Do the Experts Mean What Their Metaphors Say?
An Exploration of Metaphor in Mediation Literature

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Overview

Much of what mediators do will be influenced by how they think about the mediation process. This, in turn, depends on powerful, implicit metaphors - consciously or unconsciously adopted - about what the mediation process is and what mediators and negotiators do.

Metaphors are needed not only because mediation is a complex, subjectively experienced process involving inner states and abstract concepts that are best understood figuratively, but also because metaphoric language can communicate so much richness so quickly. For example, mediation is often understood as a journey, not only for disputants but also for mediators who prepare their clients to leave their positions, take steps to discover what underlies them, consider optional routes and follow the one leading to the best available destination.

The training of mediators depends heavily on metaphors that give concrete form to abstract ideas. What mediators learn or understand from a book or article about mediation comes partly from the explicit logic and literal meanings expressed, and partly from everyday metaphors used in the text. When underlying metaphors are known we can better ask the questions needed for improved understanding.

This is a report on the descriptive phase of an ongoing study of the metaphor structure in expert mediator texts. The study draws on conceptual metaphor theory - an interdisciplinary effort in cognitive linguistics and psychology. Metaphors were detected in 700 pages of selected professional literature.

Seven interrelated clusters of metaphors were found to be used repeatedly. Any of these metaphors alone oversimplifies and distorts descriptions of conflict and the mediation process. When the metaphor clusters are used together much of the complexity is reconstituted, if somewhat rearranged. Due to unconscious and uncoordinated use of metaphor, expert mediators inevitably are innocent of what their metaphors say. Greater awareness of the metaphors documented here could reduce inconsistency between literal and figurative meanings, promote more coherence and allow greater complexity and realism to be achieved.

Conceptual Metaphor

For theoretical guidance in uncovering such metaphors we turn to conceptual metaphor theory (especially as summarized by Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Kovecses, 2002) including the extensive work done in documenting conventional metaphor in various linguistic communities. This work on conventional metaphors has little touched the mediation profession (except Jones and Hughes, 2003).

Definitions of Metaphor

Conceptual metaphor theory emphasizes the existence of two domains - the *target* domain (the subject being discussed - e.g., a property dispute) and the *source* domain (the figurative vehicle from which new meaning is derived - e.g., two children trying to play with the same toy). A shorthand title for a metaphor follows the form TARGET DOMAIN is SOURCE DOMAIN. For this metaphor it might be A PROPERTY DISPUTE is CHILDREN TRYING TO PLAY WITH THE SAME TOY, which means "a property dispute is metaphorically understood as children trying to play with the same toy."

Also, conceptual metaphor theory exploits the abstract nature of the target domain and the more concrete, grounded nature of the source domain to map the physically experienced aspects of the source and project them onto the target (e.g., toy

corresponds to the particular property in question, playing corresponds to ownership, physical pushing or jostling corresponds to legal maneuvers, and so on). The target seems more real in terms of universal bodily activity such as movement and sensation.

Conceptual metaphors analyzed here are more universal across languages and cultures than are, say, idioms, myths, parables or allegories. And they depend much less on extent of education or sophistication. The concrete knowledge that conceptual metaphor is based upon comes simply from having and growing up with a human body, handling objects, moving in space, and encountering obstacles.

What Constitutes Evidence of Metaphor Use?

Until about twenty-five years ago metaphor was thought to be merely an artful embellishment to literal statements and logical arguments. Then Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argued that most metaphor is used unconsciously and that it reveals a conceptual structure that is no accident or decoration but is, in fact, indicative of how the speaker is thinking. Not only does it convey the underlying conceptualization of the speaker, but it frames and sets up the reader or listener to understand what is being said in certain terms, with particular limitations, and an implicit inference structure.

Here is a simple example of a conceptual metaphor taken from the corpus studied here:

"... [the proposal] only *fits* their own needs."

The use of the italicized word may not seem particularly metaphorical. In fact it is. The word *fits* is incongruous as it applies literally. It means something quite physical, as of pieces or parts shaped such that when they meet, their proportions correspond to form a unified, smooth surface. Proposals don't literally have physical parts that can fit with needs. Whatever one believes needs are, presumably they have no actual physical shape. This incongruity is taken as lexical evidence of a non-literal or figurative use of language - in this case a possible metaphor. The shorthand title for this metaphor would be PROPOSAL SUITABILITY is PHYSICAL PARTS FITTING TOGETHER; this shorthand means "proposal suitability is metaphorically understood as physical parts fitting together."

