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IS THE CONDUIT METAPHOR A REALLY WRONG METAPHOR FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF OUR COMMUNICATION?

SUMMARY

Is the Conduit Metaphor a Really Wrong Metaphor for the Understanding of Our Communication?

The paper briefly presents the main assumptions of the Conduit Metaphor, described by Reddy as the basic model of human communication, which is present in both our thinking about language and in the language we speak itself. Unfortunately, most often we are unaware of this fact. According to Reddy, expressions structured by this metaphor make up, roughly speaking, about 70 per cent of all language expressions we use day-to-day while talking or writing.

At the same time both Reddy and other linguists blame this metaphor for most cases of unsuccessful communication, among other things, due to the fact that it allegedly implies that words and other linguistic expressions contain only fixed meaning independent of context or due to the fact that it allegedly does not demand that the receiver of a message should expend any effort to understand the sender correctly.

The author of the paper tries to defend the Conduit Metaphor, refuting the charges against it by recalling, among other things, the fact that (like other conceptual metaphors) this metaphor may have a lot of particular instantiations that allow us at least to bring into question Reddy's and other linguists' accusations against it.

Key words: communication, metaphor, conduit metaphor, concept, idea, meaning, container, sending, philosophy in the flesh.

STRESZCZENIE

**Czy metafora przewodu rzeczywistości jest złą metaforą na pojmowanie
naszej komunikacji?**

W niniejszym artykule pokrótce opisano główne założenia *metafory przewodu*, przedstawianej przez M. Reddy'ego jako podstawowy model komunikacji międzyludzkiej, obecny zarówno w naszym myśleniu o języku jak i w samym języku, którym się posługujemy. Niestety, najczęściej w ogóle nie zdajemy sobie z tego faktu sprawy. Według Reddy'ego metafora ta daje się odszukać w około siedemdziesięciu procentach wyrażań, które wypowiadamy lub piszemy komunikując się na co dzień z innymi ludźmi.

Jednocześnie i sam M. Reddy, i inni językoznawcy tę właśnie metaforę obarczają winą za większość niepowodzeń komunikacyjnych, między innymi dlatego, że rzekomo implikuje ona obecność stałego znaczenia w używanych przez nas konkretnych słowach i innych wyrażeniach językowych niezależnie od kontekstu lub też dlatego, że rzekomo nie wymaga ona od odbiorcy wypowiedzi żadnego wysiłku związanego z prawidłowym odczytaniem intencji nadawcy.

Autor niniejszego artykułu próbuje bronić *metafory przewodu* przed stawianymi jej zarzutami, przypominając, między innymi, fakt, że metafora ta (podobnie jak inne metafory konceptualne) może mieć bardzo wiele szczegółowych realizacji, które oskarżenia Reddy'ego i innych lingwistów stawiają co najmniej pod dużym znakiem zapytania.

1. The Conduit Metaphor and some of its alleged flaws

Reddy, finishing his paper on the Conduit Metaphor¹, states that it permeates „our language about language” and that expressions structured by this metaphor make up, roughly speaking, about 70 per cent of all language expressions². Despite this fact, he, surprisingly, suggests that the Conduit Metaphor is a faulty mecha-

¹ M. Reddy, *The Conduit Metaphor*, [w:] *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. A. Ortony, Cambridge 1979, s. 284-324. The main assumptions of the Conduit Metaphor are the following: the mind is a container for ideas, ideas (or meanings) are objects, communication is sending, linguistic expressions are containers for ideas-objects, language is a conduit joining people in the act of communication, through which ideas-objects are sent from one person to another. (Cf. T. P. Krzeszowski, *The exculpation of the Conduit Metaphor*, [w:] *Angels and Devils in Hell. Elements of axiology in semantics*, Warszawa 1997, s. 169-176.)

² These are expressions directly based on the Conduit Metaphor. According to Reddy, there is no direct relation to the Conduit Metaphor in the remaining 30 per cent of cases but, as he notices, this absence of direct relation is not quite obvious, because one can say: „Communicate your feelings using simpler words”, meaning the same as „Communicate your feelings in simpler words”. Reddy explains that he himself, while speaking, was trying to choose the variants free from the Conduit Metaphor but it was very difficult for him to act in this way (cf. Reddy, 1979).

nism for regulating human communication, although he does not explain why, in such a case, this metaphor is so common in our language and thought.

Reddy's suggestion is supported also by Lakoff and Johnson³, who agree that the Conduit Metaphor „well fits certain prototypical situations in communication” **only**⁴, for example, when the interlocutors speak the same dialect of a given language, share the same cultural and background assumptions, the knowledge, and other aspects „relevant to the subject matter” (of course, also the same common „ordinary” metaphors). In Lakoff and Johnson's opinion, only when these conditions are met can the meaning be successfully sent in words-containers from the sender to the receiver.

What concerns Reddy's doubts, they mostly seem to result from his opinion that one of the main defects of the Conduit Metaphor consists in the fact that this metaphor makes only the sender of ideas responsible for successful communication:

[You] „Try to **put** each concept into the words very carefully”.

