



# **Metaphors in Adult Education: Cultural Inspirations for Advancement of Theory and Practice**

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## Abstract:

*Metaphors are not only inherent element of culture, but also powerful tools of thinking. In the paper analysis of metaphors used in theoretical stances, research outcomes reports, depicting world of adult education practice in Poland are discussed. First, a short review of theories of metaphor is presented. Then, the role metaphors can play in educational research is discussed. Further, the author divides metaphors found in research and discussions about adult education into four categories: natural, astronomical, pictorial and geographical. The author not only reviews metaphors of adult education process, but she also points to their implications for further development of practice of adult education, advancement in theory and possibilities of opening new horizons of thinking about adult education as well. Searching for cultural sources and meaning of the metaphors in adult education research and theory aims at discovering values underlying the concepts and related contexts. Metaphors used in adult education are analysed in the perspective of lifelong learning. The most important issue however, is if those metaphors are useful and how they contribute to adult education's theory and practice advancement.*

**Keywords:** metaphor, adult education, lifelong learning, Polish adult education, culture

## Introduction

Adult education and education as a whole, is strictly connected with and deeply grounded in cultural concepts of reality. Not every researcher pays attention to cultural issues, but culture broadens perspective of thinking, interpreting research outcomes and developing theory. Some researchers are interested only in cultural standpoint, using ethnography as leading method, focusing on Polish educational practice as cultural system in itself, e.g. school lessons as rituals (Dembiński 2005), intellectually disabled as group having own culture (Borowska-Beszta 2012, 2013; Smieszek & Borowska-Beszta 2017), myths in education (Kragul 2009) and many others, discovering new dimensions and deepening understanding of education. However this paper's aim is not to analyse ethnographic research, but concepts used in adult education by those researchers who use different methods, but find culture elements, like metaphor, helpful to interpret outcomes and advance adult education theory.

Education and culture are intertwined. Jaworska-Witkowska (2009, p. 103) enumerates three orientations: “orientation on **regaining** human development and culture for education, [...] orientation on **gaining** new domains of communication in humanistic for education, [...] orientation on communication inside culture, stressing not the search for new areas of research in education, but **exploiting** borders and cognitive passages [...].” The second orientation became foundation for exploration in this paper with aim to address the following question: how inspiring for adult education theory and research can culture (especially metaphor) be?

### *Metaphors as tools of thinking – review of theories*

The term “metaphor” belongs to linguistics, but its meaning is not so clear as it seems. Jäkel (2003) writes about few different ways of explaining what metaphor means. It can be displacement or shift of words. It can be, and commonly is, a picture, visualization, creation of links in imagination. It also can be a filter for our perception of reality, to focus on selected issues, to give a tint, to expose some colours, just like filter on camera in movie making. Last, it can be personification of things and phenomena.

Among theories of metaphor, the oldest is the classical one. “Rhetoric, philology and linguistics defined metaphor in traditional way (from greek *metaphorá*, ‘displacement’; consist of meta ‘to, behind’ + *phérein* ‘bring’) as “metaphorical speech” affirming it as an artistic rhetoric figure and decorative artistic mean” (Jäkel 2003, p.20). Theories established by Aristotle and Quintilian are named classical ones, together with later theories, that of Cicero and Demetrius. In these theories metaphor is understood as one word replaced by another, resulting in different perspective (Jäkel 2003).

However, later research showed that metaphors cannot be treated only as means of style, only a decoration. Metaphor plays major role in the process of communication, and meaning of this term is much deeper. This is how cognitive theory of metaphor came to the front, that shed light on linkages between metaphor and our way of thinking and reasoning. The most known cognitive theory is the one presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). According to Jäkel, the main difference between classical and cognitive theory is about broadening metaphors’ usage. Cognitivists not only point at single expressions, “but see language metaphors as systematic connotations between whole domains of ideas and as a sing of complex cognitive or culture models. In case of single language metaphor it is not about *displacement*, but a kind of *exploration*: they no longer demand displacement the “right” word by metaphoric one, but analyse epistemological discovery of destination domain, that needs explanation, by recalling source domains, closer to experience” (Jäkel 2003, p. 102).

