

Metaphors of movement in psychotherapy talk

Dennis Tay

Abstract

Metaphors of physical movement perform both substantive and organizational functions as they can represent things and construct cohesive links in discourse. This paper examines movement metaphors in psychotherapy talk, a context where both functions are equally salient. Categorical data and discourse analytic methods were used to investigate i) types of target topics and metaphorical movement, ii) relationships between topics, types of movement, and speaker, and iii) how the substantive and organizational functions interact in proximity. There was no three-way interaction but all bivariate associations between topics, movement types, and speaker were significant. Key findings include i) clients were more likely to use movement metaphors to discuss issues while therapists more likely to discuss therapeutic concepts and construct reference links; ii) forward movement occurred less frequently than expected as a source for issues while backward movement more frequently than expected as a source for reference links; iii) therapist metaphors were more likely to depict directions of movement associated with progress, while client metaphors were associated with stagnation, regression, or uncertainty. Clinical implications and directions for future research are highlighted.

Keywords: movement metaphors, psychotherapy, discourse functions

Introduction

There has been much theoretical and empirical research on metaphors of physical movement. One of the most prominent theories is that movement metaphors are fundamental to language and communication because our understanding of event structure is shaped by source domains which result from recurrent experiences of bodily movement (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). At the semantic level, it has indeed been shown that the ontology of events is systematically described with movement-related words across different languages (Kövecses, 2005; Yu, 1998). Discourse analysts have amplified the focus on movement metaphors in at least two ways. The first is to examine what may be called the substantive function of movement metaphors; i.e. how aspects of key sociopolitical topics such as immigration (Hart, 2011), financial processes (Rojo López & Orts Llopis, 2010), and climate change (Nerlich, 2012) are conceptualized by their respective discourse producers as physical movement, and the implications thereof. The second, and less common approach, is to examine their organizational function; i.e. how movement metaphors create cohesive links between different sections of a text or activity by invoking ostensible conceptual metaphors such as PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY. In such cases, the target topics are not substantive contents of the subject matter under discussion, but pertain to the structure of the discourse activity at hand instead. Cameron (2003), for example, discusses ‘classroom journeys’ where teachers frame lesson objectives as guiding students to arrive at ‘destinations’, with ‘discoveries’ and ‘sights’ along the way. At the linguistic level, there is then a motivation to cross-reference different parts of the lesson by using movement-related words to construct a metaphorical landscape of it. Although the substantive

and organizational functions of movement metaphors are conceptually distinct, an underexplored point of interest is how they co-occur or even overlap in particular discourse contexts.

One such discourse context is psychotherapy, a verbal activity where therapists apply mental health principles to assist clients to modify their behaviours, cognitions, emotions and/or other personal characteristics (Norcross, 1990). Metaphors are known to be commonly used across different psychotherapy approaches because of the typically abstract and subjective nature of the contents discussed (McMullen, 2008; Tay, 2013). Mental health professionals and researchers generally agree that metaphors can provide alternative means of expression and understanding, or even enhance the therapeutic relationship between therapists and clients (Kopp & Craw, 1998; Lyddon, Clay, & Sparks, 2001). In the case of movement metaphors, which as previously mentioned reflect commonly shared embodied experiences, there is a further, intriguing possibility that they provide a basis for enhancing a crucial sense of empathy between therapist and client; i.e. an experiential rather than merely conceptual understanding of another person's situation (Semino, 2010; Tay, 2014). Research into the characteristics, functions, and variability of movement metaphors in psychotherapy has nevertheless not been forthcoming.

The substantive function of movement metaphors is most obviously realized when physical movement is used as source domain(s) to depict aspects of clients' issues, not unlike the ubiquitous LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor in other discourse contexts. The organizational function is expected to be salient because psychotherapy usually involves multiple sessions where progress is signposted like Cameron's (2003) classroom example, with frequent reference to past or future discussions. However, consistent with the broader research trend highlighted above, there has been a stronger focus on the substantive function of movement metaphors in psychotherapy. Therapists who suggest guidelines on clinical metaphor use (Blenkiron, 2010; Stott, Mansell, Salkovskis, Lavender, & Cartwright-Hatton, 2010) often discuss the practical utility of journey metaphors for a variety of therapeutic situations. In terms of their potential impact, Sarpavaara and Koski-Jännes (2013) examined spontaneous metaphor use by substance abuse clients and found that treatment outcomes positively correlate with a tendency to construe oneself as a traveller completing a personal 'journey' to recovery. Much has also been said about the conceptualization of the therapy process itself as moving from origin to destination, with the therapist as a guide (Aronov & Brodsky, 2009; Tay, 2011; Van Parys & Rober, 2013). It should be noted that the above studies seem to emphasize 'moving forward' as the ideal therapeutic direction, leaving the characteristics and implications of other types of metaphorical movement underexplored. In comparison, the organizational function of movement metaphors has received much less attention. Although the explicit framing of therapy as a journey may well perform an organizational role if it recurrently signposts different treatment phases (e.g. *Last week, you took the first step. Today, I will guide you in taking the next step*), more conventional ways of using movement-related words to organize the structure of therapy (*We will come back to this again next time*) are seldom investigated. Furthermore, since both clients' issues and referential links are susceptible to be construed in terms of metaphorical movement, there is the additional question of how their respective metaphorical logics play out in cases where both topics are discussed in proximity.

This paper examines the characteristics of movement metaphors in a sample of psychotherapy talk, as an initial attempt to address the issues above. A combination of categorical data and discourse analytic methods will be used to answer the following research questions. Implications

and future research avenues for both clinical and discourse analytic perspectives on metaphor will also be discussed.

