

Az MTA Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont Szociológiai Intézete
tisztelettel meghívja negyvennyolcadik *Jour fixe* rendezvényére:

Benczes Réka –Ságvári Bence:

Where metaphors really come from

Social factors as contextual influence in metaphorical
conceptualizations of life

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Abstract

According to cognitive linguistics, any particular target domain can be conceptualized by a variety of source domains. Recently, Kövecses (2015) has claimed that when it comes to making sense of life, cultural history plays a pivotal role: the hardships that Hungarians endured throughout their 1,100-year-long history have prompted them to conceptualize life primarily as a battle, challenge and burden, resulting in a more negative mindset toward life, as opposed to American English speakers, who use more positive source domains. We investigated the validity of this claim via a representative survey of 2,594 Hungarian teenagers. Results of the survey are reported in the paper. First, there is an observable shift toward positive conceptualizations of life, which are more reflective of American English preferences of metaphorical usage; we accounted for this shift by the growing influence of a US-dominated global culture. At the same time, this influence is counterbalanced by social factors, in particular education (type of school) and socio-economic status. Second, we have also found that social factors play a significant role in speakers' inclination toward metaphorical usage – inclination and/or ability to verbalize metaphorical conceptualizations is not equally all-pervasive throughout the whole linguistic community, but is curtailed by a) type of school and academic achievement; b) socio-economic status; and c) reading habits.

Key words:

life, Hungarian, conceptual metaphor, social factors, contextual influence



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