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Metaphorising violence in the UK and Brazil: A contrastive discourse dynamics study

Lynne Cameron, Open University, UK

Ana Pelosi, Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza, Brazil

Heloísa Pedroso de Moraes Feltes, Universidade de Caxias do Sul, Brazil

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: Professor Lynne

Cameron, Centre for Language and Communication, Faculty of Education and

Language Studies, Stuart Hall Building, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK6

7AA, UK.

Email: lynne.cameron@open.ac.uk

Abstract

As part of a project investigating responses to uncertainty produced by violence and conflict, the use of metaphor in talk about violence in everyday life is compared across the contexts of terrorism in the UK and urban violence in Brazil. Data come from two studies. The UK study (n = 96) was carried out in 2006, following the July 2005 London bombings. The smaller Brazil study (n = 11) was carried out in 2010 in the north-eastern Brazilian city of Fortaleza which, like many Brazilian cities, has a high level of urban violence, including muggings, kidnappings and street robberies. Participants met in focus groups with a moderator and responded to a series of questions about how terrorism had changed their perceptions of risk, the decisions they made in their daily lives and their attitudes to other social groups. Recordings were transcribed and, in the second study, translated from Brazilian Portuguese into English for a bi-lingual analysis. Metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron et al, 2009) identified verbal metaphor vehicles produced when discussing issues around violence. Verbal metaphors were grouped into systematic metaphors. Comparisons were made of metaphor vehicles and of systematic metaphors. Findings show 16 vehicle groupings used with similar frequencies; 15 vehicle groupings used more than twice as often in UK data; and 14 vehicle groupings used more than twice as often in Brazil data. Qualitative analysis shows how the different contexts, cultures, and types of violence are reflected in, and constructed through, use of metaphor.

Metaphorising violence in the UK and Brazil: A contrastive discourse dynamics study

This article compares the use of metaphor in talk about violence in people's everyday lives in the very different urban contexts of Brazil and the UK. The work is part of a larger international project, "Living with Uncertainty: Metaphor and the discourse dynamics of empathy" investigating responses to uncertainty produced by violence and conflict. The data come from two studies. The first study[1] was carried out in the UK in 2006, following the London bombings in July 2005. It asked focus groups a series of questions about how terrorism had changed their perceptions of risk, the decisions they made in their daily lives and their attitudes to other social groups. The second study was carried out in 2010 in the north-eastern Brazilian city of Fortaleza which, like many Brazilian cities, has a high level of urban violence, such as muggings, kidnappings and street robberies. It was a small scale, quasi-replication study, using focus groups and a very similar question schedule. In both cases, metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron et al, 2009) was carried out to find out how people make use of verbal metaphors when discussing issues around violence. The findings of the two analyses are compared to explore how the different contexts, cultures and types of violence are reflected in, and constructed through, people's use of metaphor.

Background

Metaphor and violence

Metaphor offers a useful research tool to explore the intra-and inter-personal effects of living with the uncertainty caused by violence. The studies adopt the discourse dynamics approach to metaphor (Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Maslen, 2010;

Cameron et al, 2009) which views metaphor as a process, combining language and thinking within the flow of discourse activity, rather than holding that verbal metaphors (i.e. metaphors in talk) are generated by underlying conceptual metaphors, as per the Lakoffian tradition. Trajectories of connected verbal metaphors, called 'systematic metaphors', are seen as phenomena of dialogue and interaction that indicate the metaphorical framings that people use and construct as they talk. Because verbal metaphors often carry an evaluative sense, examining how they are used in the flow of discourse activity can indicate speakers' attitudes and feelings, and how they shift as talk proceeds.

The dynamic framework of social interaction and discourse (Cameron, 2007; Gibbs & Cameron, 2008) does not assume a straightforward 'top down' influence of dominant metaphors from the socio-cultural sphere on to public perceptions of social issues and international events, as is often the case in studies of metaphor in media and political discourse, particularly those generated within the remit of Critical Discourse Analysis (see critique by Deignan, 2005, p.131). While not denying that such influence can happen, discourse dynamics would also predict 'outward' and 'upward' directions of influence. In an 'outward' direction, individuals' metaphors interact with the metaphors of their peers, those who share their cultural identities and influence. In an 'upward' direction, metaphors used by people to describe and frame their everyday experiences interact with and can influence the discourse of media and politics.