Lakoff and Johnson, according to the book’s title, analysed metaphors used in daily language, not those for special reasons, like art or politics. They pay attention not only to cultural foundations of the metaphors, that reflect how people think in a given society, but also to physical experience that underlies metaphors. For example, Lakoff and Johnson analyse orientational metaphors that place happiness up, and sadness down. “In some cases spatialization is so essential a part of a concept that it is difficult for us to imagine any alternative metaphor that might structure the concept. In our society “high status” is such a concept. Other cases, like happiness, are less clear. Is the concept of happiness independent of the HAPPY IS UP metaphor, or is the up-down spatialization of happiness a part of the concept? We believe that it is a part of the concept within a given conceptual system. The HAPPY IS UP metaphor places happiness within a coherent metaphorical system, and part of its meaning comes from its role in that system.” (p. 18)

Thorough analyses of metaphors in daily life, led the authors of cognitive theory to conclusion, that terms people use are embedded in human experience with own body and space orientation. This relation is basis to successful metaphor. Hence using metaphors, even the simple ones, in daily communication becomes effect of sequence of associations connected with the way people experience the world.

Another concept of metaphor, interesting but at the same time controversial and criticized is interactional theory, especially presented by Black and Richards. In this concept, metaphor is understood as two-way, where both parts affect each other, and meaning is a result of cooperation of the parts. As an example the authors take metaphor “human is a wolf”, where human gains negative features, like being evil, aggressive, predatory, while wolf gains some human features. (Black 1955, Jäkel 2003, p. 106; 111)

Interactivity in Black and Richards’ theory concerns also metaphor’s receiver, who is “[...] demanded to cooperate in understanding what has been hidden behind the words. Metaphor is supposed to evoke the sequence of implications, as a result of cooperation. Thus interpretation becomes a kind of research into metaphor, where diversity of metaphor’s implications, reveals its quality” (Muszyńska 1999, p. 18). Two-way character of metaphor in

interactional theory shows up in operating terms and its mutual interactions, but also people who participate in communication process with metaphorical language.

Lastly, John Searle's pragmatic theory of reinterpretation, based on theory of speech acts, presents metaphor as a difference "[...] between *sentence's literal meaning* and intended *meaning of the speaker's statement* [...]" (Jäkel 2003, p. 114). Mácha (2012) gives further explanation of this assumption. "Since speakers mean and try to communicate something other than they say, metaphorical utterances are, thus, indirect speech acts. To be more formal, the speaker says that S is P and means metaphorically that S is R" (p. 187). Hence, metaphor appear in the area of meaning given to the statement. However the meaning itself is not clear for one at once, it could be even totally vague, if taken out of the context.

Metaphors as one of means of style, used mainly in poetry, understood as displacement of meaning, proved ability to operate the word by author and aesthetic function of language as well. Not till then cognitive theory showed another dimension of metaphor, broadening the scope of interpretation and usage. "Cognitivism changed the way of thinking about metaphor, gave it different status, linked to basic cognitive processes, underlined it as inevitable element of experiencing, understanding and expressing reality, and searching for new interpretations. Metaphor was no longer strange, outside, decorative, artificial. It became immanent, belonging to humankind in a complex world where human, indomitably curious and conscious of cognition's imperfection, tries to describe" (Wiśniewska-Kin 2009, p.38)

#### *Metaphors in educational research*

Metaphors are perceived as one of the most natural way to use language to describe the world. People use metaphors not only in art, but in daily life, in different domains of human activity. They become expression of meaning and broaden area of meaning. This is why it is not strange, that metaphors appear in education and academic papers and research reports. One needs creative thinking to use or pick a metaphor. Wiśniewska-Kin (2009) remarks that in traditional education, where knowledge is objective, cumulated and needs to be remembered, there is no place for metaphors.

