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A Note on Interpreting Metaphorical Scenarios : Fear in "The Second Bakery Attack"

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Abstract

Metaphorical meanings emerge through deductive inference via lexical narrowing and broadening (Wilson & Carston, 2006, 2007, 2008). Yoshimura (2014) argued that a similar process underlies interpretation of similarities on other levels as well. This paper extends Yoshimura's argument to scenario metaphors in Haruki Murakami's short story "The Second Bakery Attack" (2001), showing how parallel metaphorical fear scenarios lead readers to recognize a certain degree of the emotion *fear*.

Keywords: relevance theory, lexical narrowing, lexical broadening, abstraction, story-level metaphor

1. Introduction: Inferring metaphorical meanings

In this paper, I show that metaphorical scenarios in fiction can be explained adequately from the relevance-theoretic perspective (Wilson & Carston, 2006, 2007, 2008; Yoshimura, 2014) by demonstrating that inferential adjustment through lexical narrowing and broadening remains key to the abstraction process when interpreting metaphorical utterances on a range of different levels. Applying the ideas of Wilson and Carston and Yoshimura to scenario metaphors (*story-level metaphors* in Yoshimura's terminology), I argue that two parallel metaphorical *fear scenarios* in Haruki Murakami's short story "The Second Bakery Attack" lead readers to recognize a certain degree of the emotion *fear*. In this model, an *ad hoc* fear scenario emerges in each reader's mind that is not necessarily identical to any other reader's scenario.

In the relevance-theoretic view, metaphor is a case of *loose talk*: Understanding metaphors does not require any special cognitive process. Wilson and Carston (2006) claimed that, while lexical narrowing (to a more specific sense) and lexical broadening (to a more general sense) are fundamentally combined in understanding metaphors like (1a), the same combination

permits understanding of non-metaphorical utterances like (1b).

(1) a. Caroline is a *princess*.

  [narrowing] a female royal ⇒ an spoiled, indulged girl, used to special treatment, etc.

  [broadening] an actual princess ⇒ not an actual princess

<div align="right">(Wilson & Carston, 2006, p. 404)</div>

 b. Buying a house is easy if you've got *money*.

  [narrowing] any money ⇒ suitable amount of money

  [broadening] actual money holdings ⇒ possessions such as land and art works with a

        suitable money value

<div align="right">(Wilson & Carston, 2006, p. 409)</div>

According to Wilson and Carston, in understanding (1a), *princess* might be both narrowed to "a spoiled, indulged girl, etc." and broadened to a female who is "not an actual princess." In understanding (1b), "money" might be both narrowed to "suitable amount of money" and broadened to "possessions with a suitable money value."

2. Understanding Story-level Metaphor: Yoshimura (2014)

Yoshimura's recent work (2014) identified three distinct levels of similarity, listed in (2) below, and argued that the concepts of narrowing and broadening are adaptable to all three.

(2) a. Similarity on an object level: typically between two entities

  e.g. Juliet is the sun.

 b. Similarity on a proposition level: typically between two propositions

  e.g. A: What kind of mood did you find the boss in?

   B: The lion roared.

 c. Similarity on a story level: between two stories

  e.g. [Johnny's mother has been anxious about his recent habit of telling lies and has been trying to find a chance to teach him a mild lesson. One day, she noticed that the chocolate kept for his younger brother was missing. She thought that Johnny might have taken it because of his love of chocolate, and asked him whether he knew anything

about it.]

    A (Johnny): I didn't eat the chocolate.

    B (Mother): Let me tell you a story, Johnny. Once upon a time, a shepherd boy, tending his flock not far from a village, liked to amuse himself by crying out "Wolf! Wolf!" His trick succeeded two or three times; the whole village came running to his assistance, only to be laughed at for falling for his ruse. Then, one day, the wolf actually came. The boy cried out in earnest, but his neighbors, thinking he was up to his old tricks, ignored his cries, and the wolf devoured the sheep. What do you think?

