

DIE ZELLE im Trichter. Eine korpusbasierte Methode der Metaphernsuche am Beispiel der Zellenmetaphern in der Biologie und in der Gesellschaftslehre

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The starting point of the dissertation can be summarized as follows:

- (A) Empirical evidence suggests that metaphorical conceptualizations in science and across disciplines are characterized by multi-directional correlations and interdependences.
- (B) However, it is highly questionable whether these intricate interdependences can be uncovered and captured based on the analysis of a small sample of manually collected examples in an empirically reliable fashion.

From the perspective of my dissertation, the first and most central problem pertaining to the observations above can be formulated as follows:

P₁: To what extent is the corpus-based method of metaphor analysis offered in the dissertation capable of investigating and capturing the interdependences of metaphorical conceptualizations in science and across disciplines in an empirical fashion?

In the light of former procedures and results discussed in literature, the corpus-based method introduced here should meet (at least) the following requirements:

1. The method should offer a quantitative evaluation of the data.
2. The role of intuition and introspection in the collection of data should be reduced as much as possible.
3. The interpretation of the data should rely on the consideration of the (broader) context.
4. The primary source of the relevant metaphorical expressions should be the corpus itself, in the form of keywords.

The solution of **P₁** results from the solutions of **P₂** and **P₃**, i.e. two specific problems relating to the analysis of the role played by the concept CELL in (molecular) cell biology and sociology respectively:

P₂: What are the most relevant and central metaphors of scientific knowledge transfer in the history of cell biology pertaining to the conceptualization of the target domain CELL, and how can they be grasped by the application of the introduced method?

P₃: How does the concept CELL become a source domain in social sciences, and what can be observed regarding the changes of social imagery with the help of the introduced method?

The major objective of the dissertation points far beyond the analysis of cell metaphors, it is to find a solution to **P₁**, i.e. to develop a corpus-based method of metaphor analysis which meets the requirements above. Based on the results and solutions of addressing **P₂** and **P₃**, the answer to **P₁** can be put as follows:

L₁: Despite its intuitive elements, the “funnel” method – a semi-automatic method of metaphor analysis I offer – can give a comprehensive picture of the imagery applied to some objects of scientific study by an empirical analysis of figurative expressions based on quantification. Therefore, the method is capable of investigating and capturing the interdependences of metaphorical conceptualizations in science and across disciplines in an empirical fashion.