This traditional concept of knowledge, the positive one, also present in quantitative research, rarely results in metaphors. Positivists or neo-positivists focus on unequivocal research outcomes and those could be disrupted by metaphor. Zeidler (2014) points to reason for this radical approach, where metaphor is rejected. "If neo-positivists see place for metaphor in science, then it would be only in the context of discovery, but this context in their opinion, does not belong to research into philosophy of science and methodological issues" (p. 3). Meanwhile it is a context that occurs to be the most fertile in creation of metaphors, the most valuable source of inspiration.

Repeatedly context is in the centre of qualitative researchers' analyses. Hence, reports from these research are plenty of metaphors, finding the best way to present and interpret the outcomes. Qualitative researchers also use *verbatim* data, citing passages of interviews, depicting the essence of research project. In these excerpts frequently metaphors appear, ready to use or being just inspiration for researcher to create their own metaphorical frame.

Shift in understanding what metaphor is enhanced the use of metaphor in research on broader scale. Especially Black's interactional theory changed negative attitude to metaphor and became incentive for researchers. Interactional approach opened new areas of exploration, new way of thinking about metaphors and gave opportunity to apply them in scientific knowledge. Metaphors turned out to be linguistic expressions operating on domains' borders, simultaneously linking distant domains, giving researchers possibility to interpret the explored world, give meaning to it and present more readable picture of theories and created concepts.

As Jäkel (2003, p. 4) observes, metaphor can produce new meaning and play crucial role in science – i.e. heuristic function.

Metaphorical interpretation of research outcomes or theory, not only facilitates perception, but also opens new horizons, sometimes in a revolutionary way changing picture of the world or its elements in society. However, metaphors are not only used in science but also by researchers in social science and humanists. What kind of metaphors are applied in educational research, especially in adult education area?

#### *Metaphors in adult education research*

Metaphors are useful in describing practice and broadening theoretical area of adult education. The aim is to present adult education process more readable and to highlight some dimensions of it. Metaphorical approach to adult education appear in research reports, and in innovative or critical theoretical stances. Due to metaphors the researchers are more able to grasp the issues that needs to be exposed. But it is also an excellent way to report research result into new or niche problems. In the case of research into commonly addressed questions, metaphors are a way of finding fresh insight and setting new paths. Thus, metaphors are inspiring for in-depth exploration of adult education areas.

Review of qualitative research and literature in Polish adult education resulted in many examples of metaphors usage. Analysis of those metaphorical frames led to the following categories of metaphors: natural, geographical, astronomical and pictorial ones.

#### *Natural metaphors*

##### *Moorland*

In adult education area two metaphors taken from nature are discussed, that of moorland and tree. In geographical sense, 75% of the whole world's resources moorlands are in the Great Britain. (Internet 1) Those large terrains, covered with plants are also home to many species of animals. However, contemporary British moorlands, to some degree, are controlled by human.

It has been Shakespeare's "Macbeth" where the main character, commander of the royal army in war between Scotland and Norway, on his way home meets three witches at the moorland. In British literature moorland motif became popular in romantic novel, reflecting characters' emotions and creating mood, see Emily Dickens' *Wuthering Heights* for example (Internet 2). Moorland is a mysterious place, wrapped with fog, steeped with drizzle to create mood of eeriness and intimacy as well. In bestseller *Harry Potter* moorlands Ilkley are arena of quidditch.

In education, the most frequently used metaphor is that of moorland, introduced by Edwards (2006) to give the essence of contemporary dispersed educational activities and episodes, especially in lifelong learning concept. Edwards believes, that moorland metaphor depicts changes in adult education, particularly in adult learning's perception and research into its practice. As he observes, shifting from "field" where order reigns, signifying formal processes of adult learning, to "moorland" that is messy and may appear everywhere, signifies non-formal and informal adult learning process, getting more and more validity.

It is worth to considerate, why Edwards used moorland metaphor. On the one hand it is justified, as an opposition to "field". However, closer look leads to cultural background. Moorland is commonly perceived as something messy, savage, natural, uncontrolled. It has been strongly rooted in British culture, especially literature, for a long time. This metaphor depicts the very nature of contemporary lifelong learning as happening anytime, anywhere,

not necessarily in institution. Today's lifelong learning encompassing old and new areas of education really resembles moorland. But the question is – whose responsibility it is now?

