Gestural metaphorical scenarios and coming out narratives

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This article extends the framework of metaphorical scenarios proposed by Musolff (2006, 2016) by adding a gestural component. Coming out videos, serving as the source of data for the present analysis, help to uncover the conceptual mechanisms that shape the understanding and conceptualisation of this phenomenon. The extended framework of gestural metaphorical scenarios reveals that conceptual metaphors create cognitively and communicatively coherent wholes that are expressed multimodally, via speech and gesture. The article proposes that coming out, a highly individualised process, is conceptualised at various levels by both generic and specific metaphors. The analysis shows that metaphorical variation is present not only at the level of lexical scenarios, but also at the level of gesture, giving rise to multimodal discourse fragments. The extended framework, therefore, might be useful in analysing multimodal discourse.

Keywords: gestural metaphorical scenario, conceptual metaphor, gesture, multimodality, coming out

1. Introduction

Traditionally, metaphors have been analysed in language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Quite recently scholars have turned their attention to multimodality (e.g., Forceville, 2009), which opened doors for the analysis of metaphor in music (Spitzer, 2004), art (Fabiszak & Olszewska, 2018) and gesture (Cienki, 2008, 2016). Of the wide variety of discourses that metaphors are frequently observed and analysed in, political discourse is one of the most prominent (Musolff, 2006, 2016). Metaphorical scenarios, proposed by Musolff (2006, 2016), are a useful tool for analysing this type of discourse. In this article, I propose that this tool may be also applied to gestures, extending the existing paradigm. In Musolff's understanding, metaphorical scenarios are "mininarratives that dominate discourse manifestations of source domains" (2006, p. 23), elsewhere defined as "an

ontologically rich sub-type of frames" (Musolff, 2016, p. 63). Metaphorical scenarios may be understood as offering "a pragmatically loaded perspective about the target topic" (Musolff, 2016, p. 64). Due to their frame-like nature, they offer a pragmatic perspective and, in this way, filter attention.

Müller's use of scenario, on the other hand, is focused on gestural "enactment of the source-domain" (Müller, 2017, p. 307), narrowing it down to "imagery scenario" and "experiential scenario" that she observes in unfolding discourse of dance classes (Müller, 2017). The way she uses the term seems similar to gestural metaphorical scenario. Her account of scenario focuses more on the online creation, leaving space for developing this concept in other aspects. Moreover, if we take quite literally what Gibbs states of metaphor, that "metaphor in human experience should always be understood as an action" (Gibbs, 2019, p. 33), it makes sense to include gestures as "something that people do" (Gibbs, 2019, p. 33). Gestural metaphorical scenario (GMS) is an extension of the concept of the metaphorical scenario. Gestural metaphorical scenarios manifest in gesture forms, creating a coherent speech co-dependent narrative.

In this article, I deploy coming out narratives as an illustration by which I show the workings of gestural metaphorical scenarios, pointing to how they are different from and similar to metaphorical scenarios expressed linguistically. Coming out is understood here as "the process through which lesbian, gay and transgender people accept and publicly affirm their sexual orientation or gender identity" (Molnar, 2018, p. 52). Although this definition is quite straightforward, the nature of coming out is complex and amounts to more than sexual orientation. Coming out is a series of connected events that encompass disclosing sexual orientation and gender identity, including the process of self-realisation and self-disclosure (Molnar, 2018). Referring to "coming out" as a "closet metaphor", Scott (2018, p. 146) notices that coming out is an example of figurative language employed in discourse. This particular use (closet metaphor) highlights only one aspect of the coming out process: the aspect of isolation, not explaining the complexity of the phenomenon in a larger context. I will point out how complex coming out is and, in particular, direct attention to the intricacies of this process, which motivate the metaphor variation observed in GMS.

1.1   Selection procedure

I selected the videos by typing a phrase "(my) coming out story" in the search bar on YouTube. The videos were selected from the search results on the basis of the titles of the videos. At this stage, I reviewed approximately 20 videos and chose six matching the main requirement of the study: hands of the speaker had to be clearly visible. The videos were downloaded from YouTube and catalogued

as separate files. I copied automatically generated transcriptions from YouTube and re-viewed them for accuracy and, then, I conducted the analysis of the collected material.

