On July 12 and 13, 2019, the 8th international symposium “Cognitive Explorations into Metaphors” took place at the English Department of Heidelberg University. In cooperation with the University Koblenz-Landau and guests from Eötvös Loránd University Budapest (ELTE) as well as Comenius University Bratislava, we once again compiled a diverse program which included six thematic sessions as well as a poster session and a book presentation. The conference was framed by the workshop “Metaphor in Society” on Thursday and Saturday.

On Friday, Prof. Sonja Kleinke and Prof. Frank Polzenhagen officially opened the conference and welcomed the guests and speakers – including Prof. Zoltan Kövecses, Dr. Veronika Szelid, Dr. Orsolya Farkas and a group of nine students from ELTE Budapest. Prof. Frank Polzenhagen introduced the first plenary talk by Prof. Zoltan Kövecses on “Extended Theory of Conceptual Metaphors”.

In Session 1, two talks presented the role of “Metaphors in Political Discourse”. Anett Varga discussed the instrumental use of JOURNEY metaphors in political speeches, illustrated by a comparison of political speeches by Barack Obama and Martin Luther King. Maria Pallay also analyzed speeches by Barack Obama, claiming that Obama revived the concept of the ‘American Dream’ which he consistently used in his speeches.

Session 2 explored relations between “Metaphors and Culture”. Veronika Szarka investigated cultural differences between the United States and South Korea by analyzing metaphorically used words around the concept of ‘nation’ in the inaugural addresses of Barack Obama and Moon Jae-In. The metaphors served as indicators for the manifestation of the collectivist/individualist nature of these societies. Dr. Julia Landmann presented a research project that examines to what extent borrowings from French, Spanish, German and Yiddish into English demonstrate metaphorical use in the receiving language. The talk asked how far metaphorical uses of borrowing reflect culturally embedded concepts.

After the lunch break, literary scholar Dr. Roman Mikulaš from the University of Bratislava described the metaphorical conceptualization of trauma and medical history in the autobiographical works of Ingeborg Bachmann and Thomas Bernhard respectively.

Dr. Rebecca Netzel, who is a translator and Lakota expert at Heidelberg University, presented a book on Metaphor in Lakota Language which is to be published soon.

In Session 3, Endah Saputri gave a talk on the topic of “Metaphors and Earth Phenomena”, focusing on the visual (non-linguistic) realizations of conceptual metaphors concerning global warming.

Session 4 regarded “Metaphors in Fiction”. Petra Fejes Tóth analyzed how Maggie Stiefvater uses remappings of the metaphor of the Queer as a Monster in the novel The Dream Thieves, and how these remappings create a new understanding of the concept: The monster becomes a symbol of queerness instead of being used as a way of othering. Aubrey Armbruster examined instances of secrecy in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, pointing out that major metaphors of secrets are A SECRET IS AN OBJECT and MINDS ARE CONTAINERS.

In the subsequent poster session, seven students from Heidelberg University presented their posters and conference participants used the opportunity to discuss the poster’s topics.
In Session 5, three talks presented “Metaphors in Music and Film”. Bence Ságodi explored both linguistic and visual metaphors of grief in Beyoncé’s Lemonade in order to reflect on the complexity of the African American trauma as well as women’s trauma and their connection to metaphors. Krisztina Milovsky examined the river as a metaphor in African American slave songs, claiming that there lies an exclusive set of frames within these songs that could only be interpreted by African American slaves. Eszter Zsuzsanna Csorba pointed out how Hollywood movies from around 1980 portray the (Italian) American Dream through comparison of their location of the story, its protagonists and the themes discussed.

The final talk on Friday was on the topic of “Metaphors in Advertisements” (Session 6). Imola Zaymus presented variations of conceptual blending in commercial slogans which often have the purpose of widening the concept of the advertised product.

The program on Saturday was introduced by two plenary talks. Dr. Veronika Szelid presented “A Cognitive Linguistic Deconstruction of Johnson’s Theory of Morality”. She claimed that the concept of the ‘religious self’ offered by Mark Johnson is fundamentally different from how it reveals itself in texts of religious communities. Dr. Orsolya Farkas discussed “Subculture-bound Concepts in Hungarian Political Discourse”, pointing out how the concepts of DEMOCRACY and REPUBLIC differ in various subcultures in Hungary. After the plenary talks, the second part of the workshop “Metaphor in Society” took place.

Prof. Sonja Kleinke concluded the conference with a final roundup and prospect.

The social and cultural program included dinner and a get-together on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. A highlight was the intercultural exchange of folk songs and enjoying the Heidelberg Castle Illumination in the evening on Saturday.