

AMERICAN DREAM METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS IN THE GREAT GATSBY

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DOI: [10.23917/humaniora.v23i2.19016](https://doi.org/10.23917/humaniora.v23i2.19016)

Received: July 6th, 2022. Revised: August 20th, 2022. Accepted: August 27th, 2022

Available Online: August 29th, 2022. Published Regularly: August 2022

Keywords

American dream,
conceptual expression,
metaphor

Abstract

Happiness is the goal of the American dream; a means to reach happiness is wealth; in the following turn, wealth cannot be gained without optimism, opportunities, and hard work. Meanwhile, the massive use of conceptual metaphor raises the question of whether all of the domains, namely optimism, opportunities, hard work, wealth, and happiness were expressed in metaphor in the Great Gatsby whose theme is the American dream. The data collection technique was document analysis. The data were differentiated from the non-data, taxonomized, analyzed their components, and analyzed their dominance. The results show that all domains of the American dream are expressed in all types of metaphors. Structural and ontological metaphors have slight differences in terms of sum. The orientational metaphor, however, has an extreme gap compared to the first two metaphors.

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INTRODUCTION

The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) views that words stated are parts of the concept; this makes metaphor definition shift; it is a way of conceptualizing something with something else in which it is not done randomly. Therefore, the CMT defines metaphor as a systematic tool to understand a conceptual domain with other conceptual domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Kovecses 2010, p.4). For example, the Indonesian metaphorical expressions "Syahrir itu kancil" (Syahrir is a mousedeer), "Owen benar-benar kijang" (Owen is truly a deer), "Di kotak pinalti, Ibrahimovic berubah jadi macan" (In the penalty box, Ibrahimovic turns into a tiger), are the manifestation of the metaphorical concept HUMANS ARE ANIMALS.

Studies viewing metaphors as a linguistic phenomenon such as those done by Van Den Broeck (1981), Larson (1984), Newmark (1988), Snell-Hornby (1988), Alvarez (1993), Toury 1995, Smith 2000) et cetera have been abandoned. Instead, today's researchers see metaphors as a conceptual phenomenon. Accordingly, they are not getting busy differentiating between metaphor and simile because of the presence and absence of "as" or "like" in English and "bak", "seperti", "laksana" in Indonesian. This distinction comes from syntax because it understands metaphor as a linguistic expression solely, not as part of the conceptual structure.

Even though among the trendy research about conceptual metaphors, this research fills the research gap for some reasons. For one thing, the research is about a great topic, namely the American dream; this topic consists of subtopics, namely conducive situation (optimism, hard-working, and equal opportunity), wealth, and happiness. Safarnejad et al. (2013) do the research only on happiness metaphor and their translation. Lai (2020) investigates the sex joke metaphors. Another research includes all types of metaphors, namely structural, ontological, and orientational. Yu, Wang, & He (2016), however, work on their research on spatial metaphor. Finally, the other research includes all types of metaphors but does not have the same focus. Puschmann & Burgess (2014) is about metaphor as a human cognition instrument activated to understand the novel and abstract phenomena, namely big data. Amirabi (2015) sees the conceptual metaphor similarities and differences across cultures. Reid & Katz (2018) work on computing metaphor interpretations and their cognitive processes. Musolff (2022) examines the metaphorical war in English debate between government officials and their dissidents.

It is interesting, then, to study how conceptual metaphors express the American dream in *The Great Gatsby* (TGG), a novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This is because TGG is indeed loaded with metaphors and according to Callahan (2006, p. 97) TGG also has the theme of American dream.

METHOD

This research was qualitative since it did not contain numbers but words. The location of this research was not geographic or demographic but the media, namely the novel entitled *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Like other types of locations, the media also had places, participants, and event elements although they were only the author's imagination (Santosa, 2012). Spradley (1980, p. 39) also states that "... every social situation can be identified by three main elements: place, actor, and activity." The sources of the data were documents, namely an English novel entitled *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and its two Indonesian versions translated by Nataresmi (2010) and Verawaty (2010).

