



## MIXED METAPHOR, ITS DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES IN THE MATERIALS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

<sup>1</sup>Abbasova Nargiza Kobilovna

<sup>1</sup>A senior teacher of Fergana State University (FSU),  
abbasova@gmail.com?

<sup>2</sup>Rasulova Munira Yusubali qizi

<sup>2</sup>2nd year student of master's degree in Linguistics and English,  
FSU, Qodirovamuniraxon@gmail.com/  
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### ABSTRACT

*The article investigates mixed metaphor and its effect to the user's writing. The article is an attempt to identify the definition of the mixed metaphor in English materials. It is a highly timely contribution that fills a gap between the pre-theoretical notion of 'mixed metaphors', largely known to the (English-speaking) public as something to be avoided as it reflects poor style or even sloppy thinking, and scholarly research on metaphor, where the topic has received little attention: "people's cognitive flexibility to think of abstract concepts in a myriad of metaphorical ways"*

The phenomenon of mixed metaphors has been largely neglected by previous research in metaphor understanding. This has been due to two prevalent assumptions. First, mixed metaphors are often regarded as examples of (at worst) pathological language use or (at best) poor style. Secondly, it is clear that the understanding of a mixed metaphor is more difficult than that of a single metaphor, since a mix requires reasoning about several vehicle domains.

In the article, I wish to argue that the former assumption is wrong: mixed metaphors are common in mundane everyday discourse and can be understood by hearers without recourse to specialized reasoning. In addition, the second assumption is detrimental to long term progress since mixed metaphorical manifestations rely on straight metaphors. More specifically, this article makes the

following claim: the reasoning processes and data structures involved in understanding mixed metaphors are identical to those used in understanding straight metaphors. Therefore, current research on metaphor processing should be capable of being extended to deal with mixed phenomena and mixing can provide valuable insight into the processes underlying straight metaphors. To this end, this article describes some initial work done with ATT-Meta [Barnden, 1997] to handle various types of mixing and reprises an earlier claim for the need for within-vehicle reasoning and the use of conversion rules to filter the relevant connotations of a particular metaphor. Mixed metaphors are often regarded as humorous or cases of defective speech. Consider the following pathological sentence, quoted by Fowler [Fowler, 1908]:



"This, as you know, was a burning question; and its unseasonable introduction threw a chill on the spirits of all our party."

In the example, the question is metaphorically "hot". However, its introduction makes the party's spirits "cold". Despite this contradiction, the sentence can be understood to mean that the question was somehow controversial and its inappropriate introduction saddened the emotions of the party members. Fowler criticized such examples as poor style. However, despite the conflict between "hot" questions and "cold" emotions, the connotation of the sentence can be

easily understood since it alludes to two well-known metaphors, i.e. "DIFFICULT QUESTIONS ARE HOT OBJECTS" and "SAD EMOTIONS ARE COLD OBJECTS". Furthermore, it is unlikely that most native speakers

would even consider the disparity of "hot" questions causing "cold" reactions. This is because, in each case what is mapped is not an instance of temperature change, but a connotation with direct relevance to the tenor domain. In this paper, we will argue that it is often necessary to do extended reasoning prior to mapping from vehicle to tenor. Therefore, a capacity for within-vehicle-reasoning is essential and any conversion must also act as a strict filter to limit the range of metaphorical meaning. The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2, we will outline and distinguish two key types of mixed metaphor:

serial and parallel. In Section 3, we will briefly outline ATT-Meta and provide an analysis of each type of mixed metaphor which our program is capable of dealing

with and then in Section 4 extend the discussion to other types of mixes and the wider issues facing mixed metaphor research.

**Main body.** Mixed metaphor is a combination of two or more incompatible metaphors, producing a ridiculous effect. There are two ways for characters to use this technique, also known as a "mixaphor." In dialogue, it would either be used intentionally or unintentionally. A few of the reasons a writer would utilize a "mixaphor" as a literary device. There are some samples:

Early bird gathers no moss. Rolling stone catches the worm, right?" — *The Truman Show*

"Does the Pope shit in the woods?" — *The Big Lebowski*

"The shoe's on the other... table, which has turned" — *The Social Network*

"That's awfully thin gruel for the right wing to hang their hats on." — MSNBC, September 3, 2009

"I knew enough to realize that the alligators were in the swamp and that it was time to circle the wagons." — Rush Limbaugh

"Sir, I smell a rat; I see him forming in the air and darkening the sky; but I'll nip him in the bud." — attributed to Sir Boyle Roche, 1736-1807

Comedic delivery is the first reason of this. In a story, there are many elements that contribute to the story's [tone](#). Dialogue may be one of the most important. What a character says and how they say is a key determinant to a film's tone. The ridiculousness and nonsensical meaning of mixing metaphors makes them a great tool for comedic relief in a drama or setting a comedic tone. In this scene from the film [The Social Network](#), screenwriter