Discussions of terrorism after 9/11, in the US and beyond, was largely framed by the metaphor of the WAR ON TERROR. Krebs and Lobasz (2007) argue that this framing metaphor limited the discursive space available for people to talk about the war in Iraq. Specifically, they argue that opposition politicians were rhetorically

"coerced" by the dominance of this metaphor and its entailment of 'logical' steps leading to war, leaving opponents of the war with Iraq with few rhetorical resources with which to challenge its inevitability (Krebs and Lobasz, 2007, p.444). Media coverage of terrorism was found to use pre-existing discourses about crime and control in an uncritical way (Altheide, 2007). In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, there were many similarities in the way that Bush and Blair talked about terrorism and the war on terror in the USA and the UK (Johnson, 2002). In the UK, press coverage of emergency measures to counteract terrorism used a discourse which re-framed freedom as a freedom from fear, rather than freedom of action (Tsoukala, 2006).

Apart from the claim that politicians sometimes use an argumentation strategy in which they invent words and claim that they represent the views of 'ordinary people' (Charteris-Black, 2006, citing van Dijk, 1993; 1998), there is little discussion in the literature on what people do with the metaphors that they experience in the media or from their politicians (but see Pelosi et al., in preparation). In one suggestive study, Edy and Meirick (2007) show that, although the media used two main conceptual metaphors when talking about terrorism (TERRORISM AS WAR and TERRORISM AS CRIME), residents of Tennessee used these metaphors in idiosyncratic ways, adapting and mixing them in complex ways.

Studies of issues connected to terrorism, including racism and immigration report overwhelmingly negative metaphors about minority groups in US and UK society (Charteris-Black, 2006; Santa Ana, 1999; O'Brien, 2003; Van Teeflen, 1994). However, data for these studies comes from the public sphere (newspapers, election campaigns, popular literature) rather than from people talking about their everyday lives, as here.

Terrorism in UK and urban violence in Brazil

The first suicide bombings experienced in Britain took place on 7 July 2005, when four young Muslim men exploded bombs on an Underground train and on the upper deck of a bus. 52 people were killed and over 700 injured. The nation was shocked by the violence and by the apparent spread of terrorism from the USA, but also by the fact that three of the four perpetrators of violence had been born and brought up in Britain; these were 'home-grown' terrorists. The three British-born perpetrators came from Leeds, a city in the north of England that experienced changing demographics as a result of invited immigration in the 1960s and 70s of workers from the West Indies, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and later of people looking for work from eastern Europe countries that joined the European Community, along with smaller numbers of people given asylum from conflict situations globally. The first immigration produced Muslim communities congregated in particular areas of the city with their own places of worship, shops, doctors and other facilities. A national policy of multiculturalism from the 1970s onwards accepted such parallel communities as preferable to assimilationism, and only very recently have the knock-on effects on nationhood, social identity and belonging been discussed. When British manufacturing industries declined in the 1980s and 90s, unemployment in urban areas rose and life expectations for younger people became less positive. Underlying currents of racism, UK participation in global conflicts such as the war in Iraq, and changes in the spread of information through the internet, all contributed to increasing dissatisfaction and rifts between communities. However, that young men would be willing to kill themselves in the act of killing others was still extremely shocking to British people.

While terrorist activity is characterized by punctuated attacks that may take hundreds of lives in one event, violence in Brazilian cities is characterized by its

continual and ubiquitous presence. 14 of the world's 50 most violent cities, as measured by homicide rates, are in Brazil (Ortega, 2012). The average Brazilian citizen has to contend with a real risk of violent assault on a daily basis, in any public place, at any time of the day or night. Urban violence in Brazil takes the form of armed robbery, mugging, car-jacking and kidnapping, and appears to be increasing. Among the suggested causes are unemployment, drug addiction and dealing, poverty and hunger, and lack of government protection of and/or concern with the poor. Crimes are not just committed by poor people, but also by organized groups or gangs not driven by poverty.

According to a recent survey carried out by a Mexican non-governmental organization, the Citizens' Council for Public Security and Penal Justice (Ortega, 2012), the city of Fortaleza, located in the northeastern state of Ceará, Brazil, ranks in 37th place in the 50 most violent cities in the world, with a rate of 42.90 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. A study called The Violence Map (Waiselfisz, 2012) reveals that in the first decade of this century there has been an increase of 18% in the ratio of homicides in Fortaleza and its metropolitan regions, from 24.9 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in the year 2000 (Souza & Pontes, 2010), to 42.9 in the year 2011. As a comparison, the California Dept of Justice reported a homicide rate of 6.7 per 100,000 inhabitants in Los Angeles for 2009 (http://www.laalmanac.com/crime/cr02.htm accessed 27 January 2013).