But to confirm a metaphor we must have more (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, pp. 180-183 indicate several sources of corroboration). The source domain of a metaphor (physical parts fitting) is multi-faceted and the facets have correspondences with the target domain (the proposal). It is not necessary to name these facets because, from our everyday experience, we already know about what enables or prevents things from "fitting." It is such correspondences that compress and transmit large chunks of meaning in a very few words - a result that makes metaphor so useful and attractive. From the above example some of the correspondences are:

- The physical parts in the source domain of the metaphor correspond to facets in a proposal and to facets of needs.

- How physical parts in the metaphor work together corresponds to how proposals and needs work together.

- The physical parts of the metaphor have a shape that might be altered, and this corresponds to how parts of the proposal might be altered.

- A possible sequence of meshing physical parts in the metaphor corresponds to a possible sequence in the proposal.

These correspondences contain a logic and certain inferences (that sometimes take the form of questions) that will automatically be made: A proposal has points of contact with parties' needs; the proposal might contact some needs and not others; the shape of the proposal can be changed to better articulate with needs; the shaping of a proposal is mechanical and manipulable; the limits on changing shape of a proposal has to do with the physical qualities of the material; do you start with the needs and fit the proposal to the needs, or the other way around? if there is not a good fit damage may occur.

Does all of this come from the metaphoric use of the word *fits'?* Not entirely. That word is one of many that work together to offer what might be called a cluster of *structuring* metaphors. *Combining, attaching, picking* parts, *matching, shaping, measuring, balancing, stabilizing,* making a *foundation* or *firm* base, using sound *principles,* etc. (as we shall see below), all indicate a larger metaphoric understanding of

how to construct something. The use of these words occurs throughout the expert literature on mediation - not always metaphorically, but in large part - such that we can identify it, along with certain others, as an important metaphoric theme.

Methodology

A corpus of approximately 257,000 words (707 pages) was formed from 34 texts representative of North American mediation experts. Bibliographies from numerous sources and the help of several authorities in the field guided the choices. The texts include sections of books, anthologies, journal articles and electronic publications. All were authored by specialists or experts including several from three well-known schools, namely, "facilitative", "transformative" and "evaluative" approaches to mediation. Substantial examples, though not precisely equal amounts, were included from each school. For this exploration the selections focus on definitions of "conflict" and "methods and tasks of the mediator." (The full list of texts can be found at http://www.metaresolution.com/bibliography.htm#Mediation   Corpus Text Citations.)

The author, already very familiar with such material, read the corpus through to manually find and record the major metaphors being used, taking into account larger contexts and greater diversity in vocabulary than practical with the computerized concordance which follows. Added to this are accounts in published literature that document conventional metaphors.

Using these results concordance software was then employed to search for the use of words and combinations of words representing major metaphors, verify which instances were actually metaphorical, and to extract examples. In some instances a thesaurus was consulted to broaden the choice of words indicating certain metaphors.

Seven *Related Metaphor Groupings*

The realities that the experts are trying to express are complex. So we may expect that multiple metaphors are needed to provide the mappings for this complex material. Not surprisingly, therefore, the quantity of metaphors used in the corpus studied here is in the thousands, and there are hundreds of different ones. Most of them do not appear repeatedly.

The simple metaphors, documented below, appear again and again and are the workhorses of this literature. Properly combined, simple metaphors can potentially weave the required complexity. This paper describes seven groups (see figure 1). All of these are found as well in research done on a wide range of English language discourse (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Kovecses, 2002).

