

# Cross-linguistic metaphorical representation of the #MeToo movement: Communicating attitudes

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In recent years, the #MeToo movement has spread virally as a hashtag used on social media in an attempt to demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), initially developed by Charteris-Black (2004, 2014) and later extended by such scholars as Musolff (2004, 2016), Koller (2006), De Landtsheer (2009), Hart (2010), etc. is a one of the approaches that allows investigating social issues of concern. In this case, the #MeToo movement as a social issue is looked at from CMA perspective. CMA is a blend of Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis which aims at identifying how metaphors are used to describe socially-contested issues and how they reveal speakers' hidden intentions and attitudes (Charteris-Black 2014: 174). Also, CMA is concerned with different functions metaphors may perform. A predicative function, being one of many, is most likely to explain how socially sensitive issues are communicated (Charteris-Black 2014: 204-207; Musolff 2016: 4). In other words, it implies positive or negative attitudes expressed towards certain issues. Thus, the paper aims to study how predicative function of metaphor manifests in the discourse of contemporary social concerns cross-linguistically and cross-culturally. In other words, the paper looks into how different attitudes towards the #MeToo movement are communicated via metaphors in Lithuanian and English media and how they shape prevailing public attitudes.

To achieve the aim of the study, a three-step metaphor analysis procedure (Identified→ Interpreted→ Explained) was employed in order to determine how metaphors reflect and shape attitudes towards the issues raised in the #MeToo movement cross-linguistically and cross-culturally. For this study, two corpora of media texts comprising 113, 765 words (Lithuanian) and 120, 826 words (English) were constructed. The first step – metaphor identification – was performed using Antconc programme. The search through keywords and applying MIPVU allowed establishing metaphorical collocations. In the second step – metaphor interpretation – metaphors were interpreted by relating them to possible metaphors in thought. Both steps provide descriptive statistics. In the final stage – explanation – metaphors were analysed from a rhetorical perspective, which means that it was attempted to look into how the predicative function of metaphor operates in the #MeToo discourse cross-linguistically and cross-culturally. The findings of this evidence-based application grounded in contemporary social concerns demonstrate that in both languages the scenarios of NATURAL PHENOMENON, FORCE AND PERSONIFICATION are at work when attitudes towards the controversial issue are communicated. However, different development of the same metaphorical scenarios was identified and the paper will discuss this in detail.

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