    A (Johnny): Sorry, I was wrong. I ate all the chocolate.   (Yoshimura, 2014, p. 1-3)

Yoshimura argued that the abstraction process for recognizing metaphors characterized by Carston (2002) and Glucksberg and Keysar (1990), summarized in (3) below, is applicable not only to object-level metaphors like (2a) above but also to proposition-level and story-level metaphors like (2b) and (2c).

(3) the relevance-guided abstraction process of recognizing metaphors

Our recognition of metaphoricity is caused by the characteristic utterance interpretation pattern: the relevance-guided abstraction process of the vehicle to its newly constructed superordinate category where the vehicle is its prototypical member and the topic, which originally belonged to the intrinsically different category from the vehicle, is also just included as its member.   (Yoshimura, 2014, p. 11)

In the metaphorical utterance in (2a), the vehicle *sun* is abstracted to the non-preexisting superordinate category [sun], where it is the prototypical member. The abstraction process proceeds until the category [sun] also contains the topic *Juliet*. In this way, *Juliet*, which originally belonged to an intrinsically different category, determines the extent and direction of abstraction.

    According to Yoshimura, the same abstraction process underlies understanding of proposition-level and story-level metaphors. In B's utterance in (2b), the vehicle proposition *The lion roared* is abstracted to a superordinate category like *An authority gets angry*. Adjustment of this category through abstraction allows a topic like *The boss rants and raves* to be recovered as a relevant interpretation. In (2c), Johnny (A)'s interpretation of his mother

(B)'s utterance involves processing the abstraction on the story level: the vehicle (the story of a shepherd) is abstracted to a newly constructed superordinate category containing stories of liars undone in the end. The topic is Johnny's own situation.

In the next section, I extend this abstraction process to an entire short story, with the reader taking the place of the hearer of an utterance. I predict that a similar abstraction process occurs in the readers' cognitive environment and stops when the reader comes to the end of the story.

3. Data Analysis

3.1 Linguistic Data: "The Second Bakery Attack"

I chose Haruki Murakami's short story "The Second Bakery Attack" (2001) because it has a unique construction in which two scenario metaphors express the emotion *fear*. The central plot begins with sudden pangs of hunger striking a man (the unnamed viewpoint character "I") and his new wife. "I" tells his wife about an attack he and a friend made on a bakery as a youth. The attack was unsuccessful, and the baker made them listen to an album of Wagner overtures in return for as much bread as they wanted. "I"'s wife concludes that their pangs of hunger are a curse that can only be lifted by an immediate second attack, but as no bakeries are open at 2:30 a.m. they plan to attack a McDonald's instead.

The story contains two interrelated scenarios, the *hunger* scenario and the *underwater volcano* scenario, which proceed in parallel (see Table 1). The hunger scenario is the story's main plot, and the underwater volcano scenario is a kind of vision on the part of the viewpoint character. The scenarios are similar in structure, and the latter can be understood as a

Table 1. Summary of the two scenarios

Hunger scenario (main plot/physical world)	Underwater volcano scenario ("I"'s imagination as a reflection of fear)
"I" and wife are struck by an unbelievable hunger.	"I" has a sudden vision of an underwater volcano.
The hunger reminds "I" of the unsuccessful first bakery attack. Wife argues that the hunger is a curse and proposes a second bakery attack.	The underwater volcano imagery becomes clearer. ⇒ See (5) below as well as Appendix 1, (A)–(C).
The second bakery attack is successful.	(N/A)
The hunger disappears.	The underwater volcano disappears.

reflection of the former. In other words, the hunger scenario can be considered the topic of the metaphor and the underwater volcano scenario the vehicle.

Some extracts from the story are included below. Extracts (4a) through (4c) are from the hunger scenario, repeatedly expressing the idea of hunger. Extract (5) is from the underwater volcano scenario.

(4) a. What reminded me of the bakery attack was an unbearable hunger.