Figure 1
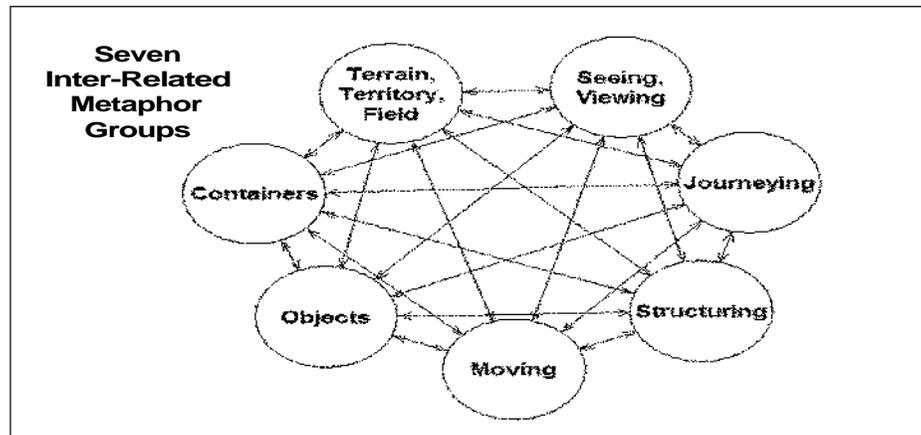
We cannot say at this descriptive stage of the study that these seven particular metaphor groupings - because they appear and reappear - are proven to be the most important. We will want to ask, however, in what ways the recurring metaphors are found to be dependent on one another. Are certain combinations useful in conveying complex meanings? It is hoped that bringing these metaphors and their patterned usage to conscious attention will help clarify the "invisible" fundamentals of the experts' presentations.

Container Metaphors

Container metaphors are used throughout the expert literature on mediation studied here. The metaphoric understanding that conflict itself is a container is shown in the habitual mode of expressing that people get *Into* conflict and often want to *extricate* themselves *from* it; this corresponds to the conventional metaphor documented elsewhere (Lakoff, 1994) given the abbreviated name DIFFICULTIES ARE CONTAINERS.

Our conventional knowledge of the source domain of containers includes surfaces - sides, walls or membranes that keep some things in and others outside of the

container's space. These boundaries may be transparent and porous or opaque and impermeable, sealed or partially open. Opening and closure are implicit. Contents of a container may enter and remain stuck inside, spill out, go in one opening and out another, and may be reached into, prodded, or dug out. Containers have size and depth and what is deep inside is harder to access than what is at the surface.

All of this we know as soon as the word container is mentioned. This knowledge, if not universal, is very widely and consistently held across all human groups. Simply the term "bargaining room" invokes the idea of a container. A room in a building is a container, as is the room you have to work, or as meant by these examples from the corpus:

"...the mediator might make *room* for the parties' anger and their resistance," "...developing room within which to negotiate."

This is metaphoric understanding - a simple term or idea evokes a "container" domain (the source domain) fully pre-structured with elements, relations and logic that, in turn, are mapped back on the subject being discussed (the target domain). The existence of all this is entailed simply by mentioning a word.

Analysis of this corpus reveals related container metaphors with their correspondences summarized as follows:

CONFLICT is A CONTAINER (e.g., energy put into a conflict; contents of a conflict can be resources for a resolution).

DISPUTANTS ARE CONTAINERS (e.g., feelings are inside, are best contained during mediation, mediators must sometimes dig out hidden interests).

MEDIATION is A CONTAINER (e.g., a safe atmosphere, room in which to negotiate, mediation practice includes many styles).

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT is A CONTAINER (e.g., proposals contain a variety of points to satisfy the other side's interests).

How Container Metaphors Help?

Concepts metaphorically understood as containers are ways to organize into more universally understood spatial terms the various qualitatively different aspects of mediation - many of which are subjectively understood mental and emotional dynamics for which standardized or scientifically based terms do not exist. Mediators are agents who inspect, alter and maintain these containers and who attempt to rearrange their contents, putting things in and taking things out.

This can oversimplify the subject. Nevertheless, the experts can draw attention to things and attempt to make needed distinctions and connections. Thus they may better bridge the gap between their more developed understanding and the lesser sophistication of the learners. Other metaphors will necessarily be introduced, as we shall see below, but keeping the terms of the container metaphor close at hand can afford thematic continuity.

Objects Metaphors

Containers entail contents that are objects, things or substances with all of their material attributes. These objects or substances may be hard or soft, dense or light, sticky, slippery or something easily moved into or out of their containers. From the conventional knowledge we all have from our bodily experience, objects can be seen or otherwise separately sensed. This is the source domain of our metaphorical understanding of objects and it assures us that whatever we understand to be objects can be separated one from another, handled and manipulated with tools. We can observe, classify, count, measure, sort, and order them, move and even reshape them to fit together, and choose which ones to use in constructing something:

"The... mediator comes to a session ready to hear a barrage of factual and emotional information, which can be *sorted* and organized into negotiable issues that are parts of a problem faced by the parties."