Data were collected by analyzing various documents relating to American dream, conceptual metaphors, English novel entitled TGG, and two translated versions in Indonesian. The data analysis technique used was ethnographic approach; the data are differentiated from non-data and grouped in accordance with their categories; they are also analyzed their components and dominance; Spradley (2007) labels them as domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis. These techniques were circular in nature meaning that even though research had already conducted cultural theme analysis it could go back to the earlier stages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The American dream is a dream to achieve happiness with wealth that can be achieved through optimism, hard work, and fair opportunity (Adams 1931, p. 214-215; Department of House and Urban Development 2002; Campbell & Kean, 2005, p. 129; Spears 2007, p. 6; Bradley, 2009, p. 138; Hartmann, 2010, American Association of Community Colleges, 2012, p. vii; The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2012, p. 4-17; Perri, 2012. So, three things cannot be separated in the American dream, namely goals, means, and conditions or processes. The goal is happiness, and the means to achieve happiness is wealth, while the condition or process of achieving wealth is optimism, hard work, and fair opportunity. Some people may see wealth, not as a means but as a goal; some others may search for fair opportunities that make them work hard optimistically. Therefore, the American dreams are five things:

optimism, hard work, fair opportunities, wealth, and happiness. This research, therefore, divides the American dream into three parts or stages, namely (1) a conducive situation including optimism, hard work, and equal opportunity, (2) wealth, and (3) happiness.

Metaphor is defined as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain" (Kovecses 2010, p. 4). This definition includes simile, which has traditionally been distinguished from metaphor because of the presence of linguistic markers "like" or "as" in English and "bak," "laksana," "seperti," or "seumpama" in Indonesian. The attempt at syntactic differentiation of metaphor and simile is the result of understanding metaphor as a linguistic expression solely, not as a conceptual structure (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 131). Understanding one concept with another concept is a definition based on how cognitive devices work. Lakoff & Johnson (2003, p. 126) argue that concepts cannot be defined solely based on the properties inherent in the concept; the concept is defined primarily based on the property that results from its interaction with other concepts; in this context, metaphor is defined as "systematic devices for further defining a concept and for changing its range of applicability" (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, p. 126).

According to the CMT, metaphor has two conceptual domains, namely the source domain and target domain. Metaphor expresses something (target domain) with something else (source domain). Something/target domain is implicit, something else/source domain is explicit. Without the source domain, there will be no metaphor; so the source domain is the most important part of the metaphor. Therefore, the source domain becomes the focus of the research datum because it is always explicit. For example, in the case of "The Lord is my shepherd" (NIV Bible, Psalm 23: p. 1). The implicit target domain "A figure who protects, loves, and takes care of me" is stated with the explicit source domain "my shepherd." In this case, "my shepherd" is the datum.

In the CMT which considers the metaphor to be more of a figure of thought than a figure of speech, the phrase "my shepherd" can be referred to as the source domain so that it is only part of the metaphor. However, because the target domain is always implicit and what appears is the source domain, the phrase "my shepherd" is also called a metaphor. Knowles & Moon (2010, p. 2) state that metaphor can be only one word or one phrase and exemplify it as follows:

The *jewel* in Northumbria's ecclesiastical *crown* is Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island, built as a monastery in 635 and reached by a tidal causeway. We used to *thrash* all the teams in the Keith Schoolboy League. We have a great squad and no-one could *touch* us.

This is analogous to the term conceptual metaphor which can be interpreted as a term that is part of a conceptual metaphor or as an umbrella term encompassing two other terms in conceptual metaphor, namely conceptual metaphor/metaphorical concept and linguistic metaphor/metaphorical expression.

All types of conceptual metaphors—structural metaphors, ontological metaphors, and orientational metaphors—about American dreams are found in the TGG. It can be seen in Table 1 in the following:

Table 1: Types of the metaphor about American dream in TGG

	Metaphor type	American dream domain	Sub total	Total	Percentage
1	Structural	Conducive situation	49		
		Wealth	34		

		Happiness	19		
2	Ontological			102	42,50
		Conducive situation	75		
		Wealth	13		
		Happiness	31		
				119	49,58
3	Orientation al				
		Conducive situation	12		
		Wealth	5		
		Happiness	2		
				19	7,92
Total				240	100

The number reaches 240 data. The ontological metaphors are in the first rank in terms of number, namely 119 (49.58%) out of 240 metaphors. The structural metaphors rank two, they have been used 102 times (42.50%). The orientational metaphor rank is three, the sum is only 19 (7.92%).