A number of factors may have contributed to such an increase. Fortaleza is a fast growing city, with development greatly intensified in the last 20 years. One of the contributing factors is internal migration by people trying to escape from the stress, violence, pollution of big centres such as Rio and Sao Paulo; other factors include job opportunities and climate. Additionally, improved communication brought about by

the Internet has helped promote tourism, bringing in hundreds of nationals and foreigners who come to the place attracted by its climate and beaches. Tourism and migration contribute to urban development and expansion, while bringing with them a number of negative consequences.

Over the years, real estate speculation has targeted privileged areas of Fortaleza, such as the seaside and adjacent areas, resulting in a rather irregular distribution of the population with a few who can pay large sums to live in such areas and the poor population confined to peripheral sections of the town. Such an imbalance generates a number of social problems, which are aggravated by the sexual exploitation of minors by foreign tourists as well by drug trafficking and prostitution in general. Such an unsavory environment is fertile soil for social unrest and disrespect for life, especially on the part of the underprivileged, leading to the increase of all sorts of unlawful behavior. Police officers fail to contribute as they should to the maintenance of a tolerable level of security. Due to factors such as very poor pay and lack of professional perspectives, they fall prey to corruption and end up entering into agreements with drug dealers and thieves. They not only fail to fulfill their duty properly but also facilitate the carrying out of unlawful deeds.

Such are the types of violence in the two contexts. The UK study avoided recruiting any participants with personal experience of terrorism. In Brazil, it was not possible to do this since most people have encountered urban violence or have someone in their family who has.

Research question

The overall research question for the comparative study was:

- How do people in the UK and Brazil use metaphor when talking about

  violence and its effects on their everyday lives?

While we expected differences in the types of violence to prompt different metaphors,

we were interested to find out which factors in the two situations would influence

metaphor choice. We also wanted to find out whether some consistency would

emerge in metaphors across languages, cultures and contexts, and at what level this

would be found.

In comparing verbal metaphors across cultures, contexts and languages, this

study attempts something new in the discourse dynamics approach. The various

methodological problems encountered in this venture are described and discussed.

The next section explains the method. We then present the comparative

findings, and finally discuss implications, limitations and further issues for research.

Method

The full method of the first, UK, study, and its theoretical background, are described

in Cameron et al (2009), and summarised here along with adaptations made for the

Brazilian context.

Participants

In the UK, Muslim and non-Muslim participants were recruited for focus groups held

in Leeds and London. A total of 96 people participated in 12 groups, with equal

numbers of men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim, in separate groups in each

city. Participants ranged in age from 18 to over 70 years.

The UK study was carried out in 2006, following the July 7, 2005 bombings in

London. The UK question schedule was adapted for the type of urban violence under

analysis in Brazil and translated into Brazilian Portuguese for use in the Brazil study

in 2010. Two focus groups of students were recruited: the first had 5 participants, 3

men and 2 women aged between 16 and 43 years, from the public University of Ceará

and the private higher education institution Faculdade Integrada do Ceará (FIC). The

second comprised 6 participants, three men and three women, aged between 21 and

25 years, from the private higher education institution, FA7.

Data collection

The focus groups were moderated by a member of the respective research teams, with

a female Muslim moderator employed for Muslim groups in the UK. The moderators

posed the questions from the schedules and encouraged responses from the full group

without intervening in terms of content, moving on to the next question when

discussion seemed to be exhausted. In UK, the discussions were in British English; in

Brazil, they were in Brazilian Portuguese. The discussions were recorded.

Data analysis

Metaphor-led discourse analyses (Cameron & Maslen, 2010) were carried out on the

transcribed talk, involving metaphor identification, vehicle grouping, and finding

systematic metaphors.

        The datasets were compared on two levels: for the use of particular metaphor

vehicle types (or source domains) in talking about the effects of violence on people's

lives, and for systematic framing metaphors that emerged from the metaphor-led

discourse analyses.

Transcription and translation. The first step was transcription into intonation units, i.e. utterances produced under a single breath/intonation contour (details in Stelma & Cameron, 2007). An English translation was added to the Brazilian Portuguese transcriptions to help the first author who assisted with the metaphor analysis. To help spot potential verbal metaphors, the English translation was kept as close as possible to the original Brazilian Portuguese, rather than being rendered idiomatic, and maintained the syntactic order of the original.