1. How do movement metaphors conceptualize substantive and organizational target topics in psychotherapy?
2. What is the nature of metaphorical movement in these metaphors?
3. What is the relationship between target topics, the nature of metaphorical movement, and the metaphor user (therapist or client)?

Data and methods

The present dataset comprises 20 transcribed MCT (Metacognitive therapy) sessions, each about an hour long, from two therapist-client dyads. Briefly, MCT practitioners believe that mental health problems arise from unhelpful and extended thinking patterns (e.g. worry and rumination), rather than the contents of specific thoughts (Wells, 2008). Besides discussing clients' issues, therapists also share theoretical models explaining this abstracted view to raise clients' awareness. For the present purpose MCT sessions are therefore likely to contain movement metaphors related to different types of target topics.

The broad methodological steps of metaphor identification, variable coding, and data analysis are outlined below. The research process involved two researchers with postgraduate level training in metaphor and discourse analysis. Due to the inductive and interpretative nature of most of these steps, Cameron and Maslen's (2010) qualitative guidelines for maximizing reliability with regular discussion were used instead of quantitative alternatives (e.g. Cohen's Kappa).

Identification of movement metaphors

The discourse dynamics approach (Cameron and Maslen, 2010) was used to identify metaphor vehicle terms based on contrast and transfer between basic and contextual senses. It was preferred over other identification procedures like the MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) (Pragglejaz Group & Group, 2007) and MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure VU University Amsterdam) (Steen et al., 2010) since metaphor in contexts of spontaneous talk like psychotherapy does not occur exclusively at lexical unit level. Attention should instead be paid to "stretches of language" which are contiguous and collectively express a coherent metaphorical description (Cameron and Maslen 2010: 105), which can then be counted as one unit for coding and analysis. For example, the utterance *I would say it's a flaw in the system* (Cameron and Maslen 2010: 107) contains a four-word stretch *flaw in the system* which collectively expresses a contextual meaning of failure in work procedures derived from the basic sense of mechanical breakdown. It makes sense to count this as one unit instead of multiple individually metaphorical words (e.g. *flaw*, *in*, *system*), since the speaker presumably wants to communicate this holistic meaning unit. As these criteria involve subjective judgments such as what counts as a coherent metaphorical description and when a metaphorical stretch of language begins and ends (Cameron and Maslen 2010:108), reliability checks require close discussion between raters. The two raters therefore met to calibrate understanding before independently identifying metaphor vehicle terms from the first two session transcripts of each client. They then met again to discuss inclusion/exclusion decisions and resolve problematic cases after every two sessions. For

example, since the present study focuses on movement metaphors, it was decided that only metaphor vehicle terms with a basic sense clearly related to physical movement would be included. The grammatical construction *(be) going to* was however excluded since it is hard to conclude if the grammatical sense or the movement sense is more ‘basic’. Conversely, examples like *I found myself going into a depressive mood* were included since the preposition *into* has a clear basic spatial meaning (Cameron & Maslen, 2010:112) which contrasts with its contextual sense. Note that although some examples (e.g. *If you can move them to one side*) may also reflect other source concepts (e.g. manipulating a physical object), all the identified examples reflect and are thus commonly definable as movement metaphors. A total of 512 metaphor vehicle terms were thus identified, each constituting a unit for subsequent coding and analysis.

Variables

All 512 metaphor units were then coded under three pre-determined categorical variables which describe their characteristics: SPEAKER, TARGET, and DIRECTION. A potential fourth variable DYAD, which might capture how metaphor characteristics differ across therapist-client pairs, was not considered due to the absence of a clear conceptual contrast between such pairs. As with the identification stage, the raters had a round of discussion after every two sessions of independent coding. The SPEAKER variable has two straightforward categories; either therapist or client. Categorization for TARGET and DIRECTION involved a more delicate balance between preserving the complexity of discourse data and ensuring that resultant categories could be used to obtain potentially generalizable findings. The inductive process of modifying categories as more units are considered was therefore guided by initial, theoretically driven expectations of the data (cf. Tay, 2015). For TARGET, the pre-determined focus on substantive and organizational topics is consistent with Kopp and Eckstein’s (2004) classification of psychotherapeutic metaphors into a few general categories: those that represent the client’s ‘self’, ‘others’, and ‘situations’ – even though from a metaphor theoretic viewpoint any of these may well be further divided into numerous sub-categories. Commencing from this intention to constrain proliferation but still arrive at categories with adequate validity, three TARGET categories were eventually finalized. These are ‘issues’, ‘general concepts’, and ‘reference links’, reflecting a distinction between metaphors for the client’s individual experience (substantive), general experiences and phenomena (substantive), and abstract interactional discourse structure (organizational). In more detail, ‘issues’ include instances where a movement metaphor describes any aspect of the client’s self, others, and/or situation. ‘General concepts’ include things not personally related to or experienced by the client, such as the general nature of a disorder or a therapeutic theory or model. ‘Reference links’ include instances where a movement metaphor signposts the progression of therapy. Table 1 provides an example of each TARGET category.