[You] „Try to **pack** more thoughts into fewer words”.

‘**You** still **haven't given** me any idea’ (bold type and brackets supplied).

According to Reddy, the listener / receiver of the message is responsible only for passively taking the meanings out of the words-containers sent to him and he does not have to expend any additional effort to understand what the sender conveys.

In such a case, Reddy explains, the Conduit Metaphor must be a faulty model of communication because – if it assumes that the receiver of the message does not put any energy into the process of communication, but only passively receives what is sent to him – the whole process does not comply (with what Reddy erroneously associates) with *the second law of thermodynamics*, which „states that if left to their own devices, all forms of organization always decrease in time”⁵, and so „human communication will almost always go astray unless real energy is expended”⁶. In other words, communication problems arise because we communicate according to the Conduit Metaphor model, which is faulty.

3 G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago and London 1980, s. 11-12.

4 Cf. T. P. Krzeszowski, *The exculpation of the Conduit Metaphor*, [w:] *Angels and Devils in Hell. Elements of axiology in semantics*, Warszawa 1997, s. 169-176.

5 Actually, Newton formulated this law in a different manner, stating, in short, that „the rate of change of momentum of a moving body is proportional to the force acting to produce the change” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. J. Pearsall, New York 1998).

6 M. Reddy, 1979, s. 295. Cf. T. P. Krzeszowski, 1997, s. 170.

To improve the process of communication, Reddy suggests looking at it through another metaphor, which he calls the „toolmakers paradigm”. This metaphor describes a situation where the senders and the receivers of messages live in isolated, totally different environments („compounds”), being engrossed in producing gardening tools. They cannot send any material objects (complete tools) to each other but only instructions on how to make these objects, and this is the only way in which they can communicate. On the basis of these instructions, tools very different from the original ones are produced, for instance, instead of a rake a hoe is manufactured. Only when instructions are replaced by iconic images of the things that are to be produced, are the results better.

Reddy explains that the way the toolmakers communicate forces them, as recipients of messages, to invest much more effort into understanding and reconstructing the tool in accordance with the senders’ intentions. The conclusion is that unsuccessful communication can only be counteracted by „continuous effort and by a large amount of verbal interaction”⁷. According to Reddy, the „toolmakers paradigm” – because it forces the recipient of the message to expend effort – is consistent with *the second law of thermodynamics*, contrary to the Conduit Metaphor.

2. A defence of the Conduit Metaphor⁸

Krzeszowski demonstrates that the arguments presented by Lakoff and Johnson, as well as by Reddy himself, are inappropriate because they approach the Conduit Metaphor „at a very high level of schematicity”⁹. They present its constituent concepts as very schematic entities, whereas the truth is that OBJECT, CONTAINER and SENDING „can be instantiated by an enormous number of more specific concepts”.

For example, the possible instantiations of the concept CONTAINER can be „/box/, /parcel/, /pocket/, /jar/, /glass/ and endless others”. So, the Conduit Metaphor’s communicative usefulness can be examined only after considering various possible instantiations of its constituent parts, „inasmuch as specific details characterising various kinds of containers [and other constituent concepts of the Conduit Metaphor] may contribute to our understanding of what happens when

⁷ M. Reddy, 1979, s. 295.

⁸ See also M. Nasiadka, *Some Arguments Provided by Lakoff, Johnson, Turner and Direct Experience in Support of the Conduit Metaphor*, „Anglica. Explorations in Language”, t. 18, red. J. Welna, Warszawa 2009a.

⁹ T. P. Krzeszowski, 1997, s. 171.

a thing is put into a container and of the impact that the container may have on the thing contained in it"¹⁰. When the container is inappropriately chosen (e. g., instead of being a rigid box it is a soft carton) and, as a result, its content undergoes some reshaping while being sent, much effort on the part of the receiver is needed to reconstruct the original content, and if effort is needed on the receiver's part, it cannot be claimed that he is passive.

Therefore, the alleged passiveness of the receiver as the reason for unsuccessful communication according to the Conduit Metaphor model must be rejected. In such a case, it must be acknowledged that *the second law of thermodynamics* is not violated by the Conduit Metaphor. On this ground Reddy's argument about the inappropriateness of the Conduit Metaphor as a model of human communication must be rejected too. Consequently, apart from CONTAINER, the concepts of OBJECT and SENDING, the other source domains in the submetaphors of the Conduit Metaphor, may also be understood less schematically and thus fit many more different situations than those listed by Lakoff and Johnson.

SENDING, for example, can be instantiated as /mailing/, /offering/, and /selling/ as well as by some other actions like *flinging*, *slinging*, *throwing*, *hurling*, *bouncing off* in „**fling/sling/throw** mud at somebody, **hurl** curses at somebody... **bounce** words **off** each other", etc.¹¹, which, too, may be one of the reasons for the **deformation of the intended message**.