Metaphor identification. Two criteria must be met to identify a metaphor in the talk, (a) a word or phrase must be found in the talk that has some other different sense – called its basic meaning, usually more physical or more concrete than its contextual meaning, and (b) the basic meaning of the word or phrase must contribute to the meaning in context (Cameron, 2003; Pragglejaz group, 2007). In the phrase *the government should open bridges* (UK data)*,* the word *open* is identified as metaphorically-used because it has the more physical and concrete meaning of opening something closed or blocked, such as a blocked path, which is different from its contextual meaning, something like talking, listening and trying to understand each other (criterion a). *bridges* has a contextual meaning of a means of communication that contrasts with its basic meaning of a structure crossing a gap, road or river. The basic meaning contributes to the contextual meaning in highlighting the change process that will be involved (criterion b). In identifying metaphorically used words or phrases, no assumption is made as to how these words or phrases are intended by speakers or how they are processed by listeners, since evidence is seldom available from discourse data. Identified metaphors were coded using Atlas.ti software in the Brazil study, and Microsoft Excel in the UK study (as described in Cameron &

Maslen, 2010). The two sets of metaphor vehicles provided raw data for comparison across contexts.[2]

Metaphor vehicle grouping. Once metaphors had been identified, they were grouped together in terms of their basic meaning semantics to find possible systematic or framing metaphors. For the example above, *open bridges* was grouped with *open the door,* and with *shut down,* as metaphors of CONNECTION/SEPARATION. By examining the metaphor vehicles used to talk about key discourse topics, we find out how participants use metaphor to frame ideas, in this case to give a sense of UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER AS CONNECTING.[3] Because metaphors are often used to imply affect – emotions, attitudes, values – framing metaphors also reveal how people feel about the topics. The metaphor of *facilitating understanding* as *opening bridges,* for example, connects into embodied perceptual simulations (Gibbs, 2006), in which being blocked feels negative and the new *open* state of understanding feels free and positive.

The analysis was 'bi-lingual' here, in the sense that English labels were used for groupings in both studies, but vehicles were listed in the language of production, e.g. *acho* (Eng. *find*) in the Brazilian data was placed in the vehicle grouping FIND. In a few cases, metaphor vehicles were placed in two groupings; for example, the phrase *cárcere privado* (Eng. *private prison = house arrest*), used metaphorically to describe how people stay at home because fear of urban violence makes them frightened to go out, was placed in the groupings HOME and CONSTRAINT to reflect the two senses that are highlighted by the metaphor.

Normed numbers of metaphor vehicles in each grouping were compared to show similarities and differences in the metaphor vehicle groupings (or source domains) that people called on in their talk about terrorism and urban violence.

Comparisons were not done statistically because of the very different sizes of the two studies. Instead, we looked for 'large' differences in metaphor frequencies, considering only those that differed by a factor of 2 or more. Account was taken of the raw numbers too, since not much can be claimed about differences in a particular grouping where very few metaphors are used, apart from suggesting further investigation in larger corpora.

The metaphor vehicle comparison produced three sets of groupings: those used at least twice as frequently in the UK data; those used at least twice as frequently in the Brazil data, and the remainder, whose frequencies were similar. The three sets were explored qualitatively to see how the metaphor vehicles were used in relation to violence and uncertainty.

Identifying systematic metaphors. To move from metaphor vehicles to systematic metaphors, vehicle groupings were examined for 'key discourse topics'. Identifying metaphor topics in the flow of talk is difficult because they often remain unspoken (Cameron, 2003, 2007; Kittay, 1988). The idea of 'key discourse topics' addresses this issue by taking a limited set of topics related to the goals of the studies and/or emerging from the talk. This article considers the topics:

- the threat of terrorism / urban violence;
- responses to, and outcomes of, (the threat of) terrorism / urban violence by various actors.

Systematic metaphors emerging from the talk in each context were compared, showing similarities and differences in how participants metaphorically framed their experiences of terrorism and urban violence.

Findings

Overall comparison of metaphor densities

The numbers of metaphors in each set were normed by calculating the number of metaphor vehicles per 1000 words of transcript, as 'metaphor density' (Cameron, 2003). Comparison of metaphor densities was a valid move here because the two languages have similar morphological rules. (It would not be valid across German and English, for example, since German constructs much longer 'words' through compounding.)

Metaphor densities in the two studies emerged as very similar at 58 (UK) and 57 (Brazil) metaphors per 1000 words. Table 1 shows the comparison of metaphor densities.