Here are metaphors found in this cluster with their correspondences :

PROCESSES ARE OBJECTS (e.g., various matters within a conflict, a "tool box" of mediation techniques, the contents of a resolution).

COMPLEX INFORMATION AND EMOTION ARE SORTABLE, SEPARATE OBJECTS (e.g., separate inventing options from deciding about them, separate people from the problem).

PARTS OF A CONFLICT ARE OBJECTS MANIPULATED IN THE HAND (e.g., holding certain goals, having the situation in hand, passing on tips)

PARTS OF A CONFLICT OR CONFLICT RESOLUTION ARE OBJECTS ONE CAN MOVE AMONG/WITHIN (e.g., mediation moves disputants toward something, a party wanders from issue to issue).

How Objects Metaphors Help?

These metaphors are found within the literal discussions of what happens in a conflict, the generation of acceptable solutions, and how to prepare and use a tool box of mediation techniques. All of these discussions are actually about processes - a flow of dynamic, interdependent steps. Yet by using objects metaphors these processes are translated into objects. What we then have is the metaphoric understanding of *things* - sometimes things in motion - within a container. The result is to highlight the attributes of material objects.

Whether consciously intended or not, object metaphors serve experts very well by enabling them to single out elements involved in conflict and mediation as if they were discrete components. After all, beginning mediators may initially see only a blur or a tangle and welcome conceptualizations that juxtapose the parts for individual consideration, making mediation seem more straightforward.

However, turning intricately interconnected processes into detached entities will strip mediation of its inherent complexity. This could be harmfully misleading if other metaphors are not also introduced that reconstitute key aspects of the diverse dynamics that make mediation work. The following section takes up metaphors that restore information by enhancing distinctions using relative locations and connections.

Terrain Metaphors

Quite often containers and their contents may be large or extensive, spread over a wide area and their boundaries may not always appear distinct or regular. Under such circumstances a container becomes a field, terrain, territory or landscape. This accords with the conventional metaphors A PROBLEM Is A REGION IN A LANDSCAPE, THEORIES ARE COVERS FOR THE FACTS, FACTS ARE POINTS (SET UP IN SPATIAL CONFIGURATION) documented elsewhere (Lakoff, 1994).

The spatial aspects of a container apply to a terrain or landscape, but additional properties become prominent. These include points and locations, relative distances between locations, starting points, directions, destinations, gradients and paths. Objects in a container often are in motion. To describe this motion a gradated space is needed to locate positions and measure distances. Terrain, field and territory metaphors provide the structure to do this and to begin to reconstitute the relationships in the process of mediation that are left out using container and object metaphors alone:

> "...a mediator who is familiar with the *rugged terrain* of his or her own assumptions,.. will be more confident when accompanying parties *through* their conflict."

Examples from the corpus provide evidence that conflict and the practice of mediation are metaphorically understood by expert mediators as a field, terrain or territory:

> CONFLICT is A TERRAIN (e.g., mediators don't always agree on the terrain of a conflict)

> MEDIATION is A TERRAIN (e.g., negotiation produces a field of options, disputants reach a point where decisions are necessary, they come close and back away).

How Terrain Metaphors Help?

Terrain and territory metaphors are widely used in this corpus. These metaphors explain where needs, feelings, and argumentative positions are located relative to each other, and how close disputants might be to settlement. But the process of mediation is

conceived as more than locating conflicting positions and underlying needs in two or three dimensions. Relational factors - largely sidelined by container and objects metaphors - are reintroduced by using these terrain metaphors, allowing comparisons, estimates of differences, and mappings to be conceived. These are important in describing a conflict and its resolution.

