

Stylistic Effect of Metaphorical Use of Prepositions in Fiction.

Case Study: Anne of Green Gables.

Anna Vogel

Department of Swedish Language and Multilingualism

Introduction

This paper concerns the stylistic effect of conventionalized metaphorical use of prepositions, adverbs and particles in literary work. Despite abundant cognitive studies on metaphors in fiction (see e.g. Shopin 2018; Muntean 2017; Senkbeil 2017), only metaphors on higher text levels and metaphorical uses of nouns, verbs and adjectives have been investigated. Given Kövesces' (2010) claim that very conventionalized metaphors tend to go under the radar and make an impact that the reader might not be aware of, this restriction is remarkable. Although there are exceptions, such as Cánovas (2016) and Vogel (2017) who study prepositions in poetry, more studies across periods and genres are needed to understand the effect of metaphorical uses of prepositions, adverbs and particles in fiction.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to show how metaphorical use of prepositions, adverbs and particles may contribute to the stylistic effect in fiction.

Case Study

The Canadian novel *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery (1908) was chosen for a case study, since it complements Cánovas's and Vogel's studies. While those data were high-prestigious poetry for adults, the current data come from a low-prestigious novel for children and tweens.

One of the themes of the novel is how Anne's imagination conflicts with the behaviour that her foster parents and the judgemental village Avonlea expect from her. A part of Chapter 16 was selected, in which Anne has been given permission by her foster mother to ask her best friend Diana to tea.

Theory and Methods

The study takes its starting-point in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) and analyses the data by using MIPVU (Steen et al. 2010) which includes both quantitative and qualitative measures.