Table 1 about here

Overall comparison of metaphor vehicle groupings

The full list of vehicle groupings and the frequency of each type in the two datasets is shown in Table 2. They are ordered alphabetically. The hash symbol # shows where frequency of a metaphor vehicle grouping was at least twice as high in the UK data ([#]) or in the Brazil data ([##]).

16 vehicle groupings were used with similar frequencies; 15 vehicle groupings were

used more than twice as often in UK data; 14 vehicle groupings were used more than

twice as often in Brazil data.

Table 2 about here

We now separate out the three sets of metaphor vehicle groupings: those used with

similar frequencies in the two contexts and languages; those used more in the UK

data; and those used more in the Brazil data. Each grouping is explored qualitatively

to find out what the metaphors are used to talk about and how.

Vehicle groupings with similar frequencies. Table 3 shows those metaphor vehicle

groupings used with similar frequencies in the two datasets, presented in order of their

frequency in the UK data.

Table 3 about here

Examination of the key discourse topics relating to the metaphor vehicles in each

dataset showed that some of the vehicles in Table 3 belong to similar systematic

metaphors across languages and contexts. These include *MOVEMENT* and *JOURNEY*

metaphors used to talk about changes in life events, as in *EVENT STRUCTURE* metaphors

(Lakoff, 1993); and culturally widespread metaphors of *UNDERSTANDING / KNOWING AS*

SEEING; SIGNIFICANT AS BIG; IMPORTANT/POWERFUL/HAPPY AS UP.

      HOME metaphors for both groups carried a sense of the place where one should

feel most safe from violence, but they were used differently. For UK speakers, a

threat felt *close to home* or *on the doorstep* was particularly strong. Brazilian participants used metaphors about being confined to the HOME, such as *toque de recolher* (Eng. *curfew*) or *cárcere privado* (Eng. *private prison = house arrest),* to highlight how fear of violence can limit people's freedom.

In both studies, BODY POSTURE metaphors were used to describe attitudes in response to violence: in the UK, such metaphors often expressed participants disdain for those in authority and their responses to terrorism: *spineless, cringe, bending over backwards* (to help USA). In Brazil, a striking BODY POSTURE metaphor described the effect of urban violence on young people: *Os nossos adolescentes já andam de cabeça baixa* (Eng. *Our teenagers walk with their heads down*).

However, key differences in metaphorical constructions of violence and responses to violence were found inside some groupings. For example, in the UK, GAME metaphors are used to speak of the risk of being involved in a terrorist attack, with vehicles such as *bluff, poker, lottery* highlighting the lack of agency and control that people feel. The systematic metaphor in that data was formulated as THE RISK OF TERRORISM IS A GAME OF CHANCE with a key affective sense of people having no control over outcomes. In the Brazil data, in contrast, GAME metaphor vehicles came from football. The frequency of violence as a topic of conversation in people's everyday lives was described through the metaphor of *bola da vez* (Eng. *ball of the time*). The metaphorically-used verb *driblar* (Eng. *to dribble*) highlighted action as movement and skill rather than chance: AVOIDING A VIOLENT SITUATION IS A GAME OF SKILL. The sense of agency is very different in the two metaphors, reflecting the sense of control that people in the two contexts feel in the face of violence. While UK participants expressed complete lack of agency in the face of terrorism, some Brazilian participants felt they could take some action against urban violence, even if that was

as a lone footballer dribbling a ball up the field in the face of an entire team of other players.

In the UK data, *CONNECT/SEPARATE* metaphors were used to highlight relations between social groups, contrasting mixed and integrated groups, as *CONNECTED*, with those *SEPARATED* by ethnic or religious differences. Terrorism was held to increase *SEPARATION* between social groups. Social division did not develop as a topic in the Brazil discussions, instead *CONNECT/SEPARATE* vehicles were used with a range of metaphor topics, mostly peripheral to urban violence.

Metaphors used more in UK data than in Brazil data. Table 4 shows metaphor vehicle groupings used with a frequency in the UK data at least double that in the Brazil data. The rows are ordered by the ratio of frequencies in the two datasets, shown in the far right column. Table 5 contains metaphor vehicle groupings only found in the UK data.