Similarly, OBJECTS (IDEAS) at a less schematic level can be instantiated as /food/, /people/, /products/, /commodities/, /resources/, /money/, /liquids/, /curses/, and many others. All this must entail vital consequences for communication, for instance, the amount of the receiver's effort will depend very much on the character of the sending and the ideas sent.

It is very surprising that Lakoff and Johnson, while distinguishing numerous different instantiations of the same metaphor (e. g., IDEAS ARE PEOPLE, PLANTS, PRODUCTS, COMMODITIES, RESOURCES, MONEY, FASHIONS¹²) at the same time do not notice the fact that also the Conduit Metaphor's general concepts will have a variety of more particular realisations. As a result, they inevitably come to some strange or even faulty conclusions. For example, they claim that „the LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS FOR MEANING. Aspect of the CONDUIT metaphor **entails that words** and sentences **have meanings** in themselves, **independent of any context or speaker**. The MEANINGS ARE OBJECTS part... entails that **meanings** have an existence **independent of**

¹⁰ Ibidem, s. 171, brackets supplied.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, s. 175.

¹² Cf. G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, 1980, s. 47.

people and contexts. ...LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS ARE CONTAINERS FOR MEANING entails that words (and sentences) have meanings, again independent of contexts and speakers”¹³.

Lakoff and Johnson fail to see that the examples they quote (cf. also the examples given by Krzeszowski, 1997) show something contrary to what they claim, as these examples testify that the Conduit Metaphor does not demand at all that words should have meanings independent of any context or speaker, or that meanings (IDEAS, OBJECTS) should have an existence independent of people and contexts (cf. also Reddy’s examples, e. g., „Martha’s poem is so sloppy” or „The Old Man and the Sea”¹⁴). This is also noticed by Krzeszowski¹⁵: „none of the source domains entails that IDEAS metaphorized as OBJECTS must be rigid, inflexible, and unchanging”. Consequently, the Conduit Metaphor **does not** entail that ideas, metaphorized as objects, „have an existence independent of people and contexts”, either, as Lakoff and Johnson argue. Instead, it allows for many varieties of source domain objects, which sometimes are soft and sometimes hard, sometimes have fixed and sometimes changing shapes; they can also be made of different materials. The same concerns the other concepts building the Conduit Metaphor.

Lakoff and Johnson’s mistake lies in the fact that they express their judgement about the applicability / inapplicability of the Conduit Metaphor in communication ignoring the less schematic instantiations of the concepts forming the source domains in the submetaphors of the Conduit Metaphor. As Krzeszowski¹⁶ puts it, showing the invalidity of the Conduit Metaphor requires demonstrating that the source and target domains in all submetaphors of the Conduit Metaphor are really represented by highly schematic instantiations.

With regard to Reddy’s objection concerning the nonconformity of the Conduit Metaphor with *the second law of thermodynamics* – even if accepted in the form presented by him – communication structured by the Conduit Metaphor is not necessarily doomed to fail. Just as Reddy’s interpretation of the second law of thermodynamics is not quite correct, his conclusions relating to this metaphor in this context are also a little wrong.

Firstly, it must be underlined that the receiver of words-containers with meaning, in fact, undertakes some effort already at the stage of „unpacking” the

¹³ Ibidem, s. 10-13, bold type supplied.

¹⁴ These are examples of metonymy, where: *poem* = 1. a poetic work, 2. emotions aroused while Martha is reading a poem (1); *The Old Man and the Sea* = 1. the title of a book, 2. a certain symbolic picture. Both of Reddy’s examples, in different circumstances, may have different meanings. Therefore, Lakoff and Johnson’s claims that the Conduit Metaphor involves meanings independent of contexts and speakers is false from the very beginning.

¹⁵ T. P. Krzeszowski, 1997, s. 173.

¹⁶ Ibidem, s. 176.

meaning. So, it cannot be assumed that the receiver is completely passive. Independently of the kind of container, the container's content, and the conduit, the receiver must expend some energy, at least to collect the container and to open it. Thus, the whole „system” is not totally deprived of energy. Even without stepping down to less schematic levels of the Conduit Metaphor, it can be easily proved that the system remains in balance and that communication in compliance with the Conduit Metaphor can be effective. This fact, however, has never been discussed in any research on the Conduit Metaphor and Reddy himself ignores it too.

Secondly, Reddy's condition concerning the conservation of energy by the system is met even earlier than at the stage of unpacking the meaning container by the receiver. A careful look at the examples quoted above („Try to put each concept into the words **very carefully**”, „Try to **pack more thoughts** into fewer words”) will reveal that this condition is met already by the sender: it is him who expends energy from the very beginning of the process of communication, thus nourishing the system. If he fails to communicate, he usually undertakes another attempt (e. g., when he hears from the receiver: *You still haven't given me any idea*, he tries again). So, logically, even if it were the case that the receiver of a container with meaning does not expend any energy (but he, in fact, does) the Conduit Metaphor would still be consistent with the second law of thermodynamics, even in the form presented by Reddy.