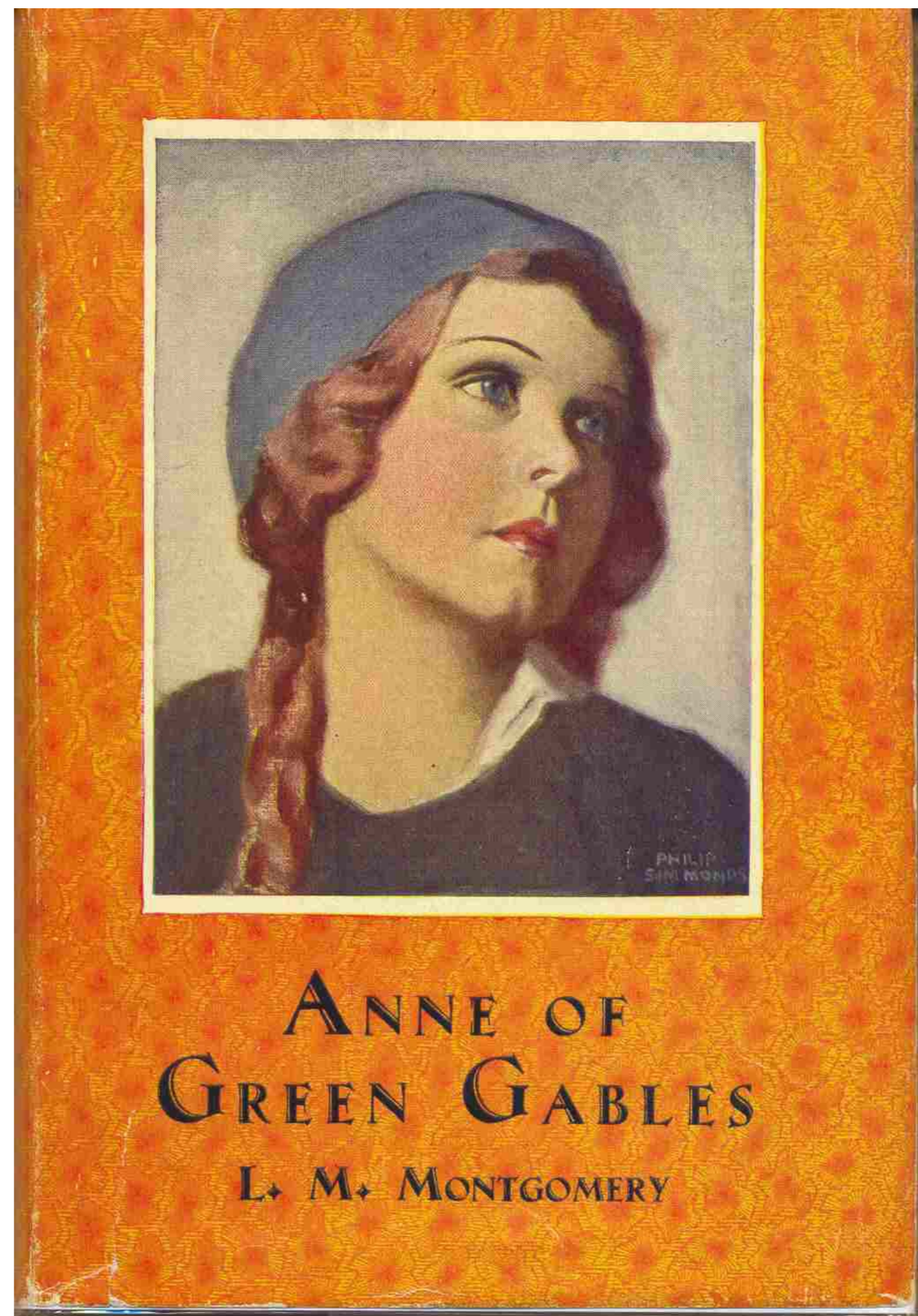
Research questions

- How many metaphorical uses can be found in the text?
- How many of these are expressed by prepositions, adverbs and particles?
- What image schemas do their source domains belong to?
- What effect do the metaphorical uses have regarding the conflict between Anne's imagination and her expected behaviour?

General Findings

Metaphorical uses of prepositions, adverbs and particles are interpreted as contributing to the dramatic conflict between Anne's imagination and her learning to be a housekeeper. Anne's reluctance towards housekeeping can be seen as feminist resistance.