(Murakami, 2001, p. 36)

  b. A few minutes later, the pangs struck with the force of the tornado in *The Wizard of Oz*.

(Murakami, 2001, p. 36)

  c. … I began to think that this was a special hunger, not one that could be satisfied through the mere expedient of taking it to an all-night restaurant on the highway.

(Murakami, 2001, p. 38)

(5) A special kind of hunger. And what might that be?

I can present it here in the form of a cinematic image.

One, I am in a little boat, floating on a quiet sea. *Two*, I look down, and in the water I see the peak of a volcano thrusting up from the ocean floor. *Three*, the peak seems pretty close to the water's surface, but just how close I cannot tell. *Four*, this is because the hypertransparency of the water interferes with the perception of distance.

(Murakami, 2001, p. 38)

Both scenarios resemble Kövecses' *fear scenario* (e.g. 1990, 2005), which has five stages as shown in (6) below.

(6) *fear scenario*

  1. The awareness of danger: The danger produces fear in S (=Subject).
  2. Fear exists inside S:

        S experiences certain physiological effects such as increase in heart rate, dryness in the mouth, sweating, etc.

        The unpleasant feeling dominates S's behavior.
  3. S's attempts to control his fear: S makes an effort not to display fear and/or not to flee.
  4. S loses control over fear.
  5. S flees from the danger: S is safe and feels relieved, Fear ceases to exist.

(Adapted from Kövecses, 1990, p. 79)

The three scenarios are compared in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Murakami's two metaphorical scenarios and the stages of Kövecses' fear scenario

Stages of fear scenario (Kövecses 2005)	Hunger scenario (main plot/physical world)	Underwater volcano scenario ("I"'s imagination as a reflection of fear)
Awareness of danger producing fear	"I" and wife are struck by an unbelievable hunger.	"I" has a sudden vision of an underwater volcano.
Fear exists inside	The hunger reminds "I" of the unsuccessful first bakery attack. Wife argues that the hunger is a curse and suggests a second bakery attack.	The underwater volcano imagery becomes clearer. (See (5) above as well as Appendix 1, (A)–(C).)
Attempts to control fear	The second bakery attack is successful.	(N/A)
Escape from danger producing fear	The hunger disappears.	The underwater volcano disappears.

Recognizing the clear resemblance between Murakami's two scenarios leads the reader to predict that their plots will proceed in parallel, one in the physical world of the story and the other in "I"'s mind. It follows that, in the reader's pragmatic inferential process, the missing third stage of the underwater volcano scenario is complemented by the hunger scenario, linguistically completing all four stages. This inferential process is part of the abstraction process for metaphorical scenarios, which will be clarified in the next section.

3.2 What Is Fear? The Abstraction Process and Metaphorical Scenarios

Before addressing the abstraction process of metaphorical fear scenarios, let us adopt the definition of the emotion *fear*. Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, and O'Connor's (1987) psychological experiments about emotion showed a range of feelings within *fear*, from low levels of fear like *anxiety* and *uneasiness* to extreme levels like *horror* and *terror*, accompanied by *shock*, *negative surprise*, or *panic*. A rough sketch is shown below in Table 3.

Table 3. (Adapted from Shaver et al., 1987)

FEAR	
Low levels of fear	**Extreme levels of fear**
anxiety, uneasiness, etc.	*horror, terror*, etc.

In Murakami's short story, certain expressions directly reveal that the hunger and the underwater volcano are both reflections of fear. Extract (7) below contains several linguistic clues of this type.

(7) While she hunted for more fragments of food, I leaned over the edge of my boat and looked down at the peak of the underwater volcano. The clarity of the ocean water all around the boat gave me an unsettled feeling, as if a hollow had opened somewhere behind my solar plexus—a hermetically sealed cavern that had neither entrance nor exit. Something about this weird sense of absence—this sense of the existential reality of nonexistence—resembled the paralyzing fear you might feel when you climb to the very top of a high steeple. This connection between hunger and acrophobia was a new discovery for me.