Thirdly, direct examples can also be found that Reddy's objection to the Conduit Metaphor that one of its weaknesses is making only the sender responsible for successful communication is generally out of place: the receiver of meaning containers really does something to preserve the energy of the system, that is he does expend energy to find the right meaning. The following examples show this:

You **are not** trying to get **my** ideas **at all!** (The speaker assumes that normally people do!)

You **never** look carefully **for what** I want to convey to you! (As above)

I'm **putting** much **effort in** getting the idea of your poem.

„Let me know if **you find** any coherent ideas in the essay”. (Because it is obvious that you should try to find some¹⁷.)

Tell me, please: What is the main idea that **can be found in** this novel?

It clearly results from these sentences that the Conduit Metaphor **imposes the obligation of expending some energy also on the receiver** to find the right

¹⁷ This example is quoted after M. Reddy, 1979.

content of words / sentences. So, the alleged incompatibility of the Conduit Metaphor with the „second law of thermodynamics” is out of place: the Conduit Metaphor is compatible even with the law as presented by Reddy.

In the light of this discussion it should be stressed, however, that Reddy is right when he claims that energy has to be expended if communication is to be successful. And it appears that the Conduit Metaphor meets this condition very well.

3. Why is not our communication successful?

Now, when we have tried to prove that the Conduit Metaphor as a mechanism structuring our communication can prove effective, especially in less schematic communicational situations (that is in more real-life communication), it would be advisable to try to answer the question posed by Reddy¹⁸: *Why are there problems with (un)successful communication and the interlocutors often find it difficult to understand each other?*

The discussed Lakoff and Johnson's work, the works by the other authors referred to in this paper, as well as our own research¹⁹, allow us to draw the conclusion that the meaning of words, phrases and sentences is both fixed²⁰ and malleable²¹ at the same time, since the „agreed on” meaning of a particular word, phrase or sentence can be modified and rebuilt depending on the circumstances and the level at which the matter is approached. Lakoff and Johnson's demonstration of the relativity of truth (e. g., when it comes to colour evidence – colours both are and are not there in the real world²²) due to the different levels of human perception (neurophysiology, the cognitive unconscious, phenomenological experience) can be referred to here, as it shows how it is possible to perceive the same concept from quite different perspectives.

¹⁸ M. Reddy, 1979.

¹⁹ Cf. M. Nasiadka, *The Nature of Meaning and Its Relation to the Model of Communication Based on the Conduit Metaphor*, „Komunikacja Specjalistyczna” 2009, t. 1, red. S. Szadyko, Warszawa, 2009b, s. 37-52.

²⁰ Cf. K. Hejwowski, *Kognitywno-komunikacyjna teoria przekładu*, Warszawa 2009, s. 49; H. Hörmann, *To mean – to understand. Problems of psychological semantics*, Berlin 1981.

²¹ G. Backman, *Meaning by Metaphor. An Exploration of Metaphor with a Metaphoric Reading of Two Short Stories by Stephen Crane*, Doctoral Thesis at Uppsala University. Textgruppen i Uppsala AB, 1991.

²² G. Lakoff, and M. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*, New York 1999. The authors remind us that from the point of view of a physicist colour properties of objects are just our optical illusion being a result of the fact that objects reflect only particular wavelengths.

The above claim about the nature of meaning appears justified even more if we understand meanings of words not as wholes but rather as sets of „semantic features”, some building blocks used to form a particular complex meaning conveyed by a given word²³. It will often happen that two different people (as individual cases of embodiment, with different experiences and cognitive unconscious²⁴) will compose a particular complex meaning of different numbers of such semantic features or even will use different words-containers for similar sets of such features. This can be observed, for instance, when two different translators are translating a foreign language text and each of them is presenting a slightly different interpretation of the original, but the general „whole” meaning, the core, is, more or less, the same in the translations. Such differences between the „whole” meanings, however, may result in some communication problems.

In addition, what is sent in words-containers may, for various reasons (like it happens with physical objects), fail to reach the intended target, that is the receiver. If this happens, it is either the receiver (if he fails to grasp the meaning) or the sender (if the idea goes past or over the receiver’s head) to blame for the state of things. Sometimes, however, it is the circumstances that are responsible for a communication failure. In Lakoff’s words: „problems with understanding may arise when an idea is *slippery* or when someone *throws too many things at you at once*, or when someone throws you a curve. When a subject is too difficult for you to understand, it is seen as being *beyond your grasp*”²⁵. The „slipperiness” of an idea results in the fact that it is difficult to hold the idea firmly. It may be, for example, slimy and this does not depend either on the sender or the receiver. The only thing they can do is to make some common effort to try to eliminate this unwelcome property of the idea.

There may also appear conditions that can be only partly controlled by the interlocutors. For instance, if a sender „throws too many things” at a time he may be forced by someone or something to act in this manner. It may happen that there is a necessity for a quick sending of many ideas at a time, in case of, say, a terrorist attack or any other emergency. When the receiver gets too many ideas at a time, he may have some difficulties with „grasping” or „getting” them.