### *Tree (redwood)*

Metaphor of tree was used by Nizińska (2008) to depict one of two strategies taken by adult educators in different settings. In research report she took metaphor of redwood to describe some type of adult educator. Redwood is a long-lived, up to 2000 years, the highest tree in the world with height from 60 to 100 meters. It has extensive root system, shallowly located under the ground (Internet 3). Redwood – adult educator is faithful to values of educational institution he/she works in, organized and attached to institution's structure which he/she finds useful and legitimated. Redwood – adult educator follows patterns, and as emotions are not a part of his/her vocational identity, tends to keep distance and be rather reserved. It is a person who easily toes the line, precisely fulfilling educational tasks.

Nizińska (2008, p. 157-158) observes two variations of redwood – adult educator. The first one “aristocratic – intellectual”, based on high reflexivity, results in domination over adult learners, who know less and should subordinate, to gain valuable knowledge, that only he/she is able to pass them along. The second variation is “satrap-technocrat”, who also takes dominating position, but it is relation of power that is essential, not knowledge. This kind of adult education has low reflexivity and is interested only in strengthening the power he/she has. As a result, “satrap-technocrat” cannot create own teaching patterns, following methods used by others and is uncritical to content.

This metaphor of redwood, illustrates the key features of such adult educator who resembles a tree – dominating, haughty, hardly noticing adult learner, especially as an individual. Redwood as towering tree is a symbol of growth, development, self-improvement, knowledge (light) searching. Thus, adult educators, described as redwood, are highly qualified and represent top level of vocational competences. Simultaneously, this linear growth in one direction becomes a limit to lack of ability to create own patterns of educational behaviour, strong attitude to obey the rules, and move only inside well known borders (trunk of the tree). Extensive root system is in turn symbol of being ingrown into institution, its value system, giving backbone, a set of references for behaviour of adult educator. He/she is well “rooted”, so is stable in position and teaching. Grandeur of redwood suggest authority, so this type of teacher may be admired by learners.

### *Astronomical metaphors*

#### *Pulsar*

The universe is inspiring for metaphors in many domains, take the structure of atom for example. The cosmic space became also fruitful for social science. Skibińska (2006) used astronomical metaphor in her report from biographical research into elder women. She used the term “micro-worlds” and “pulsar”. Micro-worlds were placed in opposition to the universe, as intimate spheres of women's life in particular aspects – education, leisure, work and family. The pulsar metaphor depicted specificity of women's life worlds, changes, behaviour in particular situations and results of decisions taken by them, revealed in narrations.

Skibińska (2006, p. 516-520) points to fierceness of situations experienced by women (pulsar as result of super-nova explosion), collapse of participants' micro-worlds, unexpected changes and loss (super-nova's annihilation), sacrifice to one domain at the expense of other with huge amounts of life energy (black whole), changes in women's activity and its duration (pulsar's radiation), position women take in different areas, their roles and usually subordination to others (pulsar in double system) or breaking schemes and women's roles

stereotypes (red giant), crisis or trauma incidents that change system of values, need additional effort, but also result in gaining strength (magnetars).

Participants of the research were also presented as stars, that adds them some value. Stars – heaven objects, observed as lighting spots, are useful as guides, also become key in romantic, intimate and spiritual mood. Together they establish constellations. Particular stars are admired, but as a group they become another, broader, but separate world. Finally, contemporary meaning of star can be mentioned – in show business known as celebrities. Woman in a micro-world or even few micro-worlds may become a star (idol).

### *Satellite*

Turning back to Nizińska's research report (2008), astronomical metaphor is found in the second strategy taken by adult educators, namely "satellite". It is a way they work in educational institution and shape their vocational personality. They are more flexible, trace their own paths and interpret institutional rules as well as teacher's role. Adult educator – a "satellite" sticks to his/her values, balancing between own expectations, ambitions, and institution's goals. It is a person prone to changes, and able to initiate change in educational institution. He/she is also convinced that emotions play a major role in life and educational work.