Both the Facilitative and Transformative schools use container metaphors in explaining where the disputants' needs, interests and feelings are (inside of them). When speaking of the positions that disputants take, terrain or territory is evoked to show where they are relative to each other. Once needs are expressed or feelings dug out, Facilitative mediators will put them on a map of the territory and take a direction that will satisfy them. Transformative mediators are more likely to mine them or seize them. Evaluative mediators, less interested in what is within containers, want the disputants to find where they are on the map and proceed accordingly. When expert mediators compare one mediation school to another they also use terrain metaphors:

> "I am not clear on exactly how you would define evaluative mediation. When does the mediator cross *the line* from facilitation to evaluation?"

But resolving a conflict necessitates finding things that have so far not been apparent and, while terrain metaphors suggest where these things might be located, other metaphors are needed to describe and explain how this "finding" is done.

Metaphors of Seeing, Viewing, Illuminating, and Searching

A dominant way that territory, terrain and landscape are physically experienced is with the sense of vision. Vision is, of course, a principal sense modality and all sighted people share common experiences based on how human vision operates. This makes it an extremely rich and widely used metaphor source domain. A central example is the conventional metaphor KNOWING is SEEING (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999) that we find exemplified in so many substitutions of the word "see" for "know" or "understand" in common parlance.

Seeing entails a number of integral factors that build upon and go beyond the metaphors of containers, objects and terrain previously discussed. These factors

include the need for light and an angle, orientation, frame, approach or point of view that is clear and unobstructed. Focus, angle, orientation, frame, approach, point of view, and clarity of view are all important aspects of seeing. The physical act of seeing combines these in a way that composes sequential segments into fields of vision (terrain, territory, landscape) where thinking is metaphorically understood to occur.

> **"...effective integrative negotiation usually requires negotiators to have a *clear view* of both their own interests and those of the others involved."**

The following variations of the KNOWING is SEEING metaphor are substantiated by metaphors and their correspondences as found within this corpus:

THINKING is VIEWING:

THINKING IN A CERTAIN WAY is VIEWING FROM A CERTAIN POINT, APPROACH OR ORIENTATION (e.g., unchanged thinking is rigid, fixed in viewpoint, occupying a distinct position in field or terrain, limited by frames, lenses, or "where you sit").

RESOLVING CONFLICT is CHANGING ORIENTATION As NEEDED (e.g., mediators try different orientations - looking behind, forward, through; seating disputants side-by-side).

POINTS IN THINKING ARE POINTS FOCUSED UPON; SCOPE OF THINKING is SCOPE OF VISION (e.g., mediators are to focus on what is said, to notice, and to define the scope).

RESOLVING CONFLICT is SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT THINGS (e.g., encourage disputants to search the terrain of the conflict for concerns, options, opportunities).

RESOLVING CONFLICT is HAVING CLEAR, UNOBSTRUCTED VISION (e.g., have clear view of own and other's interests, record ideas in full view, uncover hidden aspects).

RESOLVING CONFLICT is HAVING LIGHT IN THE RIGHT PLACE (e.g., illuminate the problem, a solution dawns on a party in light of what was said).

How Seeing/Viewing Metaphors Help?

How disputants think is held to be at the center of conflicts, and changes in this thinking are believed to lead to resolution of conflict. But expert mediators are not experts in cognition and have no special knowledge about how people think. Instead, much the same as any person might, they make use of seeing as a metaphor for thinking - they conceive of thinking as if it were seeing. And they elaborate their understanding of thinking by using all of the aspects of seeing cited above - point of view, how something is approached, the angle or orientation, what is in focus and how focus is moved. New or changed thinking, such as that which might resolve conflict, is metaphorically understood to involve searching, achieving clear or unobstructed vision and having light in the right place.

The metaphoric use of the sensory modality of vision provides both a means of creating a map and of beginning to move within it. But as seeing and moving the eyes are often precursors to physical movement of the body (pointing, reaching, starting down a path), metaphors of vision suggest linkage to metaphors of bodily movement.

Metaphors of Moving

The writings of expert mediators very often refer to conflict and conflict resolution as involving movement. Needs, interests, emotions, thoughts, histories, behaviors, procedures, mediators and the disputants themselves - all metaphorically understood as objects - are in movement. When the conflict is described these elements may be blocking each other, going in opposing directions, clashing, or rubbing each other the wrong way. Conflict is metaphorically understood as obstructive motion or things that don't fit together. The metaphor might get the shorthand name as follows:

CONFLICT is OBJECTS MOVING IN OPPOSITION To EACH OTHER (e.g., a disputant opposing the action of another, blocking the other, having clashing assumptions).