All domains of American dreams, namely conducive situations, wealth, and happiness are found in all types of conceptual metaphors. The conceptual metaphor of American dreams with conducive situation domains reaches 136 (56.67%) divided into 49 structural metaphors, 75 ontological metaphors, and 12 orientational metaphors. The conceptual metaphor of American dreams with wealth domains is 52 (21.67%) consisting of 34 structural metaphors, 13 ontological metaphors, and 5 orientational metaphors. The conceptual metaphor of American dreams with the domain of happiness is 52 (21.67%) consisting of 19 structural metaphors, 31 metaphors, and 2 orientational metaphors.

The following was domain analysis or data sorting based on two parameters, namely the metaphorical concept and the domain of American dreams as a marker that the expression was a conceptual metaphor of American dreams. This domain analysis was followed by taxonomic analysis explaining the grouping of data according to the type of metaphor: the structural metaphor, ontological metaphor, and orientational metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 2003).

Structural Metaphors

If the source domain has a richer cognitive structure than that of the target domain, the metaphor is classified as a structural metaphor. The cognitive structure intended is the whole knowledge used to understand something. The existence of the structural metaphors questions the result of the research that metaphor is not significant in helping to understand the target domain (Carston 2018). Saying inanimate products in terms of living things not only attracts the buyers (Hasyim, 2017) but also helps to understand the products due to richer cognitive structures of the source domain. Even, in some sensitive cases like cloning and other genetic expressions, metaphor can be used in such a way that does not harm someone's moral and political standings (Stelmach & Brigitte 2015).

010/TGG/6 "And as I walked on, I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, *an original settler.*"

The happiness felt by Nick the narrator is expressed in the phrase "loneliness is no longer." However, he has a more elaborative expression in explaining his

happiness with the phrase “a guide, a pathfinder, *an original settler*.” Is a person whose job is not a guide can be called a guide if the person is a well-informed one who likes providing comprehensive information to anyone needing it? Similar to that question, is a person whose job is not a pathfinder can be called as a pathfinder because of his knowledge of path finding and his helping a newcomer reach his destination in a remote area? Yes or no answers to the two questions can be debatable. However, an original settler is a resident living in a certain region permanently for a long time—not relatively a newcomer like Nick. Therefore, when claiming himself as an original settler, he must use a metaphor because of saying one thing in terms of another.

The next question is why the phrase is chosen. The answer is easy to guess. That phrase has a rich cognitive structure that can include the knowledge and expertise of the “guide” and “pathfinder” at once. The phrase “original settler” even implies that the knowledge and expertise have been naturally attached. Thus, it is categorized as a structural metaphor.

In this case, “an original settler” as the source domain possibly replaces “a happy person” as the target domain. The domain in the American dream is happiness, therefore. The phrase “an original settler” was under the metaphorical concept HAPPINESS IS ORIGINALITY.

Ontological Metaphors

Performing cognitive functions, an ontological metaphor uses any physical objects to understand non-physical entities. The ontological status causes abstract things to be sensed.

168/TGG/108 “He told me all this very much later, but I’ve put it down here with the idea of *exploding those first wild rumors* about his antecedents, which weren’t even faintly true.”

The phrase “exploding those first wild rumors” is a metaphorical expression based on the conceptual metaphor RUMORS ARE EXPLOSIVE ENTITIES. The person who likes making the American dream come true like Nick Caraway believes that someone’s origin has nothing to do with grasping success. Nick also ignores the origin of Gatsby. He frees himself from unnecessary obstacles and believes that Gatsby still has the same opportunity to reach his dream. Accordingly, the phrase “exploding those first wild rumors” becomes the datum because it is a linguistic manifestation of the metaphorical concept RUMORS ARE EXPLOSIVE ENTITIES. Besides, it is related to optimism becoming the subdomain of the conducive situation of the American dream.

The phrase “informing surprisingly” has been stated in terms of “exploding” so that “rumors” are understood as bombs, grenades, or other explosive objects. Rumors that are originally non-physical become entities that could be captured by the sense of hearing. Therefore, the type of metaphor is ontological.

041/TGG/13-14 “I *enjoyed looking at her*. She was a slender small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet.”