Category	Example
Issues	I seem to have <u>gone downhill</u> since we started
General concepts	Thoughts and ruminations are simply events in your minds that <u>can come and go</u>

Reference links	We will <u>come back</u> to this and experiment more with it
-----------------	--

Table 1 TARGET categories and examples

Coding of the DIRECTION variable followed the same principle of theory-guided inductive categorization. While there is little discussion in the psychotherapy literature about which aspects of the ‘movement’ source domain should be highlighted, the metaphor theoretic literature throws up an open-ended range of possibilities including the ‘identity of the traveler’, ‘means of travel’, ‘speed of travel’, and so on (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Consistent with the need to constrain proliferation but still arrive at distinct and valid categories, a decision was made to focus on the variability of movement metaphors at the level of their direction orientation. Not only are spatial directions relatively well-defined, they can also be expected to highlight contrastive inferential patterns which would be of considerable present interest. The resultant list of eight DIRECTION categories are ‘forwards’, ‘backwards’, ‘upwards’, ‘downwards’, ‘sideways’, ‘cycle’, ‘uncertain’, and ‘contained movement’. The first six of these are self-explanatory, each denoting examples where the metaphorical entity moves in the respective fashion. The ‘uncertain’ category denotes examples where there is no clearly stated direction of movement, while the ‘contained movement’ category denotes movement which occurs within a stated or implied spatial boundary. It contrasts with the other categories in that the inferential logic of such ‘container’ metaphors is more strongly tied to what is represented by the metaphorical boundary, often some specific experience or condition of the client (Rosenbaum & Garfield, 2001), and the movement usually relates to ‘getting in/out’ of the boundary. Table 2 provides an example of each DIRECTION category.

Category	Example
Forwards	I need to be the one that <u>puts the foot forward</u>
Backwards	I really just need some space to be able to <u>step back</u>
Upwards	Can you see how you might <u>get from here up to here?</u>
Downwards	And then it starts <u>spiraling down</u>
Sideways	If you can <u>move them to one side</u> in one situation, why can’t you do it in another?
Cycle	You’re kind of <u>cycling between</u> thinking about the past, thinking about today, thinking about the future
Uncertain	My mind is <u>wandering</u> a little bit
Contained	I think it doesn’t work when I <u>go into</u> that state

Table 2 DIRECTION categories and examples

Data analysis

To determine and interpret associations between the three variables, a backward hierarchical loglinear analysis followed by separate chi-squared analyses were conducted, and supported with discourse analytic interpretation of examples. This essentially involves constructing the best and adequate model to account for the observed frequencies by eliminating as many associations as possible, and then examining the nature of each retained association in detail. Standard requirements for loglinear and chi-squared models including sample size, mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness were satisfied, with the delta constant set at 0.5 to accommodate sampling zeroes. All following result tables are modified from SPSS 21.0 and JASP 0.8.1.2 output. Movement metaphors are underlined within the examples shown.

Results and discussion

Table 3 is the three-way contingency table showing the cross-classified frequencies (column/row totals and expected frequencies omitted). The backward elimination failed to retain the highest three-way interaction between SPEAKER, TARGET, and DIRECTION, but all three possible bivariate associations (i.e. SPEAKER*TARGET, DIRECTION*TARGET, DIRECTION*SPEAKER) were retained as significant and constitute the best model. The likelihood ratio of this model is $\chi^2(14) = 9.123, p = 0.823$, indicating that it is not significantly different than the observed data, thus providing a good fit.

SPEAKER	DIRECTION	TARGET		
		Issues	Concepts	Reference
Therapist	Forward	57	58	25
	Backward	17	14	21
	Upwards	13	12	4
	Downwards	14	12	0
	Sideways	2	3	0
	Cycle	24	19	2
	Contained	22	6	2
Client	Uncertain	15	13	0
	Forward	32	15	5
	Backward	20	7	2
	Upwards	4	0	2
	Downwards	12	0	0
	Sideways	2	5	0
	Cycle	8	2	1
Contained	12	2	1	
Uncertain	17	8	0	

Table 3 Three-way contingency table

The absence of a three-way interaction implies that association patterns between speaker, target, and direction of metaphorical movement are quite straightforward. For example, a three-way interaction would have meant that certain targets tend to be conceptualized with certain directions, but the tendency in turn varies according to who uses the metaphor. We instead have three bivariate associations separately analyzed with chi-squared statistics and discussed below.

The relationship between SPEAKER and TARGET

Table 4 shows the relationship between SPEAKER and TARGET, with expected frequencies in brackets next to observed frequencies ('count') in each cell. As already indicated by the prior loglinear analysis, there is a significant overall association between the two variables with moderate effect size ($\chi^2(2, N = 512) = 21.67, p < 0.001, \text{Cramer's } V = 0.21$). This means that the target topics of movement metaphors vary significantly according to the user. To further examine the nature of this variation, we look at the expected and observed frequencies in each cell via a chi-squared analysis. Expected frequency is the number of instances that would have been expected by chance alone, while observed frequency is the actual number of instances in the data. The greater the disparity between the expected and observed frequency, the more that category contributes to the overall relationship between the two variables. This disparity is quantified by the adjusted residual; a value above +2.0 (colored in green) means that category has occurred significantly more often than by chance ($p < 0.05$), while a value below -2.0 (colored in red) means that category has occurred significantly less often than by chance ($p < 0.05$). It is worth mentioning that a category which seems to have a high frequency, like the 164 instances of therapist metaphors on 'issues', could still turn out to be less frequent than expected. This is because the analysis proportions the frequency with therapist metaphors involving other targets, as well as 'issues' metaphors used by the client (i.e. the column and row subtotals). Hence the green and red cells should be understood as reflecting how uniquely 'motivated', rather than just how common a certain category is by raw frequency. In other words, 'expectations' of frequencies should be taken in the strict statistical sense of relativeness to other categories, and not the more general sense of how natural that category inherently is in psychotherapy talk.