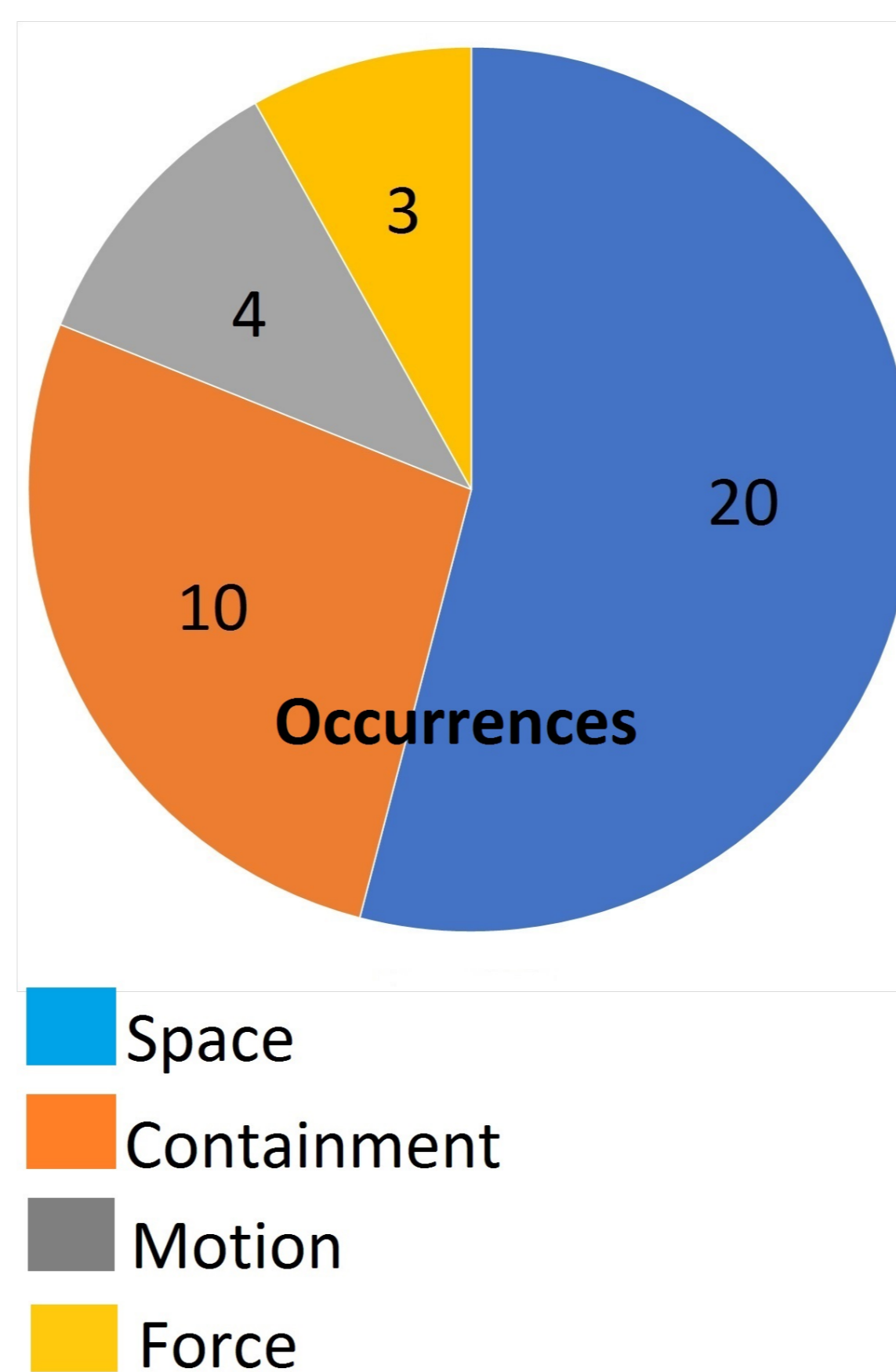
The metaphorical uses conceptualize housekeeping as a CONTAINER, the manner of learning housekeeping as MOTION, and the new knowledge as a BURDEN. Finally the household events and Anne's reactions to them are conceptualized through SPACE. (Since metaphorical uses of SPACE mainly structure TIME, and while time references are quite expected in narratives, these are not reported in detail here.) Imagination, on the other hand, is not conceptualized as any of these structures but rather seems to float around shapelessly everywhere.



Cover from 1934, early British ed., published by George G. Harrap, London. Courtesy of LM Montgomery Institute (Ryrie-Campbell Collection), University of Prince Edward Island

Quantitative Analysis

The text contains 62 metaphorical uses, of which 37 are realised by prepositions, adverbs and particles. The diagram below shows the distribution of these 37 metaphorical uses.



Qualitative Analysis

Metaphorical uses conceptualizing CONTAINMENT show how girls should be "inside" the container of housekeeping.

There is so little scope for imagination in cookery.

The desired behaviour, cookery, is conceptualized as a tight CONTAINER.

Metaphorical uses that draw on MOTION depict Anne's journey towards a housekeeper.

You have to go by the rules.

The PATH, going by (along) something is expressed, but neither the SOURCE, nor the GOAL.

Metaphorical uses conceptualizing FORCE are used to describe the burden of house hold duties:

There are so many responsibilities on a person's mind when they're keeping house, isn't there?

The preposition *on* is here used to describe FORCE, more particularly SUPPORT by the "burden metaphor".

Conclusions

Metaphorical use of prepositions, adverbs and particles contributes to the stylistic effect in fiction by enhancing the dramatic conflict. In particular, this case study has shown that metaphorical uses may underline how things and events are structured, as in:

- containment, e.g. *in*, may express hierarchies.
- motion, e.g. *along*, can be used to stress change.
- force, e.g. *on*, highlight burdens.

The field needs further studies to gain a deeper understanding of the potential and power of metaphorical use of prepositions, adverbs and particles.