Tables 4 and 5 about here

Systematic language differences accounted for several of the differences observed in tables 4 and 5. The frequency of phrasal and prepositional verbs in English accounted for the much higher number of *CONTAINER* metaphors such as *in, inside, into, out of*. The high number of *CONCRETIZING* metaphors came mainly from idiomatic quantifiers of nouns, such as *a bit, loads of*. The single phrase *decision-making circles* accounted for most of the *CIRCLES* metaphors in the UK data.

Those differences not arising from inside the languages point to different types and constructions of the violence in the two situations and/or to different ways to

talking in a group. The *BLOW* metaphors in the UK data all resulted from the terrorist bombs that were a key topic of the talk, *blow up. FOLLOW/LEAD* metaphors reflect participants' explanations of how 9/11 and 7/7 terrorism was motivated by religious affiliations, as well as the need for *leaders* in Muslim communities to consider responses. Metaphors grouped under *RELIGION* were not particularly significant in the talk; they included responses to terrorism spoken of as *diabolical* and people's lack of *faith* in political leaders. *SUPPORT* metaphors included *support* (for a cause, or for terrorists), *backing of one country by another (UK and US)* and the adverb *basically*, used by participants describing a strong position or stating their own. The urban violence discussed by Brazilian participants is not open to the 'support' because it is not driven by political or religious motivations that can be seen as right or wrong.

CONCEALMENT metaphors were interesting because they highlighted the most threatening aspect of terrorist action, and were also used in relation to police and government responses to the attacks. In both cases, *CONCEALMENT* metaphors concerned intentions and actions that were hidden away. They work with the *KNOWLEDGE AS SEEING* metaphor to construct an affectively negative scenario in which what is not visible is unknowable and therefore threatening. Terrorism was described as a *sneaky* kind of violence*;* authorities were suspected of *hiding* information and *covering up.* Combining *CONCEALMENT* metaphors with *MOVEMENT* metaphors gave the systematic metaphor of *TERRORISM AS CONCEALED MOVEMENT* (Cameron, Low & Maslen, 2010). The only parallel in the Brazilian groups was discussion by participants of responding to the threat of urban violence through deception e.g. hiding valuables from potential thieves or having a dummy credit card. However, this action was not described with metaphor but narrated with examples and scenarios of actual practice.

Two particular types of response to terrorist violence described by Muslim participants in the UK data are reflected in *MENTAL ILLNESS* and *LABELLING* metaphors. Muslim women in particular used words like *paranoia, hysteria, crazy* to describe their feelings relating to the risk of terrorism, producing the systematic metaphor: *RESPONSE TO TERRORISM AS MENTAL ILLNESS*. All Muslim groups described how, following the terrorist attacks, they are being lumped and stereotyped under the label 'Muslim' by non-Muslims. Their descriptions of this process and its effect used strongly negative metaphors such as *labelling, trademark, branded.*

BALANCE metaphors reflect an interesting explanatory metaphor for social justice that appeared in the UK focus group discussions: *THE NORM FOR SOCIETY IS BALANCE – TERRORISM DISTURBS THAT BALANCE.* In Brazil, the phrase *dieta equilibriada (balanced diet)* was used once to talk about how society operates, suggesting that *BALANCE* metaphors are available. However, the effect of violence is not spoken of as disrupting social equilibrium.

The grouping of *ACTING – STORIES* metaphors includes cultural referents, and in the UK data took two main forms. One was the use of theatre-related metaphors, such as *behind the scenes, roles, farce*, to describe action in response to violence, most often the action of politicians, police or security officials. *ACTING – STORIES* metaphors also included characters from story, film, and tv whose names were applied to politicians and other public figures, bringing with them particular characteristics, again often negative: *Billy the Kid, Alf Garnet, Captain Hook*. Where vehicles had evaluative content, this was often disrespectful. *ACTING – STORIES* metaphors create a scenario in which experts and authority figures are acting on a stage, watched by an audience of 'ordinary' people, who feel distanced and less powerful, and who have little faith in the efficacy of what they see done. We can note that *BODY POSTURE*

metaphors fit into this scenario by tying the attitude conveyed into our visual experience of seeing people in that condition. This 'watching actors from a distance' metaphor is literalised on the television screens in homes that many people mentioned.

Differences in discourse style show in several metaphors. *INCLINE* metaphors reflect how British English describes agreeing with a view or opinion as physical leaning towards, out of the vertical, as in *bias* or *inclination*; participants made much use of the verb *tend to*, as in *we tend to exaggerate*. This metaphor mitigates assertiveness when expressing an opinion, which explains its frequency in group discussions. Brazilian Portuguese uses the equivalent *tendar*, but this did not appear in the data. The finding suggest that participants in Brazil felt less need to mitigate or hedge their statements, perhaps because of the greater shared personal experience of violence and/or perhaps because of cultural stylistic differences.