Things are different when someone „throws you a curve”. He can do this either on purpose or because he lacks the skill of „throwing things straight”. In both cases, however, his way of action can be improved: he can stop the purposeful throwing of curves and learn the skill of throwing things straight. As a result, his communication will become more successful. Little can be done if something

²³ Cf. G. Backman, 1991.

²⁴ Cf. G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, 1999.

²⁵ Ibidem, s. 240. Cf. also T. P. Krzeszowski, 1997.

is „beyond your grasp”, unless you undertake some nonstandard steps, such as making use of some special devices or help of a third party.

A number of other reasons for successful or unsuccessful communication can be added to the above. For example, after expending much effort, we finally get an idea. The necessity for making this effort can mean that the „subject was too hard to be grasped” at once. There may also be a contrary situation: we can grasp ideas one after the other without much effort. This may result from the fact that „the subject is light” and to *catch* it does not demand effort at all. The sending of ideas in an act of communication (seen through the Conduit Metaphor) will be also unsuccessful if the conduit through which the ideas are sent is faulty (e. g., with holes) and what is sent leaks out. As a result, the receiver does not get the ideas intended for him and cannot understand the intension of the sender.

Such examples show that the causes of unsuccessful communication can be easily and quite precisely identified with the help of the Conduit Metaphor and be either completely or partly eliminated in real communication situations. The task is easier when unsuccessful communication results from the interlocutors’ negligence (e. g., throwing curves) and more difficult when the causes are external and do not depend on the participants of the communication act (e. g., in the case of slippery ideas).

4. Some instantiations of the Conduit Metaphor

Reddy, the „father” of the Conduit Metaphor, gives a great number of examples of this metaphor’s dwelling in our language, some of which have been quoted above.

This part of the paper gives more instantiations of the metaphor identified in two novels, a social and a poetic one, written in the English language: *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë and *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa. The examples demonstrate that the Conduit Metaphor successfully defends itself even at the macroscopic level of words and whole utterances, and that we do not need to go too far into a microscopic analysis of the quoted texts (to the level of „meaning features”).

Before examining these examples, to understand them properly, we should recall the following: the human mind is constructed in such a way that it perceives things in a pictorial way, using images, scenes, schemas and gestalts²⁶. Such is the

²⁶ Cf. G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, 1980, s. 77-86; K. Hejwowski, 2009, s. 49; R. Schank, 1982a, 1982b; Ch. J. Fillmore, 1977.

case with both static concepts and with motor activities. When the motor activities that we (are to) undertake are considered, our minds seem to act as if they were simulators or virtual realities where any situation can be „prearranged” and carried out as if on a screen. As a result, we can see in our minds a particular activity „being done” by us before the activity has even physically started – we can imagine and trace in our minds the consecutive stages of doing or making something. For example, when I say *I'll make a cake* I simultaneously see the particular stages of the whole action in my mind: I mix the ingredients, keep the cake in the oven, etc. Sometimes such imagining or „tracing” is a long process, like in the following example: „He [the photographer] jogs by it [the Rhine River] every day, but **it took him three days to form just the right image for a photograph in his mind**”²⁷, that is before he actually took the photograph.

The Conduit Metaphor model of communication also seems to be a result of the above facts. Objectified words, concepts, knowledge, information, etc. are really perceived by us as being there in the containers of our minds and undergoing various processes: we can collect them, form, send, hide and give them, hammer them out, take something out of them, put something into them and so on (cf. the other examples mentioned in this paper). This way of thinking about communication, as well as about other activities realised by us, is preconditioned by our physical experience of the physical world. The examples presented below, taken from real texts, are intended to illustrate this.

They are divided into three main groups: **A**, **B** and **C**. Group **A** includes examples of sentences and phrases directly related to the Conduit Metaphor: subgroup **A-I** lists cases where the *container* character of the human mind and of linguistic expressions is explicit; subgroup **A-II** shows examples where *ideas* are explicitly perceived as *things* or *communication* is seen as *sending* things. Group **B** includes cases only implicitly connected with the Conduit Metaphor: subgroup **B-I** gathers examples with the *inferred container*²⁸ element and subgroup **B-II** comprises phrases where the submetaphors *ideas are things* or *communication is sending* can be inferred.

²⁷ Newsweek, March 19, 2001, s. 63.

²⁸ For example, „to have feelings” in the phrase *So that everyone can have pleasant feelings about nature* implies that everyone can have „feelings” only **inside** himself, that is everyone is a container for feelings. „Scary headlines”, in turn, in *The scary headlines last week were not a media contrivance*, are signals sent by the media **conveying scary ideas** and so on.

GROUP A. SUBGROUP A-I.