			SPEAKER		Total
			Therapist	Client	
TARGET	Issues	Count	164 (187.9)	107 (83.1)	271
		Adjusted Residual	-4.6	4.6	
	Concepts	Count	137 (122.0)	39 (54.0)	176
		Adjusted Residual	3.0	-3.0	
	Reference	Count	54 (45.1)	11 (19.9)	65
		Adjusted Residual	2.6	-2.6	
	Total	Count	355	157	512

Table 4 The SPEAKER-TARGET relationship

It can thus be seen that clients are more inclined to use movement metaphors to depict their own situation and/or experiences, while therapists use them to depict general concepts and create referential links to other parts of the therapy. This finding lends necessary empirical support to previous conceptual work on the naturalness and value of a functional distribution between practitioners and help-seekers in terms of metaphor use. Cirillo & Crider (1995), for example, propose several distinct therapeutic uses of metaphor and discuss them from both therapist and client perspectives. Kopp & Craw (1998) advocate letting clients formulate their own metaphors on their issues, as opposed to more traditional perspectives which place authorial responsibility on therapists. It also confirms previous empirical work on other counseling-related contexts. In a case study of an online Chinese language counseling forum, for instance, Tay and Huang (2016) found that counselors are likelier to use metaphors to explain concepts and make suggestions, while those who seek help on the forum use metaphors to describe their problems and frame their requests. Examples 1 and 2 from the present data respectively illustrate movement metaphors used by client and therapist to describe issues and explain concepts.

1. I think it's the kind of, it's the space that I go to because of the last couple of months I have been like inside of myself rather than outside.
2. One of the important kind of, um, things that run alongside the detached mindfulness is the idea of the here and now.

In Example 1 the client describes his experience with a self-help tool recommended by the therapist as a metaphorical space which he can 'go to', as an alternative to remaining 'inside' of himself for the last couple of months. The movement metaphor thus provides a tractable and natural connection between the tool and the client's tendency for self-containment. In Example 2, true to the MCT approach, the therapist provides an explicit explanation of the nature of rumination, describing theoretical ideas like 'detached mindfulness' and the 'here and now' as running alongside each other. Examples 3 and 4 below further illustrate the unique referential function of movement metaphors seldom discussed in the literature. Like the explanation of concepts, this use of metaphor is also shown to be far more typical of therapist speech.

3. We will certainly come back to the model time and time again.
4. Let's review our last session and then move forward from there.

The therapist in both examples depicts the therapeutic process itself as metaphorical movement. Importantly, this notion of therapy as a journey is not limited to the initial phase where therapists tend to introduce the general orientation or philosophy of treatment, as outlined by some practitioners (Aronov & Brodsky, 2009; Ronen & Rosenbaum, 1998). Its linguistic manifestations can be seen to recur throughout the many sessions to create a sense of cohesiveness across the various contents discussed. For this reason, the different directions of metaphorical movement other than the typified notion of 'moving forwards' become a potential subject of interest, as elaborated in the next sections. We can already see that Example 3 is a case of backward movement where the therapist suggests that future sessions will involve revising the presently mentioned content, while Example 4 is a case of forward movement where the

therapist revises a previous session before taking the client further ahead. In both cases the movement metaphors create a sense of connection between the sessions, a prerogative which understandably belongs to the therapist rather than client.

The relationship between DIRECTION and TARGET

The next bivariate association, between DIRECTION and TARGET, reveals that certain target topics tend to be described in terms of certain directions of metaphorical movement ($\chi^2(14, N = 512) = 54.84, p < 0.001, \text{Cramer's } V = 0.24$). The effect size of this association is in fact slightly higher than between SPEAKER and TARGET, but not all categories make a significant contribution. Table 5 shows the frequencies, residuals, and contributing categories.

			TARGET			Total
			Issues	Concepts	Reference	
DIRECTION	Forward	Count	89 (101.6)	73 (66.0)	30 (24.4)	192
		Adjusted Residual	-2.3	1.3	1.5	
	Backward	Count	37 (42.9)	21 (27.8)	23 (10.3)	81
		Adjusted Residual	-1.4	-1.7	4.6	
	Upwards	Count	17 (18.5)	12 (12.0)	6 (4.4)	35
		Adjusted Residual	-0.5	0.0	0.8	
	Downwards	Count	26 (20.1)	12 (13.1)	0 (4.8)	38
		Adjusted Residual	2.0	-0.4	-2.4	
	Sideways	Count	4 (6.4)	8 (4.1)	0 (1.5)	12
		Adjusted Residual	-1.4	2.4	-1.3	
	Cycle	Count	32 (29.6)	21 (19.3)	3 (7.1)	56
		Adjusted Residual	0.7	0.5	-1.7	
	Contained	Count	34 (23.8)	8 (15.5)	3 (5.7)	45
		Adjusted Residual	3.2	-2.5	-1.3	
	Uncertain	Count	32 (28.1)	21 (18.2)	0 (6.7)	53
		Adjusted Residual	1.1	0.8	-2.9	
	Total	Count	271	176	65	512

Table 5 The DIRECTION-TARGET relationship

The categories underlying directional tendencies in each target type will be discussed in sequence. Firstly, movement metaphors which describe client issues are proportionately less likely to be in the forward direction, and more likely to be downwards and ‘contained’. This suggests the importance of an alternative perspective to the typical focus of the mental health metaphor literature; i.e. that resolving one’s issues involves slow but always positive progress. As Stott et al. (2010:64) remark, “the process of recovery from psychological problems or disorders is indeed an unfolding, multistage process, and it is not uncommon for clients either to use metaphors such

as these or need some guidance as to what to expect...”. Consequently, examples used in the literature to illustrate client metaphors or therapist guidance tend not to include attested and nuanced alternatives to forward progressive movement, which might provide useful reference material especially for therapists.

The disproportionately frequent categories of contained and downward movement as metaphorical descriptions of client issues will now be examined in more detail. In the case of containment, three specific types of client issues predominate as target topics: recurrent mental states, daily activities, and attitudes towards the mind itself. It is common to see recurrent mental states of primary topical interest such as depression, rumination, anger, and doubts described as physical containers which clients ‘cannot move out of’, ‘get sucked into’, ‘go into that place’, or occasionally ‘come out of’ only to ‘get back in’ after a while. Example 5 is a typical instance where an undesirable mental state is described as a physical location to be avoided.