(Murakami, 2001, p. 39)

"I" is again seeing his vision of floating on a little boat. His unsettled feeling is connected with expressions linked to hunger, such as "a hollow had opened behind my solar plexus," "a hermetically sealed cavern," "this weird sense of absence" and "this sense of the existential reality of nonexistence." This hunger is, in turn, connected with acrophobia. Acrophobia implies an extreme level of fear, but "I"'s feelings on the boat are described only as "unsettled." Therefore, the two scenarios convey different levels of fear. Roughly following Shaver et al.'s (1987) categorization, the underwater volcano scenario conveys a weaker level like *anxiety*, whereas the hunger scenario conveys a stronger or even extreme level like *horror* (see Table 4 below). This suggests a natural reading of the entire story as a single fear scenario metaphor, with readers inferring a level of fear that fits the combination of the two distinct fear scenarios.

Table 4. Levels of fear in the two scenarios

FEAR	
Low levels of fear	**Extreme levels of fear**
anxiety, uneasiness, etc.	*horror, terror*, etc.
↑	↑
Underwater volcano scenario	Hunger scenario

To summarize, after encountering the lines in (7), readers of this story might abstract the hunger scenario as a topic and construct an *ad hoc* superordinate fear scenario for it. A sample abstraction process might be:

(8) Readers' abstraction process for fear in "The Second Bakery Attack"
    a. Pragmatic inference 1
      Premise 1: "I"'s "unsettled feeling" in the underwater volcano scenario can be categorized as a *fear* linked to a "hollow," a "weird sense of absence" and "the existential reality of nonexistence."
      Premise 2: "Hollow," "weird sense of absence," and "existential reality of nonexistence" can all be connected to the physical feeling *hunger*.
      Conclusion: "I"'s existing feeling of fear in the hunger scenario can be naturally connected to the newly created *ad hoc* feeling of fear in the underwater volcano scenario.
    b. Pragmatic inference 2
      Premise 1: "I"'s fear in the hunger scenario is *fear**, which is constructed via lexical narrowing. "I"'s fear in the underwater volcano scenario is *fear***, also constructed via lexical narrowing.
      Premise 2: *fear** and *fear*** share the same sort of conceptual meaning as concepts like *acrophobia*, which can be linked to an extreme level of fear.
      Premise 3: *fear** can be abstracted and a new *ad hoc* superordinate conceptual category of fear, which includes not only *fear** but also *fear*** as a member, constructed.
      Conclusion: "I"'s fear in the story as a whole is *fear****, which emerges from the abstracted superordinate category of fear.
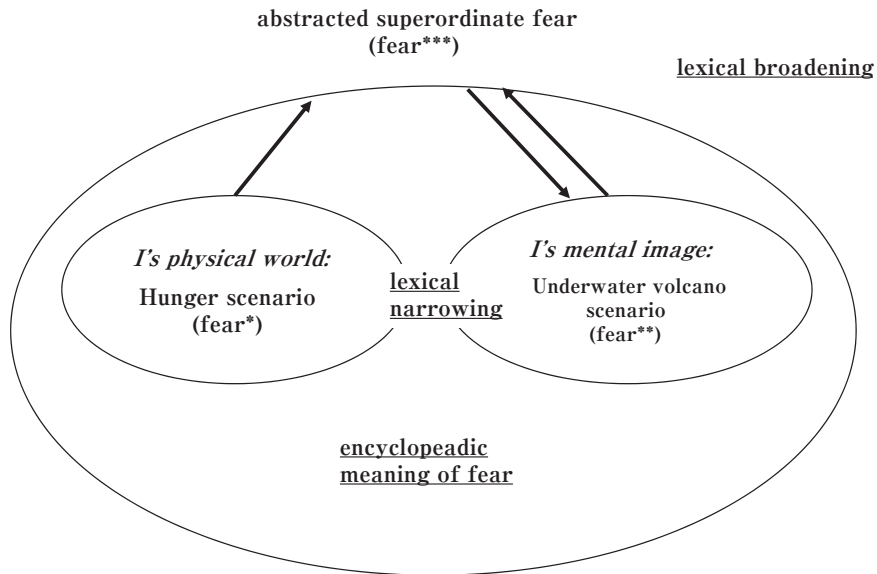
This process is depicted visually in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Abstraction process for construction of fear [***]