A-I.1. Examples from *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa

- *The widower was so full of questions that I half expected him to ask for an identity card.* (p. 7)
- *The book feels heavy with voices from the past – a connection to Mother and Grandma Kato I did not know existed.* (p. 46)
- *If I search the caverns of my mind, I come to a collage of images...* (p. 50)
- *His roll-top desk sits in my memory in the centre of the basement...* (p. 52)
- *Speech hides within me, watchful and afraid.* (p. 58)
- *I am filled with a strange terror and exhilaration.* (p. 58)
- *Questions are meaningless.* (p. 66)
- *It [the darkness] rushes unbidden from the mouths of strangers and in the taunts of children.* (p. 69-70)
- *They [the sharp stabs] come at unexpected times, in passing remarks, in glances, in jokes.* (p. 201)
- *...memories alive in their minds.* (p. 235)
- *'If these matters are sent away in this letter, perhaps they will depart a little from our souls', she writes. For the burden of these words, forgive me.* (p. 236)
- *Unless the stone bursts with telling, unless the seed flowers with speech, there is in mind no living word.*

A-I.2. Examples from *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë

- *... all the sage reflections and good resolutions I had forced my mind to frame...* (p. 13)
- *...their shallow minds can hold no great ideas...* (p. 85)
- *It [the thought] seemed to dwell continually on her mind...* (p. 89)
- *I... had rightly kept revolving in my mind some pretext for another call.* (p. 90)
- *I make no empty promises, but you shall see.* (p. 92)
- *...nothing were on his mind...* (p. 163)
- *...every page stuffed full of railing accusations, bitter curses...* (p. 184)
- *...those disagreeable reminiscences of his former life – I wish I could blot them from my memory...* (p. 216)
- *...I earnestly wish I could banish the thoughts of them from your mind...* (p. 273)
- *His letters... are... full of trivial excuses and promises that I cannot trust...* (p. 219)
- *...how many of my thoughts and feelings are gloomily cloistered within my own mind...* (p. 243)

- ...I **revolving in my mind** the best **means** of politely dismissing my companion. (p. 327)
- If there be **power in words...** against cool impudence... (p. 332)

GROUP A. SUBGROUP A-II.

A-II.1. Examples from *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa

- That's the one sure-fire **question** I always **get from strangers**. (p. 7)
- The **connection** is full of **static sounds** and I press the receiver hard against my ears. (p. 9)
- But Obasan **gave me no answers**. (p. 26)
- ...we'll **pass our anger down** in our genes... (p. 36)
- ...to **give knowing to** somebody... (p. 56)
- Oh, if there were some way of **getting news**... (p. 83).
- The last ruling forbids any of us... to go anywhere in this wide dominion without a **permit from the Minister of Justice**. (p. 88)
- We can only **get information** verbally. (p. 93)
- She **called** them 'filthy Japs' **to their faces** and Fumi **gave her what for** and had a terrible scrap with her... (p. 99)
- She heard about a place in Revelstoke, **got word to her husband** and he came to see her... (p. 101)
- I **phoned him the news** earlier and he said he would drive up from Coaldale. (p. 182)
- ...he **had no words** of comfort **to offer**... (p. 182)
- It matters to **get the facts straight**... (p. 183)
- There is no **word from Mother**. (p. 200)
- She was very ill and refused to **give her name**. (p. 212)
- 'If these **matters** are **sent away in this letter**, perhaps they will **depart** a little **from our souls**', she writes. For the burden of these words, forgive me. (p. 236)
- Obasan and Uncle hear your request. They **give me no words from you**. (p. 242)

A-II.2. Examples from *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë

- When we were together last, **you gave me** a very particular and interesting **account** of your early life, previous to our acquaintance, and then **you requested a return of confidence** from me. ...I declined, under the plea of having nothing to tell... (p. 10)
- ...I am about **to give him** a sketch – no not a sketch – a full and faithful **account** of certain circumstances connected with the most important event of my life... (p. 10)

- ...her father intends to call upon her soon, to **offer** some pastoral **advice**... (p. 14)
- [She was] bustling out of the room, under pretence of household business, in order to **escape** the **contradiction** that was trembling **on my tongue**. (p. 14)
- I **gave** her some useful **pieces of information**, however, and several excellent receipts... (p. 15)
- We seemed, indeed, to be..., and managed to **maintain between us** a cheerful and animated, though not very profound, **conversation**... (p. 26)
- ...the Wilsons, who testified that neither their **call** nor the Millwards' had been **returned** as yet. (p. 28)
- ...[She] explained... the **reasons** she had **given** for neglecting to **return their calls**... (p.40)
- ...I am the last person you should **apply to for information** respecting Mrs Graham. (p. 40)
- **Take my word** for it, you will [repent it]. (p. 45)
- ...his mother would always follow and trudge beside him... to see that I **instilled** no objectionable **notions into his infant mind**... (p. 51)
- ...my little neighbour was **exchanging** a few **words** with Miss Wilson... (p. 67)
- ...he spared a moment to **exchange a word** or a glance with his companion now and then... (p. 69)
- ...Mrs Wilson... bending forward, evidently in the **delivery of** some important, confidential **intelligence**... (p. 84)
- I hate talking where there is no **exchange of ideas** or **sentiments**, and no good given or received. (p. 85)
- ...within these last few days: you haven't a good **word for anybody**... (p. 110)
- ...I was curious to know what sort of an **explanation** she would have **given me**... (p. 124)
- I told you I would not **give it** [my explanation]. (p. 125)
- ...if you intend to refuse him, **give me** your **reasons**... (p. 138)
- He protested he had never **given it a thought**... (p. 175)
- ...[he] **poured forth** the following **complaints into my ear**... (p. 183)
- Lowborough's going to **give us a speech**. (p. 190)
- ... he could **give** but poor **account** [when asked]... (p. 196)
- ... I... **received his revelations** in the silence of calm contempt... (p. 208)
- ... what **encouragement** can I **give you**? (p. 223)
- ...if I ever **give a thought to another** [woman], you may well spare it... (p. 234)