If the nature of conflict is emotions, thoughts and behavior - all of which are objects in some kind of oppositional motion - then mediation is the process of altering this motion. The logic of physical movement is repeatedly used metaphorically:

INTERESTS ARE FORCES; STRONG INTERESTS ARE STRONG FORCES (e.g., interests motivate people, are "silent movers").

NEEDS ARE FORCES MOVING OBJECTS IN A DEEP CONTAINER (e.g., needs are hidden deep inside, drive people's actions, should be discussed at deep enough level).

ISSUES, ATTITUDES ARE FORCES THAT MOVE DISPUTANTS (e.g., issues and attitudes drive the discussion, move disputants in a direction, to dead ends, through impasses).

DISPUTANTS ARE FORCES THAT MOVE THINGS (e.g., disputants move themselves beyond the old, move forward, move towards agreements, or away).

MEDIATORS ARE FORCES THAT MOVE THINGS (e.g., mediators move with their clients, move the process along, nudge the focus, put interests and options where they can be seen, probe for information, push or even prod disputants to be more clear, press them to consider other points of view).

All of this mediators do, but with the proviso that they advise and lead in a neutral, balanced way, avoid imposing settlements by not being coercive or overly directive and certainly not try to compel something.

"True change cannot be *forced,* so the mediator will only support the parties' efforts and help open doors for them to consider whether they wish to enter."

How Metaphors of Moving Help?

We have already seen that interests are metaphorically understood as objects contained and often hidden, but clearly seen with the proper orientation or point of view. Metaphors of movement, combined with metaphors of terrain and of seeing, form a kind

of mental space or territory where retrospective and prospective action can be conceived. When disputants see things in a new way their positions often change. This is our everyday understanding of how one can see different things from different locations, and this ties together terrain, seeing and moving to give a more complex metaphorical understanding. The logic is contained in the metaphors of physical seeing and movement (not in psychological knowledge of how thinking actually occurs) and communicate a complicated process to students of conflict resolution. But it has limitations, as discussed later.

Metaphors of moving include an implicit pattern of starting from an initial location, proceeding along a path, and heading for a destination. This has been referred to in the literature of conceptual metaphor theory as a source-path-goal schema (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). But journeying metaphors are required to give this schema enough specificity to conceive action fully.

Metaphors of Journeying
Besides affording an explanatory context for action, force and causation, movement metaphors, as just described, contain within them the elements of a journey - movement from a starting point to a destination, along a path. We have learned through everyday experience that a path implies a channel or route on which to continue to a destination or goal. We also know that starting and continuing imply specific locations in some known proximity to each other that can be mapped, along with intermediate locations, implying progress along the way to a destination. Step-by-step movement the length of this route is implied. Diverging from this route means that the destination will not be reached or be more difficult to reach. This illustrates an implicit inference structure in the journey metaphor.

Mediators or disputants invoke journeying metaphors when they speak of where they would like to go or where they have been. Likewise when they mention seeking or not seeking certain things, the way to reach their objectives or goals, when mediators try to move parties in one or another direction, when a particular solution or a realistic settlement is mentioned, or when parties have moved to more extreme positions. These and the other examples cited below not only invoke the implications of terrain

metaphors, such as relative locations and distances, but also the sequential pattern that typifies a journey. The story of a conflict or an account of the mediation process can readily be understood metaphorically as a journey. The journey metaphor in some ways "sums up" the other metaphors discussed.

Here are some of the ways that the journey metaphor and its correspondences are specifically invoked in this corpus.

MEDIATION is A JOURNEY:
SELF-DETERMINED (BROAD SCOPE) MEDIATION is AN EXPLORATION OF DISCOVERY (e.g., exploration implies general direction, multiple paths, but not a fixed destination).

MEDIATING is GUIDING A JOURNEY (e.g., mediator is a sort of tour guide on the journey, guiding disputants through the process).

FACILITATIVE MEDIATION is MEDIATOR MAPPING AND GUIDING THE JOURNEY (the Facilitative mediator has the map, but the choices are self-determined by the disputants; e.g., the mission is to enhance communications).