3.3 Summary from the Relevance-Theoretic Perspective

It is worth noting that Kövecses' fear scenario is also compatible with the cognitive linguistic framework. This framework views cognition as reliant on the structures of conceptual metaphors, most of which can be reduced to a "*generic is specific* metaphor" form. Drawing on relevance-theoretic analysis of metaphors, I argue that the cognitive linguistic framework is unnecessary because understanding metaphorical scenarios does not necessarily require the cognition of such structures. Wilson (2011) summarized the difference between the two theoretical frameworks as follows:

> [A] central difference is that cognitive linguists see linguistic metaphors as depending on pre-existing cross-domain mappings, whereas relevance theory suggests that cross-domain conceptual mappings may result from repeated use of linguistic metaphors, but are not essential to either the production or the interpretation of metaphors. More generally, relevance theorists see metaphors as arising primarily in linguistic communication, whereas cognitive linguists see them as arising primarily in thought. (p. 210)

Examining the fear scenarios in "The Second Bakery Attack" reveals two reasons in

particular to prefer the relevance-linguistic framework. First, the underwater volcano scenario lacks linguistic data for Stage 3 (attempts to control fear), whereas the hunger scenario linguistically completes all four stages. The underwater volcano scenario's missing third stage is therefore complemented by the hunger scenario. All that is required for this is similarity between the two scenarios, and so readers do not necessarily access Kövecses' fear scenario. Rather, something like Kövecses' fear scenario might or might not emerge as the result of understanding the two parallel scenarios in the story.

Second, and more importantly, in the relevance-theoretic framework, as mentioned above, the cognition of metaphorical structure does not require any special process. Instead, metaphorical understanding mainly involves three pragmatic inferential processes: narrowing, broadening, and implicating. As shown in examples (1a) and (1b), lexical narrowing and broadening are generally important processes when searching for the meanings that the speaker intended to convey through an utterance. They are also important when searching for similarities between two things or events, including the similarity between metaphor topic and vehicle.

The same is true of scenario metaphors, although in this case readers might find more than one topic-vehicle interaction. For example, in addition to the similarity between *hunger* in the hunger scenario and *state of floating in a boat* in the underwater volcano scenario, similarities could potentially be found between *hunger* and *fears like acrophobia*, or *clarity of the ocean water* and *unsettled feeling*. Whatever similarities come to the reader's mind, though, the story can be reduced to three core scenarios: the hunger scenario, the underwater volcano scenario, and an emergent fear scenario.

The "emergent property" issue is an important topic in recent relevant-theoretic studies of metaphor. For instance, Wilson and Carston's (2006) account of the process of understanding the utterance *Caroline is a princess* [= (1)] includes an *ad hoc* concepts created by narrowing and broadening the explicit content. The combination of explicit content with contextual assumptions leads the interpreter to a contextual implication, as shown in (9a)–(9c), where (9a) is the explicit content of the utterance. The asterisk on PRINCESS identifies it as an *ad hoc* concept constructed by narrowing and broadening as shown in (1a).

(9) a. Explicit content: CAROLINE $_X$ IS A PRINCESS*

    b. Contextual assumption: A PRINCESS* IS SPOILED, INDULGED (etc.)

    c. Contextual implication: CAROLINE$_X$ IS SPOILED, INDULGED (etc.)

If *Caroline is a princess* is uttered in response to a question like (10) *Will Caroline help us clear up the flood damage?*, the contextual implication is something like (11c). The *ad hoc* construction of PRINCESS** is based on what is relevant to the interaction, as seen in the connection between (10) and (11b).

