth water)

- meaning: to strongly desire something (Barata, 1989)
- contexts: [par=ext816216-clt-95b-2] “Este ‘The Complete no Noise Reduction’ deixa uma certa água na boca e é um dos bons álbuns feitos em 1995.”; [par=ext783254-clt-95a-1] “«Dust be diamonds» (kazoos, guitarras acústicas «folky», harmonias vocais – com as duas meninas do grupo, Rose Simpson e Licorice, no seu papel de falsas ingénuas – sem lógica visível, as entoações escocesas de Robin conferindo às palavras ressonâncias de fazer crescer água na boca, teatro, pura magia), «Sleepers, awake!», harmonização a quatro vozes «a capella», no mais genuíno espírito folk de um projecto como «Morris on», de Ashley Hutchings, e «Mr. & Mrs.»”
- metaphor: structural metaphor that represents the strong desire for something in accordance with the physical reaction of water in one’s mouth due to the sight of delicious food.

encher chouriços (fill chorizos or the tripe that envelop the spicy meat)

- meaning: do something that is worthless and a waste of time (Barata, 1989).

- contexts: [par=ext581768-clt-97b-1] “Acontece muitas vezes, noutras ocasiões, os jornalistas não terem imagens e verem-se obrigados a «**encher chouriços**»: falam, sem dizer nada, tentando substituir a ausência de imagens”; [par=ext516096-clt-97b-2] “Alguns dos apresentadores de televisão mais queridos do público revoltaram-se contra a «arrumação da casa» introduzidas pelo odiado Birt Jeremy Paxman, prestigiado «pivot» da BBC2 e entrevistador de língua afiada, explicou que a nomeação de cinco «super-editores», encarregues de todos os noticiários de rádio e televisão era como «transformar as notícias numa fábrica de **encher chouriços**.”
- metaphor: structural metaphor – traditionally chorizos are made in autumn and winter in rural areas by filling up tripe with the meat remainders from people’s cattle and poultry. Perhaps because it is a time-consuming activity, it is used to refer to situations that are a waste of time or worthless.

entornar o caldo (spill the broth)

- meaning: spoil the harmony; change to a worse situation; make a serious mistake (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext114492-soc-93a-1] “Se um «peru» é apanhado na área das «galinhas», ou vice-versa, é certo que o «**caldo se entorna**» e a «panela» só volta a ficar direita com a chegada da polícia, «inimigo» comum dos dois grupos, que assim aproveitam a ocasião para se reconciliarem”; [par=ext185398-clt-93a-2] “Então um desses cantores ‘operários’ virou-se para mim e disse: ‘Ah, tu és daqueles gajos que vêm aqui sacar massa à classe operária...’ A partir daí entornou-se o **caldo todo**.”
- metaphor: structural metaphor, because the comparison with spilling the broth is made to conceptualise what occurs when one, for example, says the wrong thing and spoils the harmony or changes to a situation which is even worse than the previous one.

estar no ponto (be at the setting point)

- meaning: reach a state of high quality (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext163570-clt-soc-92b-1] “Depois, a equipa médica espera – os embriões podem manter-se congelados durante anos – até a mulher **estar no ponto** do seu ciclo natural que lhe permite tentar nova gravidez.”
- metaphor: structural metaphor that compares the setting point for jams and jellies with reaching the highest point of one’s ability or life.

farinha do mesmo saco (flour from the same bag)

- meaning: have or share the same flaws (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext122110-pol-95b-1] “Há já 20 anos que ouvimos essas promessas, mas só quando vir a chave na mão é que acredito, é tudo **farinha do mesmo saco**», comenta, abanando a cabeça.”