5. I think that it doesn’t work when I go into that state because it goes into negative thinking which isn’t good.

In some cases, the container refers to the client’s own mind rather than a separately construed mental state, and the undesirable mental states are in turn described as things which ‘come into’ or get ‘out of’ from the mind. In Example 6, the client describes how his worries get ‘out of his head’ and are temporarily lessened when he prepares meticulously for what he needs to do.

6. I made a few lists of everything I needed to do and that kind of got everything out of my head.

While it is mostly the case that being outside the metaphorical container represents positive relief from some undesirable issue, Examples 7 and 8 show that the reverse can also be true. In Example 7 the client describes his prescribed attention training activity as a physical space which he looks forward to entering, because he construes it as a positive alternative to being inside of himself. In Example 8, ‘getting into it’ refers to the client confronting another person to resolve a troubling interpersonal issue, which the therapist sees as an important priority.

7. I think it’s the space that I go to because the last couple of months I have been like inside of myself rather than outside
8. Why do you leave it for after service? Why do you not get into it there and then?

In the case of downward movement, most of the cases describe the client’s emotional well-being at the point of conversation, or since the last time they saw the therapist. Specific aspects of well-being described as moving downwards include ‘mood’, ‘confidence’, ‘self worth’, and in one case, ‘everything’. While the target topics are relatively invariant, the source concept of downward movement is depicted with considerable variety. Examples 9 to 13 illustrate cases of downward movement in subjective order of ‘severity’ and loss of control, corresponding to the respective

impact on the client. Starting from a gradual ‘downhill’ movement which is less perceptible and accordingly hedged with ‘seem to have’, one can be described as having ‘dropped’, ‘spiraling down’, ‘plunging’, and even experiencing a catastrophic collapse or ‘meltdown’.

9. I seem to have gone downhill since we started rather than uphill
10. It makes sense that your mood’s dropped as well
11. Then things would kind of go along the way that I didn’t want to and would get me down and then I’d get kind of agitated, and then start spiraling down
12. I feel as if I’m plunging into the darkness
13. I feel as though I melted down with it

Examples of movement in other directions (i.e. backwards, upwards, sideways, cyclical, and uncertain) also abound, although not more or less frequently than would be expected at chance level. Overall it is striking that the direction most often emphasized in the mental health literature (i.e. forwards) turns out to be proportionately least likely to occur vis-à-vis other possibilities. From a discourse analytic perspective, it would be important for future studies of metaphorical movement in psychotherapy to pay greater attention to different directions of movement, and what this implies for the practical use of such metaphors.

The next observation pertains to movement metaphors for general concepts; i.e. those not experienced directly by clients, such as therapeutic theories and models. Again, all directional categories are represented, but two of them stand out as disproportionately frequent and infrequent. Firstly, the sideways direction appears to be uniquely coupled with this topic category, having twice as many instances as for issues, and being unattested for reference links. Relatedly, contained movement occurs less frequently than expected as a source for concepts, and more frequently than expected as a source for issues (as previously discussed). The fact that sideway metaphors are unexpectedly frequent and container metaphors unexpectedly infrequent could be explained by the nature of ‘concepts’ vis-à-vis ‘issues’. Since concepts are external to clients’ direct experience, and often represent some idealization of what they *should* do, there could be a tendency to describe them in ways which are more peripheral and/or less sensitive to clients’ (metaphorical) perceptual focus. Conversely, since issues are directly experienced by clients, the previously discussed inferential logic of containment is a far more motivated choice. Examples 14 and 15 are two short extracts in which the therapeutic concept of ‘detached mindfulness’ is described in terms of sideway movement.

14. C: Searching them and then putting them to one side

T: One side, yeah. It's kind of this idea that they're there, they're noisy children but that's okay, it's not where my attention is right now.

15. C: Well, I think the detached mindfulness has been the most positive method I found

T: Right

C: Of just pushing the rumination and the you know, the worry, to one side

T: Yeah, ok

C: But I must admit at the moment I do feel pretty bloody awful cause my job's gone and there are so many other things going on

In Example 14, the therapist had been sharing an analogy of ruminating thoughts as naughty children in a school bus, and the client as bus driver - the point being for the client to just accept their presence without focusing on them. Example 15 is similar as the client describes his understanding of the method to 'push' the rumination and worry 'to one side'. It is noteworthy, however, that both instances depict an idealization which may not correspond with the clients' actual experience. Example 15 is especially telling as the client admits that the method does not seem to be working for him now, and the 'many other things going on' may make it difficult for him to appreciate how these worries could simply be pushed to the side.

The final observation relates to the creation of reference links with movement metaphors of different directions. As discussed in the introduction, metaphorical reference links are usually fairly conventional expressions which recur as cohesive devices, and can complement the framing of therapy as a journey by signposting its different phases. While one might again expect the forward direction to be most prominent due to the idealized notion of therapeutic progress, it is backward movement which turns out to be proportionately most salient. Typical forward reference links include 'carry that forward', 'moving on to talk about', and 'move forward'. These are counterbalanced by examples of backward movement where therapists revisit previously discussed content ('go back'), recently discussed content ('come back'), or anticipate future revisiting of the present content ('will come back'). Examples 16 and 17 respectively show an example of forward and backward referential movement.