TRANSFORMATIVE MEDIATION is MEDIATOR FOLLOWING DISPUTANTS EXPLORATIONS (the Transformative mediator promotes exploration and leads by following; the map doesn't tell where to go, only what you might look out for).

EVALUATIVE MEDIATION is MEDIATOR ON A MISSION (the Evaluative mediator has a map with a specific destination, a charted route; urges the parties to speed on, avoiding diversion).

MEDIATION is FINDING, FOLLOWING A PATH (e.g., find straightest, narrow path, lurch from impasses, persevere).

DIRECTION OF MEDIATION is CHOICE OF PATH (e.g., a path that meets needs, goes through anger, can be backtracked if necessary).

MEDIATION is OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN THE PATH (e.g., progress impeded, setbacks, roadblocks that parties must get past).

MEDIATION is STEPPING FROM UNOBSTRUCTED POINT TO UNOBSTRUCTED POINT (e.g., take steps along paths that are unobstructed, clear, and not blocked).

MEDIATION is NOT ABANDONING THE PATH (e.g., keep going, not abandon when the going gets rough, but to alter the path if found not to be heading for destination).

How Metaphors of Journeying Help?

If there is a single, overall metaphor it may well be MEDIATION is A JOURNEY. One begins this journey in a direction set by needs and interests and then, having been impeded by conflict, does as any traveler would do - turns back, goes through, over or around, finds an alternate route, or just stays put. An alternate route can take a new direction more worthwhile than the original. Resolution of conflict is the path taken and it is likely to include several intermediate steps. Depending on the type of mediation, disputants more or less actively choose their route, step along roughly in parallel, and assist each other to some degree, but they may not walk side by side. Sometimes they must negotiate difficult turns or maneuvers. A mediator travels such routes regularly and can be a guide. Or, the mediator may actually draw the map and then pull or push the disputants along one of a limited choice of routes.

Now the mental terrain of the conflict and its resolution has been established as a virtual map. By paying attention to these implicit metaphors we may now describe one school that conceives mediation as a journey to a known location on the map, while another sees it as an exploration to find a certain kind of place. In yet another school mediation is an exploration of discovery.

The metaphor clusters discussed so far do not fully capture what one has at the end of the journey. For that metaphors of structuring are needed.

Metaphors of Structuring

Metaphors having to do with structure and structuring involve many of the same implications as the metaphor groups already discussed. But structuring goes further and entails an overall useful design or plan (not just a desirable destination), putting the right pieces in the right place (arranging, matching, fitting, constructing, building, forming, assembling, integrating), according to principles (standards, norms), that balance, link, and attach parts on a foundation solidly and flexibly.

In conflict resolution and mediation, as evidenced in the present corpus, these words are used metaphorically to describe two major areas of concern to mediators. The first is the design and carrying out of the mediation process, itself:

> "To *construct a* different approach to mediation practice, we have to begin with the *underlying basis on which practice rests..."*

The second is the formation of a solid outcome to a given conflict.

> "The mediator... experimenting with the *form* of settlement options... while *tailoring* it to their specific needs and interests."

It is becoming more evident that expert mediators have always been speaking of two groups of containers, two types of terrains, and two parallel journeys. So now as we consider metaphors of structuring, we find structured models of the mediation process in general and the resolution of a given conflict in particular. The metaphors below can be taken in both the general and specific sense:

> A MEDIATION is A STRUCTURED PLAN OR DESIGN (e.g., mediation sessions are designed to produce certain results, the form of settlement is tailored to needs).

> BECOMING A MEDIATOR is DESIGNING OWN MODEL OF THE MEDIATION PROCESS (e.g., forming agendas according to a design, mediators bring a set of skills, strategies, plans).

RESOLVING CONFLICT is BUILDING:

LASTING RESOLUTION is BUILDING ACCORDING TO AGREED PRINCIPLES (e.g., negotiators build settlements, resolution meets disputants' norms, is based on objective criteria).

RESOLVING CONFLICT is PICKING, MATCHING, MEASURING AND FITTING PIECES TOGETHER (e.g., proposals are integrated, key items picked, parts of offers are dovetailed, the mediator matches style to disputants' needs, information is assembled, parts of mediation process fit together).

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT is SOLID, STRONG AND FIRMLY BASED (e.g., lay groundwork, solutions based on rights and interests, seek strong agreements based on firm foundation).