Two strategies taken by adult educator – satellite were discovered by Nizińska (2008, p. 156; 159): "transformativist" and "neurotic showman". The first one is based on high reflexivity, teacher's role consciousness, changes in teaching methods, high criticism in knowledge and teaching process' assessment. The second one is based on low reflexivity, chaos in educational work, accidental changes in teaching-learning process. But "neurotic showman" needs public to play the role, so actions taken do not focus on the content and things essential for process of learning but on person's exposition and gaining admiration.

Using metaphor of satellite Nizińska depicted type of adult educator's behaviour, where one is settled down to educational institution (he/she orbits), but at the same time away because of (mental?) distance. Adult teacher as satellite is in better position to look at the institution, from different perspective – distance allows him/her see it as a whole. This is why these teachers are more reflexive.

Satellite is an object to communicate two-way, broadcasting and receiving signals, so this type of adult teacher should be communicative. This metaphor brings up the association with broadcasting world's picture or rather facilitating this broadcast. Nizińska does not pay attention to this issue. Perhaps it was not the direct result of data analyses. But this association points to the concept of teacher as translator, and co-interpreter of surrounding reality. Satellite may be broken, pause the signal and, in the extreme case, fall off the orbit, be out of the control. This is possible, as Nizińska underlines such features of the teachers as being prone to changes, beyond the role and exposing emotions.

### *Pictorial metaphors*

Negative aspects of lifelong learning were identified in my project "Lifelong education's dark sides, shadows and hazes" (Frąckowiak 2008). Operating the light allows to expose some issues and hide others, making it more vague, unobvious. Dark sides of lifelong learning, i.e. totally negative, are as follows: promotion of learning throughout life by lofty slogan, with political populism standing behind, and lack of financial support from the state for many valuable educational projects. It is also growing commercialism of adult education and, in some cases, using methods inappropriate for teaching adults.

Shadows – understood as something wrong or done in an unaware manner, is illusion that adult education can fight social exclusion, for many educational offers do not meet real adults' needs. Education taken by adults often result in gaining new qualifications that allow to get low-paid job, that does not help overcome poverty. Also paying attention to needs of economy that to individual, forcing to learn – constant repeating that learning lasts throughout whole human's life, obligatory vocational advancement courses, may act as shadows, resulting in negative attitude to learning.

Finally, hazes – unobvious aspects of lifelong education, hard to assess as positive or negative. Good example is terminology used when talking about lifelong learning. In English literature, term “lifelong education” was abandoned and “lifelong learning” became officially accepted. Simultaneously, it brought shift from humanistic concept, promoted mainly by UNESCO, to neoliberal one, promoted mainly by the World Bank OECD, European Commission. Other terms may be found, such as “permanent education” (Suchodolski 1993), “learning throughout life”, “lifewide learning” or even “in-depth learning” (Belanger 2016). On the one hand, many terms reflect variety of the concept and advancement in the field's exploration. On the other hand, it increases the risk of misunderstanding, and for people who are not professionally engaged in education – of misuse.

Shadows, dark sides and hazes as metaphor of some aspects of lifelong learning, are inspired by art but nature as well (the weather). A picture in blacks and greys is a sketch of some domain of reality. It sharpens particular elements, but at the same time, blurs the other ones, eager to hide something uncomfortable. This is why in discussions about lifelong learning, generally positive aspects prevail, while the negative, threats or potential situations of abuse, are not so common. Dark sides, shadows and hazes may also signify an attempt to draw attention away from what is behind the decisions taken, especially the political ones, concerning lifelong learning. It is an attempt to hide that many documents, between the lines, stress that learning is obligatory in contemporary world, while in the exact words like freedom, chose, commonness and sheer joy of learning are exposed.

Shadows, dark sides and hazes, especially the last ones, signify attempts to mislead or even manipulate by unfair adult education providers, promising adults the moon. Pictorial metaphor reflexes something mysterious, rarely or unwillingly spoken about. But the darkness itself is not tempting, rather discouraging, because it means lack of safety, uncertainty, so it is better to stay away from it. Thus, this metaphor points to issues absent or silenced in discussions about lifelong learning.

