

# Review of: "Conceptual oxymoron, oxymetaphor, and oxymetaphonymy: inclusive border and violent inclusion in close-up"

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The author of the article, I believe, has found an under-researched niche of considerable yielding potential. Placing the linguistic phenomenon of oxymoron against the background of studies on conceptual metaphonymy seems a theoretically sound choice, which is well-supported in the article. The hypothesis of the existence of oxymetaphonymy is fully justifiable and justified. Nevertheless, as the article itself states, much further research is needed to confirm and develop oxymetaphonymy as an analytical tool. I view this article as the point of departure for a long and fruitful journey.

The idea of oxymetaphonymy has my full support as does the line of argumentation proposed in the article. Regardless, the following brief comments and suggestions might be found of use by the author:

The definitions cited on p. 3 rely on 'levels' of language use, which is something I would avoid. Although 'levels' have long been a scholar-friendly research tool, they are still little more than just a conceptual metaphorization of actual cognitive processes.

Moreover, what, on p. 3, is called 'the verbal level' functions in a considerably more complex manner than suggested in the text, and viewing 'the verbal level' as a homogeneous single-plane cognitive phenomenon is likely to lead to misinterpretations, as some of the examples analysed in the article themselves show. Without diminishing Gozzi's (1999: 212) contribution, defining 'the verbal level' as "what the words say" seems both a touch too simplistic and neurobiologically unsupportable. The same could be argued about seeing a linguistic unit as either 'an oxymoron at the verbal level' or 'a metaphor at the discourse level'. If an oxymoron is indeed viewed as a cognitive phenomenon, surely, it can involve several domains of operation simultaneously and it can result from the co-operation of several cognitive processes simultaneously (as in, e.g., Tincheva 2022). Formulations such as "an oxymoron that is used as a metaphor" (emphasis added) may further enhance the reader's uncertainty as to whether the author really deals with conceptual metaphors or with literary metaphors.

As far as linguistic 'levels' go, "the level of contradiction/incongruity" (p. 3) does not seem to me the best choice of term. Truly, oxymorons do need to be approached as associated with the text linguistic understanding of coherence (I have in mind only de Beaugrande and Dressler's [1981] cognitive version of text linguistics), which tackles conceptual inconsistency/incongruity. Still, speaking of a separate 'level of contradiction' does not seem fully compatible with cognitive research.

Neither does the claim of “illogical and contradictory description at the verbal level” (p. 3). ‘Illogical’ and ‘contradictory’, I would argue, do not relate to linguistic expression(s) but, rather, to conceptual structure(s). Again, ‘domains of operation’, especially cognitive domains related to cohesion and coherence, seem to me better applicable when oxymorons are concerned and not ‘language levels’.

If ‘domains’ are used in the analysis, conceptual domain scope variations could also help explain some pragmatic peculiarities noted by the article’s author, such as the ones evident in Rudkiewicz’s (2019: 226-228) examples analyzed. Domain expansion, it is my belief, could account for pragmatic/discursive peculiarities to an extent where an ‘illogical’ and ‘contradictory’ oxymoron may turn out to be ‘quite logical’ and ‘not contradictory’ in dependence on interpersonal communicative intent(s).

In that respect, it is my humble opinion that the article could only benefit from not disregarding cognitive research on HUMOR in explaining how and why some oxymorons appear in the first place. I fully support Gibbs’ (2021: 48) claim cited by the author of the article that some oxymorons may be “somewhat oxymoronic” and may lie closer to IRONY. The pragmatic/discursive and humorous effect of an oxymoronic utterance does need to be taken into consideration in order for an oxymoron’s conceptual built to be understood in its complexity.

I fully support the author’s suggestion (p. 3) that, to not “attribute the oxymoronic quality to expressions too easily”, the notion of scalarity needs to be used.

I also fully support the author’s employing (p. 4) the notion of polysemy in the analysis and find it obligatory as far as the issues of how and why some oxymorons appear are concerned. Littlemore’s (2015) theoretical interpretation seems especially significant in that respect.

Mezzadra and Neilson’s assumptions discussed on p. 4-5 could be harmonized with Musolf’s (2006) idea of metaphor scenarios.

I am not completely sure the examples in the two Figures involving ‘exclusion’ and ‘border’, and ‘peaceful approach’ and ‘inclusion’, conceptually speaking, represent exactly hyponymy. Or is it pragmatic metonymy which is being referred to here?

Resolution to the three options listed on p. 8, from my perspective, could depend on findings from research on the career of metaphor (Bowdle and Gentner 2005), and research on ‘online’ vs. ‘offline’ metaphoric uses (Vereza 2021), both of which have to do with degrees of conceptual conventionalization.

I believe the article can only benefit from adopting a view of conceptual metonymy in terms of domain activation/highlighting, domain inclusion, and domain contiguity (as in Barcelona 2011; Dirven and Pörings 2002; Panther and Thornburg 2003; Ruiz de Mendoza 2020; Panther 2022).

And let me include here a last impertinent proposal on my part – an alternative title such as *“Inclusive border” and “violent inclusion”: Conceptual oxymoron, Oxymetaphor, and Oxymetaphonymy*, which would place heavier emphasis on

the article's theoretical contribution of 'oxymetaphonymy'.

I truly look forward to finding out how the author's research on oxymetaphonymy will progress in the future and I do hope his research will extend beyond the boundaries of this article.

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