THE ABILITY TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS is To BUILD SOLIDLY, To OPERATE BY PRINCIPLE (e.g., mediators build on solid traditions in field, mediation based on principal of self-determination).

How Metaphors of Structuring Help?

The structuring metaphors found in the expert literature on conflict and mediation all seem to come from physical construction, such as of buildings. These are useful metaphors. Above are shown the entailments of structuring metaphors, including planning and design, building standards, matching, measuring, fitting pieces together to build solidly on a strong foundation. Curiously, other very useful entailments are hardly used at all: e.g., blueprints, weight-baring, and fragility.

The structuring metaphors are the final group considered here and can be seen to reinstate much of the interrelated complexity of actual conflict and real-life mediation that had been stripped away when only container, object and terrain metaphors were used.

Conclusions

This study looks at the conceptual metaphors that underpin expert mediator texts. The proposition is that conceptual metaphors frame what expert mediators say about

conflict and mediation and contain essential but hidden assumptions. They will, in turn, influence mediators' thinking as they mediate. At this descriptive stage of the study such metaphors have been identified and their meanings explained.

Expert mediators appear to use many of the same conceptual metaphors found in other research throughout a variety of English texts. These metaphors project the conventionally understood, concrete, physical aspects of containers, objects, bodily movement and so forth onto abstract, subjective experiences of conflict and the mediation process. We found here that these metaphors are applied repeatedly throughout a representative sample of expert mediator texts.

The inference structures of these metaphors include those of force mechanics, traveling, and building construction. In reality, the processes of conflict and mediation operate literally according to other principles entirely - probably those of physiology, psychology and sociology. By using these metaphors much of the complexity facing mediators is transformed, simplifying ideas of conflict and mediation. Certainly this makes it easier to communicate to less experienced members of the profession. Should these transformations and simplifications be pointed out we suspect that the experts would protest not to mean what their metaphors say. But if the metaphors remain unconscious, the experts' own thinking may actually follow these simplified lines.

What Would the Metaphor-Aware Expert Do Differently?

An expert mediator who knows how conceptual metaphors work would realize that thinking and most communications inevitably depend on them. Literal language just isn't sufficient. But the metaphor-aware expert would compensate for over-simplifications and distortions, and would make the best use of as much metaphoric potency as possible.

Several advantages accrue when expert mediators bring their conceptual metaphors into conscious awareness. It becomes possible to better align meanings expressed literally with those expressed metaphorically. For example, instead of claiming literally that mediation facilitates self-determined outcomes but then contradicting that by describing how the mediator uses *leverage* to *shift* an intransigent

party *from a hard-line position,* the expert might directly admit that forcefulness is best in certain instances. Or, he might realign the metaphor and describe how *stepping stones* can be put in place for the disputant *to climb out* of an *entrenched* position.

In addition, conscious use of metaphor could counteract oversimplification by combining the use of several or the entire network of the seven interrelated conceptual metaphor clusters found here.   For example, mediators are to *locate* and list positions, needs, and interests, *sorting* them into their appropriate category so they can be compared and possibly matched. Knowing now that these represent dynamic systems that container and object metaphors have simplified into things, the mediator can be ready for other, more process-oriented metaphors. And when mediators are described as *looking behind* positions for disputants' true interests, the metaphor-aware expert knows that a viewing metaphor has been invoked. Conscious knowledge of the network of metaphor clusters enables richer discussion. A *terrain* of positions *(in valleys)* can include interests *(on hills)* from which better *routes for travel can* be *mapped.*

All metaphors, as we have seen, have entailments and their own inference structure. But in this corpus, where the metaphors are likely to have been introduced unconsciously, only certain ones are used and others, that are rich with possibilities, are routinely ignored. For example, the process of mediation is understood as a journey for disputants and this entails a means of *transport,* perhaps a *vehicle, within which* disputants move together. Discussing the nature of this vehicle and its use - how one *enters and leaves,* what is found *inside,* coping with close *quarters,* how to *speed* it up or *slow* it down - is consistent with the unconsciously assumed aspects of the metaphor (also see Casonato, 2001). Allusion to any of the extensions just suggested is virtually absent from the expert mediation literature studied.

These possibilities for metaphor awareness and exploitation call for further investigation.

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