Aaron Sorkin utilizes the mixed metaphor not only to create the rhythmic dialogue he loves, but also for a bit of comedic delivery. To see the comedic function of the mixed metaphor in this scene, it helps to see the action of Sean Parker and how the dialogue changed from script to screen. In addition to delivering a joke or setting a comedic tone, mixed metaphors say a lot about the character using it. When a person uses a metaphor, they are often attempting to appear intelligent in the way they craft an argument or an idea. Combining metaphors that usually doesn't make sense, underscores the character's desire or belief in the fact that they are intelligent despite falling short. Take a look at this example from [The Truman Show](#) (spoilers ahead). Truman has just started to figure out there is something suspicious about his life and the world around him. This realization has made him a bit frantic to find out whether he is right or not. In this frantic state, Truman combines the metaphors "Early bird gets the worm" and "A rolling stone gathers no moss." This is a great example of a mixed metaphor that delivers a joke while simultaneously revealing the state of a character. Truman's use of a mixing metaphors reflects his frantic paranoia that something is up. It delivers a joke while also revealing Truman's emotions and state of mind. Most people advise writers to avoid combining or hybridizing metaphors. They may end up confusing or nonsensical. However, in the context of storytelling, mixed metaphors can be a great tool to deliver a joke or set a comedic tone. The nonsensical nature of a mixed nature can also reveal a lot about the character saying it. Mixing metaphors is only one tool under the umbrella of metaphors. To better understand all types

of metaphors and their value to writers, check out our next article. We take a look at the term metaphor, the different types of metaphors, and the distinctions between them. A mixed metaphor is the linking of two or more disparate elements, which can result in an unintentionally comic effect produced by the writer's insensitivity to the literal meaning of words or by the falseness of the comparison. mixed metaphor occurs when an author combines **two incompatible metaphors**, forming an absurd or irrational comparison. In a mixed metaphor, there is no connection between what the author compares. For instance, Gertrude Stain's "a rose is a rose is a rose" uses multiple metaphors intentionally to create rhythm and meaning within her work and poetry. When a writer attempts to blend two metaphors that should be kept separate from each other, such as "Her face was a blank canvas." In this example, "blank canvas" is being used for the concept of facial features and not for artistic expression. Using this metaphor incorrectly can create confusion for readers and impact the quality of one's writing. Mixed metaphors can combine any form of expression, including literary devices like similes and onomatopoeic words.

For example, calling someone "the salt of the earth" implies that they are valuable, just like salt is. To make things even more confusing, metaphors can be mixed—the implied comparison can be two different things. "It's time to go shopping. I'm so hungry I feel like I could eat a horse. Or three pizzas. Or maybe I should go shopping first?"

In this case we're comparing hunger to both horses and pizzas, but we're not



saying which is which. If you wanted to make it clear that eating pizza would be like eating three horses, you would need to use a mixed metaphor.

Mixed metaphors are examples of the use of a metaphor in the wrong context or for the wrong purpose, often with humorous effect.

What is a mixed metaphor? A metaphor is a comparison of two different things that aren't alike in most ways, but do have one thing in common. In a mixed metaphor, this common feature is used to create a seemingly nonsensical combination of words.

The word "mixed" refers to the mixing together of metaphors. It doesn't mean that there are more than one metaphor being used at once. Mixed metaphors usually involve combining two phrases with different meanings, but it can also involve combining two different kinds of metaphors, such as when an extended simile becomes so complicated that it is no longer an accurate comparison. Mixed metaphors can happen when someone changes words in a sentence but not their meaning. For example: "She was so hungry that she could eat a horse." Here, the word "eat" is changed from its meaning of "to consume food," to mean something else entirely.

There are so many different kinds of writing, each with its own rules and goals. One of the most basic kinds of writing you will encounter is poetry. In comparison to other forms of writing such as research papers or blog posts, poetry is much more structured.

It must follow a rhyme scheme, which means that it has to sound good as well as make sense. There are also certain words and phrases that are used in poetry that

you won't see anywhere else. This does not only make poetry unique, but also fun to read!

Poetry has been around for centuries, originating in ancient Greece and Rome. It was originally used for entertainment purposes for those who could afford it, but eventually became popular enough to be used for mass consumption.

Poetry was written and performed by poets who were very well known for their writing skills or their ability to perform well on stage. These days, poetry is still widely read, but it has a much different purpose than it did in the past.

Here are some examples of metaphorical language in poetry:

\*I have loved the stars too fondly

The origins of many popular sayings and phrases can often be traced back to a single source. In this article, we will look at the origin of mixed metaphors.

Metaphors are a very popular literary device. They are used to create a comparison between two unrelated objects or ideas, usually by using descriptive language. The purpose of a metaphor is to help the audience understand one concept better by comparing it with another, more familiar concept.

Mixed metaphors are similar to metaphors wherein they also involve the comparison of two unrelated objects or ideas. However, mixed metaphors do not always create a comparison that makes sense. This is because mixed metaphors combine two completely different ideas together in order to create one metaphor.

For example, let's take the following saying: "He is wise as an owl." An owl is considered wise but obviously, an owl cannot be wise since they do not have the ability to reason or think rationally.



Another example would be: "I am as cool as a cucumber." Cucumbers are not cool but rather they are known for being extremely moist and often used in calming our eyes.

One way to recognize a metaphor is by the use of "is" or "are." For example, "The moon is like an egg" uses the verb "is" to compare the moon with an egg.

Metaphors can be positive or negative like this one: "The angry ocean tossed and turned." The ocean is compared with something negative and destructive here. So metaphors can be used to describe something in a positive or negative light

just like they can be used to make one thing resemble another. **Conclusion.** In this article has argued that both types can be processed using basic AI reasoning techniques which have already been applied to cases of straight metaphor, and in particular, the nesting of simulation and metaphor-pretense cocoons. We have suggested that within-vehicle reasoning plays an important role in mixing so that the connotation of each metaphor can be established prior to mapping to avoid contrary but mixed metaphors from conflicting.

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