16. I wanted to sort of take that kind of the next step further today really.

17. I want to come back to this idea about rumination, sort of zeroing in and helps you confront these ideas

Example 16 reflects the typical conception of therapeutic progress as a journey, where therapists guide clients in a progressive direction towards gradual improvement. The present findings

suggest that such examples, when discussed in the mental health literature, should be complemented with those like Example 17 for a fuller understanding of how therapists and clients construct their metaphorical ‘landscape’ for therapeutic progress. Even though the overarching objective is to move forwards, there are many points when ‘backtracking’ is equally important to revise and consolidate what has been done before. It is noticeable that Example 17 includes two more non-movement metaphors of ‘zeroing in’ and ‘confronting’ which are consistent with the idea of taking a break from forward progress and spending time with previous ideas.

Other than the forward-backward contrast, Table 5 also highlights several unattested directions including ‘downwards’ and ‘uncertain’. This can be explained by the fact that ‘downwards’ is not likely to be a motivated direction when conceptualizing reference links (with the possible exception of ‘down the line’), while the expression of directional uncertainty would likely be characteristic of client speech rather than therapists who are responsible for creating a sense of coherence in the discussion. This brings us to the final bivariate association between DIRECTION and SPEAKER where such differences are indeed found to exist.

The relationship between DIRECTION and SPEAKER

The final association between DIRECTION and SPEAKER reveals different directional tendencies between therapists and clients when using movement metaphors. It should be noted that despite the significant overall association ($\chi^2(7, N = 512) = 19.65, p = 0.006$, Cramer’s V = 0.20), its effect size is the weakest among the three bivariate associations discussed in this paper. Table 6 shows the details.

			SPEAKER		Total
			Therapist	Client	
DIRECTION	Forward	Count	140 (133.1)	52 (58.9)	192
		Adjusted Residual	1.4	-1.4	
	Backward	Count	52 (56.2)	29 (24.8)	81
		Adjusted Residual	-1.1	1.1	
	Upwards	Count	29 (24.3)	6 (10.7)	35
		Adjusted Residual	1.8	-1.8	
	Downwards	Count	26 (26.3)	12 (11.7)	38
		Adjusted Residual	-0.1	0.1	
	Sideways	Count	5 (8.3)	7 (3.7)	12
		Adjusted Residual	-2.1	2.1	
	Cycle	Count	45 (38.8)	11 (17.2)	56
		Adjusted Residual	1.9	-1.9	
	Contained	Count	30 (31.2)	15 (13.8)	45
		Adjusted Residual	-0.4	0.4	
	Uncertain	Count	28 (36.7)	25 (16.3)	53
		Adjusted Residual	-2.8	2.8	

Total	Count	355	157	512
-------	-------	-----	-----	-----

Table 6 The DIRECTION-SPEAKER relationship

The differences are confined to the two directional categories of ‘sideways’ and ‘uncertain’. Although other categories are not significantly different, grouping them according to their relative over/under-occurrence still offers some useful collective insight. The more frequent than expected categories used by therapists are ‘forwards’, ‘upwards’, and ‘cycle’, while those used by clients are ‘sideways’, ‘uncertain’, ‘backwards’, ‘downwards’, and ‘contained’. It is noticeable that most of the frequent therapist categories depict directions of movement which are conventionally associated with positive progress, whereas most of the frequent client categories convey a sense of stagnation, regression, or uncertainty. Examples 18 and 19 are two forward metaphors used by the therapist. In both cases the notions of ‘moving on’ and ‘moving forward’ are used to describe concrete actions taken for therapeutic progress.

18. You’re working through and solving your problem and coming up with a plan of action and hopefully moving on to take some steps, take some action.
19. We’ve talked about an alternative which is moving forward, accepting what’s happened and moving forward.

In contrast, Examples 20 and 21 illustrate a ‘sideways’ followed by an ‘uncertain’ metaphor used by clients.

20. I think maybe I’m trying to completely push them to one side forgetting they’re even there and it’s a surprise when they come back.
21. I lose touch with them, they kind of drift away and I don’t have any contact with them.

In Example 20, the client is responding to what the therapist had described as his two conflicting ‘channels of thought’ – one which consists of ruminating thoughts, the other of thoughts he ought to be focusing on. He deals with the former by ‘pushing them to one side’, only to be surprised when they ‘come back’ later to distract him. The sideways movement of his ruminating thoughts is thus construed as a temporary solution or relief without any longer-term progress. In Example 21, the client describes the poor state of his personal relationships, losing touch with his friends and allowing them to ‘drift away’ in uncertain directions such that it is difficult to make contact again. Although both examples discuss different aspects of life, the client in both cases appears to construe himself as not being in control. The attendant implications are similar to those discussed above; i.e. that mental health professionals working with and writing about metaphor should consider highlighting such clinical examples which seem less than ideal but have a prominent presence in actual psychotherapy talk. The present case of movement metaphors exemplifies how

even fundamental source domains can vary in their deployment to reflect different stances towards psychotherapy treatment and progress.