The phrase “enjoyed looking at her” is a metaphorical expression based on the metaphorical concept LOOKING IS FOOD. Looking at something or someone can be a fun activity like food that can be enjoyed. Therefore, “felt happy” can be replaced with “enjoyed”. The sense of taste seems to be activated to help understand the non-physical entity “looking” as the physical entity “food.” Therefore, it is part of the data,

namely metaphorical concept about the American dream, because of ontological nature and the positive emotion as the subdomain of happiness.

122/TGG/83 “It was *touching* to see them together.”

Nick's emotion caused by seeing the togetherness of Jay Gatsby and Daisy is positive and, therefore, part of happiness. The word “touching” is a metaphorical expression based on the metaphorical concept HAPPINESS IS PHYSICAL CONTACT; happiness is understood as a contact. This is classified as an ontological metaphor since the word which was originally “emotive” is later replaced by “touching” which invites the sense of touch to understand such happiness.

132/TGG/91 “Daisy’s face, tipped sideways beneath a three-cornered lavender hat, looked out at me with a *bright ecstatic smile*.”

The phrase “a bright ecstatic smile” is a metaphorical expression based on the metaphorical concept HAPPINESS IS LIGHT which is also manifested in “the light of happiness,” “beaming with happiness,” “radiant with happiness/joy,” “the glow in his face,” and so on. The term “ecstatic smile” is one of the attributes of happiness, so it is the American dream domain, the term “bright” is an attribute of the term “light.” Thus, the metaphorical concept HAPPINESS IS LIGHT is manifested in a “bright ecstatic smile” that makes “bright” become the datum. The metaphorical concept HAPPINESS IS LIGHT causes abstract happiness to become visible; happiness is understood as “light” which is expressed by the word “bright.” The visual sense becomes active in helping to understand happiness as light.

Orientational Metaphors

Referred to as an orientational metaphor because it relates to a fundamental human spatial orientation, namely up-down, inside-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, middle-edge, and so on.

006/TGG/4 “... then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life ...”

High sensitivity to the promise of life is only possessed by optimistic people; optimism is a situation conducive to achieving the American dream. The word “heightened” in “heightened sensitivity” is a linguistic metaphor based on the metaphorical concept AWARENESS IS VERTICALITY. Therefore, “heightened” becomes the datum.

This metaphor belongs to the orientational metaphor because it is related to top-down spatial. Height tends to be positive and low tends to be the opposite. This does not apply only to consciousness, but also to happiness in 091/TGG/51 “... while happy, vacuous bursts of *laughter rose toward the summer sky*”, success in 183/TGG/119 “Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that *the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees* — he could climb to it, if he climbed alone,” and so on.

The upward orientation which tends to be positive and the downward orientation which tends to be negative are also found in Indonesian/Javanese. For example, the metaphorical concept *LEBIH ITU TINGGI; KURANG ITU RENDAH* produces the metaphorical expressions such as “Karinya meroket” and “Keberaniannya tiarap.” The metaphorical concept *SEHAT ITU TINGGI; SAKIT ITU RENDAH* generates metaphorical expressions such as “Sing lara wis njenggelek” and “Ia sudah seminggu terbaring sakit.” *SADAR ITU TINGGI; TIDAK*

SADAR ITU RENDAH organizes “Kesadarannya perlahan-lahan bangkit,” and “Ia tiba-tiba jatuh pingsan.” *KENDALI ITU TINGGI; KURANG KENDALI ITU RENDAH* yields “Ia yakin bisa mengatasi masalahnya” and “Semuanya berada dibawah kendali isterinya.” *BAHAGIA ITU TINGGI; SEDIH ITU RENDAH* is manifested linguistically in “Istri dan anak-anaknya membawanya ke puncak kebahagiaan” and “Hampir sebulan ia tenggelam dalam kesedihan.” *BAIK ITU TINGGI; KURANG BAIK ITU RENDAH* organizes “tentara kita memiliki moral dan daya tempur yang tinggi” and “Para koruptor sungguh berbudi rendah.” *BERNALAR ITU TINGGI; TIDAK BERNALAR ITU RENDAH* produces “Setiap keputusan dalam rapat komisi itu diasumsikan berdasarkan pada penalaran yang tinggi” and “Karena pendek akal, ia mudah dipermainkan orang.”