- metaphor: structural metaphor that enables to understand people that have the same flaws, such as politicians, according to the flour that comes from the same bag.

fome de dinheiro (hunger for money)

- meaning: yearn for money (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext271808-clt-94a-2] “Francisco Sande Lemos, da Unidade de Arqueologia da Universidade do Minho, a par de reconhecer que «a arqueologia urbana é uma área em expansão», frisou, por outro lado, que ela «tem também uma **fome insaciável de dinheiro**» – preocupação sublinhada por Nuno Alpoim que foi mesmo ao ponto de afirmar que o “Orçamento de Estado deveria dotar uma parte para a área da arqueologia”.
- metaphor: ontological metaphor, because the expression attempts to quantify an abstract concept, which is money, depicting it by means of another abstract, yet physical state, which is hunger.

ser pão duro (be stale bread)

- meaning: used to qualify someone who is mean (Barata, 1989).
- context: [par=ext597212-pol-94b-3] “E o mundo rural, na sua áspera autenticidade, é um **pão duro** de mais para as entranhas da urbe.”
- metaphor: ontological metaphor, since it aims at explaining an abstract feature – being mean and tight-fisted – by means of its comparison with stale bread, hard to break.

At the end of this lexical and metaphorical analysis, it is possible to refute beyond a shadow of a doubt the traditional idea that metaphors are merely used in literary and poetic texts with the function of embellishing them or in rhetoric contexts to flourish speech. Metaphors are pervasive in language and life itself, enabling to conceptualise extralinguistic reality by structuring and organising thoughts and actions. The examples presented above allowed to have a glimpse of the power of metaphors in language by means of a basic area in people’s lives – food. The transference of meaning from one conceptual domain to another throw light on areas which might be difficult to understand or conceptualise, such as abstract concepts or features. Consequently, most metaphors we identified in our set of expressions were structural and ontological metaphors.

Conclusion

It is now important to recover Scheffler’s (in Dormael, Spoelders & Vandamme, 1987) misconceptions mentioned in the introduction, which concern the traditional way to perceive metaphors. We consider that it is now possible to refute most of these myths, based not only on the theoretical framework provided by Lakoff &

Johnson's approach, but also on the analysis of Portuguese metaphorical expressions from the conceptual domain of food.

Concerning the myth of falsehood, the truth is not a feature that is restricted to literal statements, nor are metaphorical expressions necessarily false, since the translation of these expressions by their literal equivalent leads to the loss of their cognitive content, not to mention the complex semantic relations that are established. Related to this myth, we can also refute the myth of embellishment, because metaphors are not mere rhetorical ornaments used in literary language. It should be recalled the fact that the contexts we offered with the explanation of the expressions were taken from the Portuguese newspaper *Público*, which emphasised the idea that these expressions convey concepts, organise human thought and action and enable the development and evolution of knowledge – thus the denial of the myth of emotivity. Another myth that we can refuse is that of ownership, because metaphors are not under the control of their individual authors, but are rather dependent on the cultural and social contexts that created them, maintained with these a close relation.

Nonetheless, we can reinforce some of Scheffler's myths, namely the myth of suggestiveness, communication, objectualism and metaphorical truth. In terms of the suggestiveness, metaphors possess a high level of suggestion, the so-called power of insight, that allows for the creation of mental images potentially conducive to the apprehension of their meaning. As Cormac (1985) puts it, the understanding of a metaphor depends more on its visual image than on the linguistic understanding of its components, being usually non-compositional. As far as communication is concerned, the use of metaphors may facilitate communication, especially in specialised languages, what Kocourek (1982) names terminological metaphors. The myth of metaphorical truth is related to the myth of falsehood and, in this particular point, the cognitive approach provides the answer: metaphors not only convey true thoughts, concepts and ideas, but also structure and organise our conceptual system. At last, the metaphorical relation is not merely a relation of similarity between objects, but also among entities, concepts, experiences and events.

All in all, metaphorical expressions surpass the simplistic conception of rhetorical and poetic ornament to reach a wider dimension grounded on their cognitive function. Our conceptual system according to which we think and act is fundamentally metaphorical, as we demonstrated through Lakoff & Johnson's cognitive approach.

End-of-text Notes

- ¹ This is a literal translation for the Portuguese idiomatic expression *com água na boca*.
- ² Notice the fact that the English and Portuguese similes make use of a different animal, thus reflecting a different conceptualisation of the world, as envisaged by cognitive linguistics.
- ³ In this context, we understand *sememe* as a unit of meaning that corresponds to a morpheme, whereas *seme* is a single unit of a *sememe*.
- ⁴ The sequences between square brackets that precede each context are the code that identifies the concordance provided by CETEMPúblico.