Substantive and organizational functions in proximity

The analyses above rest on the assumption that each movement metaphor is a relatively independent discourse unit, with distinct characteristics that coalesce into quantitative patterns over large samples. This section illustrates the complementary qualitative perspective of examining a small amount of data (e.g. a short transcript extract) for emergent or highly contextualized themes of interest. One such theme is how the metaphorical logic of movement ‘plays out’ when its ostensibly distinct substantive and organizational uses occur in proximity. Interest in this question is underpinned by more general inquiries into the interplay of source and target domains, or the ‘mixing’ of metaphors in discourse (Gibbs, 2016; Goatly, 2007; Kimmel, 2010; Shen & Balaban, 1999). Goatly (2007), for example, outlines the two patterns of ‘diversification’ and ‘multivalency’. Diversification refers to cases where the same target is described by different sources, whereas multivalency refers to the same source being used to describe different targets within a single stretch of discourse. The potential case of movement-related sources being used for both substantive and organizational purposes, within a single extract, represents a case study of multivalency and its rhetorical effects. We can expect one of two outcomes, or some hybrid thereof, to be observed. Firstly, despite a similar inferential logic being used in close textual proximity, the different targets of substantive topics (i.e. ‘issues’, ‘concepts’) and referential links (i.e. ‘reference’) are still regarded as ontologically distinct, with no evidence of inferential overlap or comprehension difficulties in the event of contradictory inferences (cf. Kimmel, 2010). Secondly, there may be cases where the same inferential logic creates a semblance of equivalence (cf. Goatly, 1997) or blurs the lines between the different targets, with various rhetorical consequences. In the present case of psychotherapy, for example, superimposing ‘forward’ metaphorical movement onto both the client’s issue and the course of treatment may create a perception of alignment between the two and ‘naturalize’ the latter as a solution for the former.

A close examination of the transcripts in the present dataset reveals that the first outcome predominates, with no clear example where the distinction between the two main target types is compromised. Consider the following extract. The therapist is explaining the activity of filling in a ‘rumination’ diary to help the client consciously register when he starts to overthink.

1. T: Yeah, yeah. So it’s not all thoughts that we’re after, it’s that rumination thoughts that we are most, I think we are interested in. So how do you think you would go at distinguishing between rumination and other sorts of thoughts?
2. C: I think I would probably be capable of making the distinction.
3. T: Okay. So that’s not a difficulty as such okay. And it might be that you find you kind of get into the rumination and you know in to it you go oh hang on this is what the diary’s asking for and you kind of go back. And yep you might get a rebound effect when your

rumination increases but it's quite possible that you're actually realizing you're ruminating, filling in the diary, so taking a break from the rumination to fill in the diary, disrupts the rumination thing itself and kind of breaks it.

4. C: Okay.

5. T: I mean that's possible too so it could go either way. Okay so shall we carry that forward and you can see how you go with filling in the diary?

6. C: Okay.

She asks if the client could differentiate between rumination and 'other sorts of thoughts' (Line 1), explains the diary in more detail (Line 3), and then moves on to the next phase (Line 5). The substantive use of movement metaphors is clear from Lines 1 to 3. Within these lines, however, there appears to be two distinct conceptualizations. In Line 1 the therapist and client are described as (chasing) after rumination thoughts. In Line 3 the ruminative state becomes a bounded container which the client involuntarily 'gets into' and 'goes back' from, with a 'rebound' effect. Line 5 is where both functions occur. The therapist states that the outcome could 'go either way' (i.e. either the client experiences the rebound or breaks the rumination), and then switches to a referential statement to carry the described activity 'forward'. In summary, we see both the substantive and referential function occurring within this short extract, with different types of metaphorical movement co-existing in proximity. Some of these could be regarded as 'clashing'. For example, the construal of rumination as a container is incompatible with the immediately preceding construal of it as a chased after entity. The 'carrying forward' of the activity is likewise inconsistent with the prior image of moving in and out of the container. Despite this, there is no indication of any communicative difficulty as the client appears to understand every therapist utterance (Lines 2, 4, 6). The absence of clear interaction between metaphorical logics lends support to the conclusion that both functions are generally independent of each other, and capitalize on the source domain of movement in their own ways.

Conclusion

Summarizing the findings with respect to the research questions, three major target categories were found to be conceptualized by movement metaphors in psychotherapy talk. These are 'client issues', or any therapeutically relevant situation experienced by clients, 'general concepts', which are mostly therapists' explanations of relevant theoretical ideas, and 'reference links', which function as cohesive ties as the interaction unfolds. The first two categories demonstrate the well-known substantive function of movement metaphors, while the last category demonstrates their less discussed organizational function. As for the nature of metaphorical movement in these metaphors, eight different directions of movement were outlined, reflecting varying attitudes towards the discussed issues and concepts. The relationships between metaphorical targets, directions, and speakers were also analyzed in detail. There was no three-way interaction but all three possible bivariate associations were found to be significant with comparable effect sizes. Clients tended to use movement metaphors to describe issues while therapists focused on concepts and reference links. The 'forward' direction occurred less frequently than expected as a source for 'issues', and relatedly, the 'sideways' and 'uncertain' directions occurred more frequently than

expected in client movement metaphors. Given the tendency for mental health professionals to show examples of ‘optimistic’ directions such as moving forward, the present discourse analytic findings suggest that examples of other directions should also be highlighted for a more complete account of how metaphors function in psychotherapy.

There are several ways in which the present work could be theoretically and empirically extended. Firstly, while the major target topics of ‘issues’, ‘concepts’, and ‘reference links’ emerged, and were treated as mutually independent conceptual and coding categories, their inter-relationships remain open to be theorized in alternative ways. One example would be to visualize them as conceptual subsets in a concentric circle: ‘issues’, being fundamental to any therapeutic discussion, occupy the innermost circle, but are necessarily framed or contextualized by the next larger circle of therapeutic ‘concepts’. Concepts in turn form a subset of the largest organizational circle of ‘reference links’, or more generally, linguistic means in which the therapist and client manage the whole dialogue. The more dynamic interrelationships implied by such a theoretical model may dovetail with general psychotherapy tenets, where perspectives are continuously broadened, narrowed, or otherwise revised as the interaction unfolds.