Spatial metaphors are also found in metaphorical expressions based on the metaphorical concept *BOOKS ARE DEPTH*; serious and quality books are called “deep books” as in 044/TGG/16 “He reads *deep books* with long words in them” and based on the metaphorical concept *WORDS ARE LENGTH* many words are expressed as “long words” as in 045/TGG/16 “He reads deep books with *long words* in them.”

Numerous American dream metaphors

All the domains of the American dream, namely conducive situations (optimism, hard-working, and equal opportunity), wealth, and happiness, are found in all types of conceptual metaphors. This theoretically means three things. Firstly, some domains of the American dream require expressions with richer cognitive structures. Secondly, some other domains need physicalized expressions. Thirdly, several more domains take on spatial expressions related to verticality, depth, and width. The use of metaphor is myriad. This reinforces the conceptual metaphor theory that the metaphorical concept, which produces many of these metaphorical expressions, is unavoidable, everywhere, and generally unconsciously created (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Out of the three types of metaphor, ontological metaphors and structural metaphors are very dominant. The lowest in number is the orientational metaphors. Lakoff & Johnson (2003) have determined that the number of orientational metaphors will be less than the number of ontological metaphors. This is because the source domain of orientational metaphor is limited to spatial like the up-down, inside-outside, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, center-edge, et cetera which are more limited than the ontological metaphor whose source domains are entity; meanwhile, the structural metaphors whose source domains are richer cognitive structures also have broad domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003); Kovecses, 2010). Therefore, the gap numbers between ontological and structural metaphors are not significant.

The spatial metaphors seen in *The Great Gatsby*, however, strengthen the previous research by Yu, Wang, & He (2016); they work on spatial metaphor and find the five similar pairs of spatial metaphors on morality in English and Chinese.

In terms of metaphor topics, the part of American dream metaphors conforms the previous research done by Safarnejad et al (2013) doing the research on happiness metaphor. A lot of data on happiness metaphors in the novel can also be found in the source and target languages in their translation research. Indirectly, the findings of American dream metaphors prove that the use of metaphor is massive and, therefore, this can be used to talk about a lot of topics including the sex jokes investigated by Lai (2020) aiming at comforting the taboo talk while maintaining the relational and social harmony.

The findings of various American dream metaphors imply that there must be many new things that are communicated with the metaphors. For example, the expression ‘Her voice is full of money,’ is unusual metaphorical expression based on the metaphorical concept *GOOD QUALITY IS WEALTH*. The new metaphor is to

adjust the high value of money in the jazz era in America in 1917 in which there are many newly rich persons. Besides, this is an integral part of American dream since wealth is a means of grasping the end, namely happiness. This is the function of metaphors as a human cognition instrument in which it is also activated to understand the novel and abstract phenomena in big data (Puschmann & Burgess, 2014); they find two big metaphorical concepts, namely BIG DATA IS A NATURAL CONTROLLED FORCE and BIG DATA IS A CONSUMED RESOURCE. Computing adequate metaphor interpretations, therefore, can be partly based on the cognitive processes (Reid & Katz, 2018). Similarly, metaphors can be used very well in the debate between the government and their opponents (Musolff, 2022) on any topics including about overcoming the Covid 19. Accordingly, besides metaphor universality, the differences in shaping factors and cultures make conceptual metaphor different (Almirabi, 2015).

CONCLUSION

All domains about American dream, conducive situation (optimism, hard work, and fair opportunity), wealth, and happiness are expressed in three types of metaphor, namely structural, ontological, and orientational.

This implies three things, domains of the American dream require expressions with richer cognitive structures, physicalized expressions, or spatial expressions related to verticality, depth, and width. The use of metaphor which is myriad reinforces the conceptual metaphor theory that the metaphorical concept, which produces many of these metaphorical expressions, is unavoidable, everywhere, and generally unconsciously created. The fewer numbers of orientational metaphors is also theoretically predictable since the source domain of orientational metaphor is limited to spatial like the up-down, inside-outside, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, center-edge, et cetera. This limitation does not occur to ontological metaphor whose source domains are physical entities. This does not happen to structural metaphor either whose source domains are richer cognitive structures. Accordingly, the gap between structural metaphor and ontological metaphor on the one side and orientational metaphor on the other side is significant.

Pedagogically, many metaphors that can be used to talk about American dream topics can be used to talk about many other topics including new things. This implies that any teaching materials can be talked metaphorically. This in some cases can help the students' understanding.

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