(10) Will Caroline help us clear up the flood damage?
(11) a. Explicit content: CAROLINE$_X$ IS A PRINCESS**
    b. Contextual assumption: A PRINCESS** DOESN'T CLEAR UP FLOOD DAMAGE.
    c. Contextual implication: CAROLINE$_X$ WON'T HELP US CLEAR UP THE FLOOD DAMAGE.

According to Wilson and Carston (2006), "contextual implications are drawn on the interpreter's own responsibility and not necessarily attributed as part of a speaker's meaning, [but] if some of the contextual implications are required to make the utterance relevant in the expected way, they would be not only contextual implications but also *implicatures*" (p. 422).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I offer the following rough relevance-theoretic explanation of the process of understanding the two fear metaphors in "The Second Bakery Attack."

The two scenarios develop in parallel with complementary explicit messages and contextual implications. Because interpretation involves finding the path of least effort to contextual implications via the adjustment process, the reader's adjustment process stops when it reaches a relevant (superordinate) fear scenario. The precise contextual implications found may vary from reader to reader. For instance, a reader might recover an implication that the fear in the two scenarios are related to each other through the category *troubles between husbands and wives* or, more generally, *married relationships*. Each reader must infer the author's intention using linguistic clues collected from the two scenarios.

As Yoshimura (2014) observed, the abstraction process is applicable to both metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances with similarities on any of the three levels in (2a)–(2c). I predict that the same process applies to scenarios in fiction—not only metaphors like those as discussed in this paper, but also non-metaphorical similarities in parallel scenarios. However, further discussion of this issue must be left for future studies.[1]

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Acknowledgments

Notes

1) For example, Haruki Murakami's short story "The Elephant Vanishes" also includes two scenarios that proceed in parallel: breaking news in the real world about an elephant in a zoo disappearing, and the main character's thought that the elephant seems to be shrinking (Murakami, 2001). Despite the parallelism of these scenarios in the story, it is uncertain whether a given reader will recognize any conceptual similarity between them. Nevertheless, a certain degree of abstraction might be processed in their cognition.

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Linguistic Data

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Appendix 1. Underwater Volcano Scenario (Extracted from Murakami, 2001)

Before the attack

(A) A special kind of hunger. And what might that be? I can present it here in the form of a cinematic image. *One*, I am in a little boat, floating on a quiet sea. *Two*, I look down, and in the water I see the peak of a volcano thrusting up from the ocean floor. *Three*, the peak seems pretty close to the water's surface, but just how close I cannot tell. *Four*, this is because the hypertransparency of the water interferes with the perception of distance.   (Murakami, 2001, p. 38)

(B) While she hunted for more fragments of food, I leaned over the edge of my boat and looked down at the peak of the underwater volcano. The clarity of the ocean water all around the boat gave me an unsettled feeling, as if a hollow had opened somewhere behind my solar plexus—a hermetically sealed cavern that had neither entrance nor exit. Something about this weird sense of absence—this sense of the existential reality of nonexistence—resembled the paralyzing fear you might feel when you climb to the very top of a high steeple. This connection between hunger and acrophobia was a new discovery for me.   (Murakami, 2001, p. 39)

(C) I took another look at my undersea volcano. The water was even clearer than before—much clearer. Unless you looked closely, you might not even notice it was there. It felt as though the boat were floating in midair, with absolutely nothing to support it. I could see every little pebble on the bottom.   (Murakami, 2001, p. 43)

After the attack (fear is gone)

(D) Alone now, I leaned over the edge of my boat and looked down to the bottom of the sea. The volcano

was gone. The water's calm surface reflected the blue of the sky. Little waves—like silk pajamas fluttering in a breeze—lapped against the side of the boat. There was nothing else.

I stretched out in the bottom of the boat and closed my eyes, waiting for the rising tide to carry me where I belonged. (Murakami, 2001, p. 49)

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