In terms of empirical extension, one natural way would be to investigate other dimensions of variation which interest metaphor discourse analysts and/or mental health professionals. On the discourse analytic side, an obvious avenue is to compare patterns across or within different languages and cultures, treating psychotherapy as a case study context for investigating metaphor variation in general (Kövecses, 2005). For mental health professionals, the prevailing view seems to be that metaphor is a ‘common factor’ (Frank, 1982); i.e. not something which distinguishes between different therapy contexts and approaches. To the extent that metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon, more work needs to be done to ascertain how far its usage patterns are common across factors such as the type of psychotherapy approach, the quality of the therapist-client relationship, other particular characteristics of therapist-client pairs, and the nature of the psychological disorder at hand. The present study is limited to the case of Metacognitive therapy, and did not consider the potential effects of different relationships and disorders. In general, more in-depth and larger scale studies as envisioned would require continuous and close collaboration between language and mental healthcare professionals.

References

- Aronov, N. E., & Brodsky, S. L. (2009). The river model: a metaphor and tool for training new psychotherapists. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 39, 187–195.
- Blenkiron, P. (2010). *Stories and Analogies in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cameron, L. (2003). *Metaphor in Educational Discourse*. London: Continuum.
- Cameron, L., & Maslen, R. (Eds.). (2010). *Metaphor Analysis*. London: Equinox.
- Cirillo, L., & Crider, C. (1995). Distinctive therapeutic uses of metaphor. *Psychotherapy*, 32, 511–519.
- Frank, J. D. (1982). Therapeutic components shared by all psychotherapies. In J. H. Harvey & M. M. Parks (Eds.), *The Master Lecture Series: Vol. 1 Psychotherapy Research and Behavior Change* (pp. 5–38). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Gibbs, R. W. (Ed.). (2016). *Mixing Metaphor*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Goatly, A. (1997). *The Language of Metaphors*. London: Routledge.
- Goatly, A. (2007). *Washing the Brain - Metaphor and Hidden Ideology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hart, C. (2011). Force-interactive patterns in immigration discourse: A Cognitive Linguistic approach to CDA. *Discourse and Society*, 22(3), 269–286.
- Kimmel, M. (2010). Why we mix metaphors (and mix them well): Discourse coherence, conceptual metaphor, and beyond. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(1), 97–115.
- Kopp, R. R., & Craw, M. J. (1998). Metaphoric language, metaphoric cognition, and cognitive therapy. *Psychotherapy*, 35(3), 306–311.
- Kopp, R. R., & Eckstein, D. (2004). Using early memory metaphors and client-generated metaphors in Adlerian therapy. *J Ind Psychol.*, 60(2), 163–174.
- Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (2nd ed., pp. 202–251). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenges to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lyddon, W. J., Clay, A. L., & Sparks, C. L. (2001). Metaphor and change in counselling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 79(3), 269–274.

- McMullen, L. M. (2008). Putting it in context: Metaphor and psychotherapy. In R. W. Gibbs (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 397–411). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nerlich, B. (2012). “Low carbon” metals, markets and metaphors: The creation of economic expectations about climate change mitigation. *Climatic Change*, *110*(1–2), 31–51.
- Norcross, J. C. (1990). An eclectic definition of psychotherapy. In J. K. Zeig & W. M. Munion (Eds.), *What is Psychotherapy? Contemporary Perspectives* (pp. 218–220). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Pragglejaz Group, & Group, P. (2007). MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *22*(1), 1–39.
- Rojo López, A. M., & Orts Llopis, M. Á. (2010). Metaphorical pattern analysis in financial texts: Framing the crisis in positive or negative metaphorical terms. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *42*(12), 3300–3313.
- Ronen, T., & Rosenbaum, M. (1998). Beyond direct verbal instructions in cognitive behavioral supervision. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, *5*, 7–23.
- Rosenbaum, B., & Garfield, D. (2001). Containers, mental space, and psychodynamics. *PSYART*, *Dec 2001*. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2044-8341.1996.tb01873.x/abstract>
- Sarpavaara, H., & Koski-Jännes, A. (2013). Change as a Journey-Clients’ Metaphoric Change Talk as an Outcome Predictor in Initial Motivational Sessions with Probationers. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *10*(1), 86–101.
- Semino, E. (2010). Descriptions of pain, metaphor, and embodied simulation. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *25*(4), 205–226.
- Shen, Y., & Balaban, N. (1999). Metaphorical (In)Coherence in Discourse. *Discourse Processes*, *28*(2), 139–153.
- Steen, G. J., Dorst, A. G., Herrmann, J. B., Kaal, A. A., Krennmayr, T., & Pasma, T. (2010). *A Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification: From MIP to MIPVU*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Stott, R., Mansell, W., Salkovskis, P., Lavender, A., & Cartwright-Hatton, S. (2010). *Oxford Guide to Metaphors in CBT. Building Cognitive Bridges*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tay, D. (2011). THERAPY IS A JOURNEY as a discourse metaphor. *Discourse Studies*, *13*(1), 47–68.
- Tay, D. (2013). *Metaphor in Psychotherapy. A Descriptive and Prescriptive Analysis*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Tay, D. (2014). Metaphor theory for counselling professionals. In J. Littlemore & J. R. Taylor (Eds.), *Bloomsbury Companion to Cognitive Linguistics* (pp. 352–367). London: Bloomsbury.

- Tay, D. (2015). Metaphor in case study articles on Chinese university counseling service websites. *Chinese Language and Discourse*, 6(1), 28–56.
- Tay, D., & Huang, J. (2016). Metaphor and internet-based mental healthcare in Hong Kong. *Foreign Languages Research (China)*, 160(6), 31–38.
- Van Parys, H., & Rober, P. (2013). Micro-analysis of a therapist-generated metaphor referring to the position of a parentified child in the family. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 35(1), 89–113.
- Wells, A. (2008). Metacognitive therapy: Cognition applied to regulating cognition. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 36, 651–658.
- Yu, N. (1998). *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: A Perspective from Chinese*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.