HOT/COLD metaphors were mostly used in the UK data to talk about talk: reasoning in talk and urgent or emotional talk: *it boils down to, sparks a conversation, heated debates, burning question.* The Brazilian data did not feature these metaphors, although there was talk of becoming a *cold person* in response to violence.

Metaphors used more in Brazil data than in UK data. Table 6 shows metaphor vehicle groupings that were used with at least twice the frequency in Brazil data as compared with UK data. The right hand column shows the ratio of frequencies for each vehicle type in the two datasets.

Table 6 about here

Once again differences between British English and Brazilian Portuguese languages account for some of the differences in metaphor use seen in Table 6. *FINDING/LOSING* metaphors are accounted for by 54 instances of the idiomatic phrase *eu acho* (Eng. *I find*) at the start of utterances where participants express their experience or beliefs. *SPEAKING/LISTENING* metaphors are mainly accounted for by the decision to mark as metaphorical the word *questão* (Eng. *question = issue*) as used in *essa questão da violência urbana* (Eng. *this question of urban violence*).

A larger grouping of metaphors relating to *VIOLENCE* from Table 6 (comprising *VIOLENT ACTION, VIOLATE LIMITS, MILITARY, STRENGTH, CONSTRAINT*) work together to express participants' ideas that the threat of urban violence in Brazil is itself a powerful, violent force in society that constrains people's actions and lives. Pro rata, Brazilian participants make more than three times as much use of *VIOLENCE* metaphors, with a frequency across the data of 8.79 *VIOLENCE* metaphor vehicles per 1000 words, compared with UK frequency of 2.57 per 1000 words (ratio 3.4:1).

An explanation for this contrast appears to come from different experiences of violence in the two contexts, and from a desire to avoid potential ambiguity around metaphors. A response to 9/11 and to the UK terrorism of 7/7 was joining the USA in the 'war on terror', a war made literal by attacking Iraq and Afghanistan. Once war becomes a reality, *VIOLENCE* metaphors seem to be ruled out to describe active responses and are restricted to more background aspects, including the *backlash* on Muslim minority ethnic groups, the emotional *impact* of terrorism, and responses by the media, who are said to *whip up frenzy*.

Because Brazilians, on the other hand, are not actually at war, they seem to be more free to describe their experience using *VIOLENCE* metaphors: *é como se nós fossemos cidadãos em guerra civil* (Eng. *it is like as if we were citizens in a civil war*);

and to talk about fighting against urban violence and for human rights: *a luta assim de cobrar seus direitos* (Eng. *to fight to protect their rights*). One of the Brazil focus groups discusses whether the urban violence will lead to a war but decide not. They describe how people come to accept increasing levels of urban violence, adjusting their behaviour and finding other ways to respond than fighting back, e.g. by buying a cheap phone for the robber to take. There is also recognition that living with high levels of crime and violence leads to more violent feelings and emotions in the self, and that this personal violence becomes a force that itself needs to be constrained.

VIOLENCE metaphors continue when Brazilian participants use *CLOSE* and *CONSTRAINT* metaphors to talk about a common response to violence as fear that leads to hiding away in one's safe house or flat and not venturing out on the streets. This was described as *locking oneself in prison, putting oneself under house arrest, or making one's children live in a box*, and as *imposing a curfew on oneself:*

Brazilian Portuguese:

    você meio que faz com que seu filho viva dentro de uma caixa, pelo medo

English: *you   make like that   your son lives   in   a   box, through fear*

    CLOSE and *CONSTRAINT* metaphors yielded the systematic metaphors: *URBAN VIOLENCE IS A CONSTRAINING FORCE; FEAR AS A RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE IS PUTTING ONESELF IN PRISON*.

    COMMERCE-MONEY metaphors occurred in discussion of how recent changes in societal *values* in Brazil both cause, and are affected by, urban violence

    Both studies used *NATURAL WORLD* metaphors such as *propagating violence* in systematic metaphors that describe the *GROWTH OF VIOLENCE* as *ORGANIC*. The

difference in numbers is partly the result of an extended metaphorical scenario in the

Brazilian data, in which human rights were described as a little plant that has to be

nourished and fertilised in order to flourish and blossom.