- ...to **give joy to somebody**... (p. 240)
- She never **gives him a word** of reproach or complaint... (p. 258)
- ...I would not stay to enquire or suffer him **unburden his sorrows to me**. (p. 261)
- ...I endeavoured to impress her strongly with the notion of Arthur's redeeming qualities... **she received** all such **intimations** coldly... (p. 264)
- ...I have had no leisure to **pass any comments upon them** till now. (p. 269)
- ...I purpose to **give her a little advice**... (p. 285)
- ...**he** [began] to **pour forth** the most unequivocal **expressions** of earnest and passionate love... (p. 327)
- ...**exchanging** a few **words** of the coldest civility... (p. 327)
- ...my cheek glowed like a fire, it was rather at the **question** than the information it **conveyed**... (p. 329)
- ...she would **give me** a quiet **intimation**... when she had reason to believe he was about... (p. 331)
- I heard high **words exchanged** between him and his half-inebriated host... (p. 351)

GROUP B. SUBGROUP B-I.

B-I.1. Examples from *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa

- The **word is** stone. I hate the stone. I hate the **sealed vault** with its cold icon. (Prologue)
- Then, as if to **erase his thoughts**, he rubs his hands vigorously over his face... (p. 3)
- Love, like the coulee wind, **rushing through** her **mind**, whirring along the tips of her imagination. (p. 8)
- Hush, hush, my dear! your brother **has** no such **idea!** (p. 13)
- 'This house', Obasan says as if she has **read mind**. (p. 15)
- **From** a few **things** Obasan has **told** me, I wonder if the Katos were ever really a happy family. (p. 20)
- He had no provisions nor did he **have** any **idea** where the gunboats were herding him and the other Japanese fishermen. (p. 21)
- I did not have, I have never had, the key to the **vault of her thoughts**. Even now, I **have** no **idea** what urgency prompts her to explore this attic at midnight. (p. 26)
- The **shouting inside** me communicates to everyone. (p. 26)
- No prodding will **elicit clues** [out of her]. (p. 45)
- Her **voice is full of curiosity and amusement** at this cleaning and she makes mock cries of alarm at my dirtiness. (p. 49)
- If you're bitter, be bitter. **Cry it out!** (p. 50)

- She **has no idea** of what's going on and I think she may not survive. (p. 98)
- The **memories** are dream **images**. A pile of luggage **in a large hall**. (p. 112)
- He stands beside the coffin and begins to say a long **prayer full of words I do not understand**. (p. 128-129)
- ...the **message to disappear worked its way deep into the Nisei heart and into their homelands**. (p. 184)
- Sam, he was a clever man. Never once said a **bitter word**. (p. 225)
- For the **burden of these words**, forgive me. (p. 236)

B-I.2. Examples from *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë

- I was going to tell you an important piece of news I heard there - I've been **bursting with it** ever since. (p. 11)
- ...she... would be on pins and needles till she had her and got all she could **out of her...** (p. 11)
- ...neither Mrs Wilson... nor Mr Wilson... could manage to **elicit** a single satisfactory **answer**, or even a casual **remark**, or chance **expression** calculated to ally their curiosity... (p. 14)
- ...Eliza... is sure she can succeed in **wheedling something out of her...** (p. 14)
- ...I **preserve** my own **opinion** precisely the same as at the beginning... (p. 35)
- As for their **talk**, I paid but little attention to that... and the only **information I derived from it**, was that, one fine, frosty day... (p. 51)
- I think I **hold** the same **opinion** respecting her as before - but slightly ameliorated. (p. 56)
- I **have** a very pleasant **recollection** of that walk. (p. 64)
- ...these **thoughts flashed through my mind...** (p. 87)
- My heart was beginning to throb, but I checked it with an **internal rebuke...** (p. 125)
- ...he **has no idea** of such a thing... (p. 139)
- ...say you **have no thoughts** of matrimony... (p. 139)
- ...I can't **bear my own thoughts...** (p. 191)
- ... I... **swallowed back my emotion...** (p. 235)
- I know you don't mean it; it's quite **out of the question...**
- She never gives him a **word of reproach** or **complaint...** (p. 258)
- I fear no such **idea crossed his mind**. (p. 285)
- ...he had a **double meaning to all his words...** (p. 299)
- ... he [began] to pour forth the most unequivocal **expressions of earnest and passionate love...** (p. 327)

- ...exchanging a few **words of the coldest civility**... (p. 327)
- ...my cheek glowed like a fire, it was rather at the **question** than the **information it conveyed**... (p. 329)

GROUP B. SUBGROUP B-II.