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Annex 1 – List of metaphorical expressions and proverbs in Portuguese

1. A bom ou mau **comer**, três vezes beber (proverb)
2. A carne é fraca
3. A conversa não chegou à cozinha
4. À falta de capão, cebola e pão (proverb)
5. À minguia de pão, boas são as tortas (proverb)
6. Abre o olho que assam carne (proverb)
7. Apetite sexual
8. Babar-se por alguém
9. Barriga cheia/ merenda comida, companhia desfeita (proverb)
10. **Barriga** cheia, cara alegre
11. **Barriga** farta, pé dormente
12. Batata quente nas mãos
13. Bem mal ceia quem come de mão alheia (proverb)
14. Bem mal farás que andes e não comas (proverb)
15. Bocado comido não apanha amigo (proverb)
16. Cada um come do que faz/gosta
17. Carne que baste, vinho que farte, pão que sobre (proverb)
18. Carne sem osso, proveito sem trabalho (proverb)
19. Chorar sobre leite derramado
20. Come caldo, vive em alto, anda quente, viverás longamente (proverb)
21. Come e folga, terás boa vida (proverb)
22. Come para viver, não vivas para comer (proverb)
23. Comer com os olhos
24. Comer como um abade
25. Comer gato por lebre
26. Comer o pão que o diabo amassou (proverb)
27. Comer e coçar, mal é começar (proverb)
28. Cozinha sem salsa é como jarra sem flores (proverb)
29. Cozinhar em banho maria
30. Cuspir no prato que deu de comer
31. De dar água na boca
32. De meia tigela

33. Depois de eu comer não faltam colheres (proverb)
34. Depois de fartos, não faltam pratos (proverb)
35. Do prato à boca se perde a sopa (proverb)
36. Docinho de coco
37. Dos cheiros o pão e do sabor o sal (proverb)
38. É pelo estômago que se conquista
39. Em casa onde não há pão, todos ralham e ninguém tem razão (proverb)
40. Encher chouriços
41. Entornar o caldo
42. Estar no ponto
43. Farinha do mesmo saco
44. Fome de dinheiro
45. Grão a grão enche a galinha o papo (proverb)
46. Guarda que comer, não guardes que fazer (proverb)
47. Guardado (está / estava) o bocado para quem o há de comer (proverb)
48. Ir com muita sede ao pote
49. Manteiga derretida em focinho de cão
50. Mel, se o achaste, come o que baste (proverb)
51. Menino farto não é comedor (proverb)
52. Mesa sem pão é mesa de vilão (proverb)
53. Mudar como da água para o vinho
54. Muito come o tolo mas mais tolo é quem lho dá (proverb)
55. Não alimentes burros a pão-de-ló (proverb)
56. Não metas a mão em prato onde te fiquem as unhas (proverb)
57. Nem pão quente, nem vinho que salte ao dente (proverb)
58. Nem sempre galinha nem sempre sardinha (proverb)
59. Mem só de pão vive o homem (proverb)
60. O que não mata engorda (proverb)
61. Os comes e os bebes
62. Os olhos pedem mais do que a **barriga** aguenta (proverb)
63. Panela velha é que faz comida boa (proverb)
64. Pão quente: muito na mão e pouco no ventre (proverb)
65. Pão, pão, queijo, queijo
66. Para a fome não há pão duro (proverb)
67. Para boa fome não há mau pão (proverb)
68. Pela farinha se conhece o moleiro (proverb)
69. Plantar batatas
70. Puxar a brasa para a sua sardinha
71. Quando não há pão, come-se broa (proverb)
72. Queijo com pão faz o homem são (proverb)
73. Quem comeu a carne que roa os ossos (proverb)
74. Quem não arrisca não petisca (proverb)
75. Quem nunca comeu melado, quando come se lambuza (proverb)
76. Quem tarde vier comerá do que trouxe (proverb)
77. Se mal jantas e pior ceias, minguentes as carnes e crescentes as veias (proverb)
78. Se não queres **engordar** come e bebe devagar (proverb)
79. Se tens sardinha, não andes à cata de peru (proverb)

80. Sede de poder
81. Ser pão duro
82. Ser um banana
83. Ser um pão
84. Ter mais olhos que barriga
85. Trocar alhos com bugalhos