       The Brazil dataset has many more metaphors pro rata relating to disease and

sickness, that together form the systematic metaphor URBAN VIOLENCE AS DISEASE, with

vehicles including *sick, pain, disease, suffer, band-aid, weak.*

       Brazilian Portuguese: *pessoas   que já sofreram a   custa   de violência*

       English: *people   who   suffer from the cost of violence*

A response to sickness is passivity, which seems to characterise some responses to

urban violence in Brazil, and to fit with the idea of PUTTING ONESELF IN PRISON.

Comparison of systematic metaphors

This section brings together the systematic metaphors mentioned in the previous

section, together with some others arising from the metaphor-led analysis, and

compares across contexts. Table 7 summarises these.

Table 7 about here

Both kinds of violence bring deep social changes, but the external (terrorism, UK) and

internal (urban violence, Brazil) sources of violence prompt different metaphors: in

the UK data, terrorism upsets society by disrupting its equilibrium, whereas in Brazil,

participants speak more of changes to, inversions of, social values.

       Both urban violence and terrorism create a sense of lack of agency for

participants, highlighted by the metaphors of self-driven organic growth. Some people

in both contexts respond to the threat of violence with passivity. Brazilian participants

present a more constrained response to urban violence, with a strong sense of

metaphorically putting oneself in a kind of prison by not leaving the house; in

contrast, Muslim women describe their response in terms of incapacitating mental

illness metaphors. Some Brazilian participants also report a somewhat more active

response, taking steps to avoid urban violence or fool criminals. In contrast, UK

participants present a more widespread sense of lack of control, feeling like pawns in

a game or distant observers of government responses.

      In both contexts violence breeds violence, as well as passivity. In the UK, the

external violence of terrorism impacted on social equilibrium, on the lives of ethnic

communities, and on people's mental equilibrium. In Brazil, continuous experience

of, or hearing stories about, urban violence creates strong emotions and attitudes that

people describe as a kind of internalised violence.

Conclusion

      Researching metaphor across languages and cultures presented

methodological challenges. Brazilian researchers brought good skills in English, and

the lead researcher's limited skills in Brazilian Portuguese increased the importance

of accurate translation of the transcripts for the bi-lingual analysis. Similarity in word

formation rules in the two languages made comparison easier but, even so, identifying

and grouping verbal metaphors was a long and difficult task. Differences in metaphor

use had to be checked for language, stylistic, and cultural influences before

conclusions about differences in attitudes towards violence could be drawn.

      We set out to compare metaphors about violence in people's everyday lives in

two distinct settings. Methodologically, efforts to replicate data collection processes

were important for minimising irrelevant sources of variability in talk that might have

an effect on metaphor production. For example, in both settings people met as strangers in the focus group setting where they responded to moderator questions. The comparative metaphor analysis revealed differences in metaphor use that result from and reflect the different levels and types of violence that people experience in their everyday lives. There was also a degree of similarity across the settings, particularly around metaphors that highlight people's feelings of powerlessness in the face of violence.

The findings that (i) a small set of metaphors, working at a high level of generality, are used with similar, often high, frequencies in the two languages, and (ii) most metaphors work much more specifically, are important for the discourse dynamics theory of metaphor (e.g. Cameron, 2010). The first finding supports the idea that large-scale, generalised metaphors emerge from human embodied experience and language use, and overlap with 'conceptual metaphors' (e.g. Lakoff, 1993). The most important of these for the violence project are metaphors in which *HOME* represents people's strongest sense of safety, security, and comfort (see Pelosi et al., in preparation). The second finding supports the discourse dynamics claim that many, if not most, verbal metaphors used in the flow of interaction have a context-specificity that results from more complex production processes than a simple instantiation of pre-existing conceptual metaphors. Such metaphors may highlight particular aspects of a topic under discussion, such as personal sense of powerless or awareness of social change, and/or they may reflect cultural preferences in interaction, such as the need to mitigate the strength of statements made in a group.

Notes

1. The Perception and Communication of Terrorist Risk project was funded by UK Economic and Social Research Council Research Grant ESRC RES228250053.

2. We worked with metaphor vehicles rather than with 'metaphors' because of the well-documented problems with identifying the topics of metaphors in the flow of talk (Cameron, 2003, 2007; Kittay, 1988). While a vehicle term is an explicit word or phrase, the topic of the metaphor is very likely to remain unspoken.

3. Systematic metaphors -- sets of connected metaphors used across a discourse event -- are written in SMALL ITALIC CAPITALS.

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