B-II.1. Examples from *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa

- ...*The questions thinning into space. The sky swallowing the echoes.* (Prologue)
- **Words**, when they **fall**, are pockmarks on the earth. They are hailstones seeking an underground stream. (Prologue)
- *The speech that frees comes forth from that amniotic deep. To attend its voice, I can hear it say, is to embrace my absence.* (Prologue)
- Uncle is almost never **direct in his replies**. (p. 3)
- **From both Obasan and Uncle I have learned** that speech often hides like an animal in a storm. (p. 3)
- This afternoon, when the **phone call comes**, it is one month after my last visit to Granton (p. 5)
- I lose control over **classroom discussions**. (p. 6)
- My **question was out of place**. (p. 6)
- Let the **question come**. (p. 8)
- She says if we **laundered the term** properly she'd put it on, but it's too covered with cultural accretions for comfort. (p. 8)
- '**Sift the words thinly**' - the voice inside is saying. (p. 9)
- And I walk down... leaving a **hubbub behind me**. (p. 9)
- Her **answers** are always **oblique** and the full **story** never **emerges in a direct line**. (p. 18)
- From a few **things** Obasan has **told me**, I wonder if the Katos were ever really a happy family. (p. 20)
- *The memories were drowned in a whirlpool of protective silence.* (p. 21)
- A man's **memories end up in some attic** or in a Salvation Army **bin**. (p. 25)
- Potent and pervasive as prairie dust storm, **memories** and **dreams seep and mingle through** cracks, settling on furniture and into upholstery. (p. 25)
- When I least expect it, a **memory comes** skittering **out of** the dark, spinning and netting the air, ready to snap me up and ensnare me in old and complex puzzles. (p. 26)
- ...the old **question comes** thudding **out of** the **night** like a giant moth... (p. 26)
- Yesterday the **phone call came**. (p. 30)

- ...and from the moment we met, I was **caught in the rush-hour traffic jam of her non-stop conference talk...** (p.32)
- ...**I waved those lines** like a banner in the wind... (p. 36)
- I shall discuss some of the **accusations brought against us.** (p. 39)
- **I cry out the question:** Is this my own, my native land? (p. 40)
- **It [the darkness] rushes unbidden from the mouths** of strangers and in the taunts of children. (p. 69-70)
- **I had a talk with Tommy on the phone.** (p. 93)
- Behind us lies salty sea within which swim our **drowning specks of memory** – small waterlogged eulogies. (p. 111)
- This little bridge is where sad **thoughts come.** (p. 128)
- I have much to **say to you.** (p. 147)
- **It [the bathhouse] is always filled with** a slow steamy **chatter** from women and girls and babies. (p. 160)
- Her **words are spraying out in a rush** and she points her finger at me. (p. 162)
- When I move my head finally, **the words rush around** stumbling to form questions, but there are no questions. (p. 170)
- **The words, rushing by in a whirl,** sound as familiar as the wind... (p. 176)
- ...her **heap of words...** (p. 183)
- All my **prayers disappear into space.** (p. 189)
- Some of the ripe **pidgin English phrases we pick up** are three-part inventions... (p. 218)
- All that is **left** is your **word...** (p. 242)
- **The voices pour down** like rain but in the middle of the downpour I still feel thirst. (p. 245)
- What ghostly **whisperings** I feel **in the air** as I hold the card. (p. 245)
- Her lips move imperceptibly as **she breathes her prayers.** (p. 246)
- What the Grand Inquisitor has never learned is that the **avenues of speech** are the avenues of silence. To hear my mother, to attend her speech, to attend the sound of...

B-II.2. Examples from *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Brontë

- But then, **it flushed upon me** that these were very improper thoughts for a place of worship. (p. 17)
- ...Miss Millward never opened her lips, except occasionally to correct some **random assertion or exaggerated expression** of her sister's... (p. 26)
- Well! you ladies must always **have the last word,** I suppose,' said I... (p. 35)

- ...her **opinions** respecting me... **fell** for below those I entertained of myself. (p. 36)
- ...we often **hold discussions** about you... (p. 62)
- ... [She] endeavoured to **draw me into conversation**. (p. 62)
- ...if all the parish, aye, or all the world should **din** these horrible **lies into** my ears, I would not believe the... (p. 83)
- ...my mother... received me with a **shower of questions and rebukes**... (p. 107)
- ...you **dropped** some **hints** that might have opened the eyes of a wiser man... (p. 126)
- ...let us **drop** the **subject**... (p. 141)
- ...a **bundle of congratulations**... (p. 183)
- ...a **burst of hope**... (p. 196)
- ...a clamorous **volley of oaths** in his mouth... (p. 273)
- ...**Rachel's last words rung in my ears**. (p. 298)
- ...**swallowing** down all fiercer **answers**, I merely demanded...

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