

Conceptual blending vs. conceptual metaphor theory. A note on the semantics of plant names in English and Polish

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The wide spectrum of figurative meanings of common plant names in English and Polish is used in the article as a basis for a critical evaluation of two approaches to conceptualization phenomena as proposed in the current cognitive literature: Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT; Fauconnier and Turner 1998, 2003; also Coulson and Oakley 2000) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1987, 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989). When first introduced, CBT, also known as Conceptual Integration (cf. Evans & Green 2006; also Taylor 2002), was considered to be an alternative to a well-grounded CMT. This article argues that CMT and CBT should be treated as complementary rather than competitive theories. The claim advanced here is that the unidirectional mapping, which holds in CMT, is replaced in CBT with a projection of the inputs to the blended space and vice versa: from the blended space to the inputs (Evans & Green 2006). By analysing the figurative meanings of such Polish expressions as *To wypracowanie to groch z kapustą* ‘this essay is one big mess’ lit. ‘this essay is beans (mixed) with cabbage,’ *Marek to kapuściana głowa* ‘Mark is an idiot’ lit. ‘Mark is a head of cabbage’, or sl. *Stokrótką* ‘a widow/ divorcee ready to establish (many sexual) relationships with many men’ (blend: *sto* ‘a hundred’ + *krotność* ‘a hundred times’) as well as English expressions such as *Make hay while the sun shines*, or *push up the daisies*, the article points to the dynamic, “on-line” aspect of conceptual blending, juxtaposing it with the “static”, conventional CMT structure.

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