### *Geographical metaphors*

#### *Road*

In Polish adult education biographical research conducted by Czerniawska and Dubas (2002) brought major contribution to the field's development. They used “educational road” as metaphor ranging not only for education, but cultural analyses in education as well. Road appears in philosophical and religious contexts, signifying choice, but also toil, an attempt to reach the goal. However, roads are different – straight and easy, wide as highways, main and side roads, but also winding, going down or up, branching off, so tempting but at the same time so dangerous, and finally there are roads that end suddenly. Multiplicity of roads and ways people can drive through, depends not only on human, but also on many circumstances, like other road users, who help or disturb driving. One may turn back or abandon a given road to change life.

As Czerniawska observes “educational roads teach humility, teach how to listen to others. Prevent from forgetting facts, people, things. Enhance for remembrance, rebuilding



one's life road, coming back to former friendship, to the past. Also posing a problem to researcher and participant, what to remember, what to skip, what to come back to, what to keep" (Dubas & Czerniawska 2002, p. 9).

To travel a given educational road one needs to accept the challenge, but also to set the goal. Travelling (learning) may be regular or irregular, interrupted by situations in family, work, health condition or social and political circumstances. Nevertheless, educational road always brings something new to human development. It is no matter if experience is bad or good – it always results in personal growth. Educational road means human must face subsequent levels, often hard to achieve, but the harder it is, the more satisfaction it brings when goal is achieved.

Educational road is strictly connected with metaphor of vocational career as ladder. Sometimes one needs to change a job and begin new educational road, or change the road itself, if ineffective, unsatisfactory or unsuccessful, especially when chosen not by individual, but others (e.g. family).

### *Meander*

Close to metaphor of educational road is that one of "meander", usually associated with river, but also with roads. Czerniawska and Dubas observe that "researching educational roads, roads of learning is connected with research into life course, individual biographies, life histories; these categories are present in qualitative research" (2002, p. 13). Metaphor of meander depicts complexity of education, sometimes stagnation in curves. Meander resembles loop, that signifies the danger of looping, when one sees not chance to get out. But loop is not necessarily negative. Constantly coming back to one place (words, pictures e.c.t.) may be helpful for remembering ("repetition is the mother of all learning"), but it may also mean willingness to come back to pleasant educational situations. Sometimes meander, in effect of processes in river, becomes cut off, and the river changes its running, while the meander becomes oxbow lake (Internet 4). The last one may be treated as educational stock of particular value.

## **Implications of metaphors in adult education**

On the basis of review of metaphors used in research reports and papers, a question arises – what is the influence of metaphors on adult education's theory development? Assessment of metaphors' implications may be different, having in mind functions to fulfil. Those are pointed by a given metaphor theory, discussed at the beginning of this paper. Boyd (1993, p. 485) distinguishes between two functions of metaphor: theory-constitutive, and exegetical (pedagogical). The first one are foundational of theory, that cannot be replaced, the second one are more explanatory. According to Boyd, the most implicative are theory-constitutive metaphors, because not only explain the essence of the theory, its elements and relations, but constitute creative expression of theoretical foundations. This is of crucial meaning in case of theories that change how people see the world around. (Boyd 1993; Zeidler 2014)

The exegetical (pedagogical) function in case of metaphors in adult education discussed above, has double sense. On one hand, it explains and depicts particular issues in thinking about adult education. This is what Lakoff and Johnson (2003) claim. "Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.), we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc.). [...] We have tried with examples to give some indication of just how extensive a role metaphor plays in the way we function, the way we conceptualize our experience, and the way we speak" (p.

115) On the other hand educational function means teaching, instructing, interpreting, launching intellectual, cognitive processes. Boyd states that “[t]he fact that these metaphors, and other like them, do not convey theoretical insights not otherwise expressible does not indicate that they play no important role in theory change” (p. 486). Boyd is absolutely right, especially when social science is taken into consideration. Every metaphor may be crucial for knowledge advancement, enriching the way problems are seen.

Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) cognitive theory interestingly explains metaphor’s function. “Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding” (p. 36). Metaphors, full of sense, built at the crossroads of meanings, are constructive for knowledge in the field of adult education. Inspiring for new research, new theoretical stances, innovations in adult education practice. This function of metaphor cannot be underestimated or unnoticed. “The primary function of metaphor is to provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience. This may involve preexisting isolated similarities, the creation of new similarities, and more” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, p. 154)

Hence, metaphor ceased to be understood only as figure in poetry or rhetoric. It is obvious that metaphor reflect the way people think of the world. Metaphors depicting phenomena and concepts extract meaning and facilitate explanation and cognition. In the same manner, metaphors in adult education (natural, geographical, astronomical, pictorial), visualize phenomena in adult education and make them easier to understand. Metaphors move imagination and make adult education’s theory more accessible.

### *Highlighting and hiding*

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) make interesting remark on the nature of metaphors. “The very systematicity that allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another (e.g., comprehend-ing an aspect of arguing in terms of battle) will necessarily hide other aspects of the concept” (p. 10). What kind of aspects do metaphors in adult education highlight? What aspects they hide?

Moorland metaphor was criticized for being British-centred, and that moorlands are in fact not so opened as Edwards suggests in relation to lifelong learning. Whilst Edwards (2006) underlined that by using this metaphor he do not want to reject field of ordered adult education practice.

Metaphor of dark sides, shadows and hazes presents monochrome vision of reality, hence it reflexes extreme stance, where only the bad, adverse, unfavourable, perverted and manipulated aspects of adult education are seen. It represents only one-side picture, without positive features. Thus, it hides everything that functions good in adult education.

Terms, taken from astronomy, like pulsar and satellite, focus on distance and these metaphors show adult education from specific point of view. While moorlands, trees, light and darkness are closer to peoples’ experience, phenomena and instruments in cosmic space interest only few. By watching television, exploring Internet resources or visiting science centres, one may for example hear how pulsar sounds. Hence astronomical metaphor moves imagination but is based on indirect experience. A question arises then – is adult education also based on indirect experience? If so, then it becomes less successful.

Last, but not least, metaphor of educational road and meander, is close to human’s experience, not only is the sense of daily living as way home, to work or shop, but also more metaphysical – as way of life. The same road may be perceived differently, according to emotions and expectations. One’s observations may differ and depend on mean of transport – if he/she walks, rides a bicycle or drives a car. There are milestones and points of choice – to

go left, right or ahead. Road changes one's perspective, when goes up or down. Educational road suggests not only the one on land, but also in the sea, in the air or sometimes underground. This changes and broadens the manner of seeing adult education and its role in human's life, reveal new potential in theoretical views, research projects, especially biographical, and practice.

## Conclusion

Metaphor changes the way people perceive the reality. Wiśniewska-Kin (2009), underlines this function according to cognitive theory of metaphor. She points to metaphor function as explanation and understanding of phenomena and expression of individual's attitude to reality. Authors of research and theoretical stances discussed above, also present their own way of perceiving educational reality, by metaphors. They enhance to follow their interpretation. But metaphor may act differently. It can provoke new associations, that allow for better understanding and reaching beyond author's interpretation, but are closer to reader's experience.

It is worth to cite Charteris-Black (2012), who proposes critical approach to metaphors' analyses. He claims, that Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) aims at pointing reason for metaphor's choice, together with ideology, and giving proof of metaphor's influence. Ideology as a basis for a given voice, are not always visible. But revealing ideology brings crucial data for framing the reality and setting borders of discussion. For theory advancement contestation is most fruitful.

Then what implications do metaphors bring to field of adult education? First, they develop interesting frames of adult education's practice. Enrich discussion about adult education, allow for other interpretations, inspire other researchers. But in fact, from all the metaphors discussed earlier, only that of educational road is used more frequently in different biographical research projects in Poland, by Czerniawska and co-operates. The remaining were used incidentally with no further research projects. Thus, in Polish adult education metaphors play role as in classical theory – that of ornament, interesting concept, but hardly ever deepen theory.

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