The character of the video as a medium for coming out stories may affect the speaker's gestures. Firstly, YouTube videos are not the most ecologically valid source of data as we do not know if, and if yes, how the videos were edited. Secondly, talking to a camera is not the most natural way of describing coming out experiences. What is more, a situation in which a person speaks to a webcam is definitely different from a face-to-face interaction between two people. These issues should be born in mind alongside the ethical concerns addressed below.

1.2 Ethics of the study

Discussing LGBT+-related subjects alerts researchers to the ethical concerns which highlight the need to raise awareness of the ethical standards necessary in academic work on LGBT+ issues. These arguments are understandable, given the vulnerability of the group. Yet, putting much stricter ethical requirements on LGBT+-related research may impede scholarly discussions about topics relevant to the community (e.g., coming out). Academics who work in the areas that involve LGBT+ community aim to advance the understanding of how LGBT+ people communicate and interact. As coming out is a sensitive topic, measures to ensure confidentiality of data are required. The YouTube videos I analyse here were publicly available at the time of writing. Two of them have been hidden by the authors by now. I have attempted to contact the authors and receive their permission, but only one has responded and agreed on using the video. To ensure anonymity for the speakers, I employed sketches of the gestures instead of the stills. To address possible ethical concerns, I decided not to provide URLs. Faces in the pictures have not been removed when they acted as a reference point for the gesture (signifying the gesture being additionally meaningful with reference to its placement in the gesture space).

2. Metaphoricity and gesture

In this section, I present metaphoricity as a multifaceted phenomenon that can be gesturally embodied (Müller & Tag, 2010, p. 87). First, I discuss the relationship between conceptual metaphor and multimodality, concluding with a discussion of the model of metaphorical scenario (Musolff, 2006, 2016).

2.1   Conceptual metaphor theory and multimodality

Musolff notices that "metaphor (…) brings together different areas of experience and knowledge so that a particular topic is cognitively and communicatively present in terms of another" (2016, p. 8). This definition adds more weight to its communicative function, moving away from "conceptual domains" towards "topics" to fittingly capture the role of metaphor in discourse. Therefore, metaphor is not a reflex of thought only, but a narrative tool for expressing complex multimodal scenarios. Musolff does not focus exclusively on language in his definition, which allows for more modalities to be counted as expressing metaphoricity. Lederer (2015), for example, shows how transgender individuals conceptualise decision-making in the coming out manifested in gesture as weighting, externalised in the form of both hands iconically depicting the scales. The metaphor, although observed in the context of transgender coming out stories, may be quite universal and deployed in many communicative contexts (e.g., as a recurrent gesture, see Ladewig & Bressem, 2013). Moreover, weighting metaphor in gesture is based on an axis-oriented conceptualisation (e.g., Calbris, 2008), showing how transgender people "necessarily feel mismatched between two genders" (Lederer, 2015, p. 107).

Beattie and Sale's (2012) study shows the impact of gesture-speech mismatch. Their study shows that people whose verbal message is different from the content expressed in gestures are liked less than people who do not mismatch gesture and speech. This effect may be explained by the figure-ground principle, stating that "some objects (figures) seem prominent, and other aspects of the field recede into the background (ground)" (Sternberg & Stenberg, 2012, p. 115). In this interpretation, gestural metaphorical scenarios comprise two modalities – language, more controlled, being the figure, and gesture, being the background element of the scenario, hence less controlled. When the mismatch is perceived, the figure-background reversal that occurs crossmodally between gesture and speech takes over the 'default scenario', the prototypical speech-gesture relation, and gesture becomes more visible to the conceptualiser (for a review of figure-ground reversals in language, see Thiering, 2011, for multimodal reversal, Veale, 2008). The aspect of controllability will be addressed later in this article.

The terminological shift proposed by Musolff allows for developing the concept of metaphor use in discourse context. The extended definition is a useful starting point for arguing that multimodal manifestations of metaphor may be analysed as coherently structured narratives, not only in language (metaphorical scenarios) but also in gesture, in gestural metaphorical scenarios.

2.2   Metaphorical scenarios

Metaphorical scenarios are understood by Musolff as 'mininarratives' that encompass parts of the discourse. Those fragments of discourse display a set of (non-exhaustive) features that can be expressed linguistically. The list is as follows:

1.   Metaphorical scenarios are exemplified by lexical items (Musolff, 2016, p. 31).
2.   Metaphors may be constructed deliberately to create a metaphorical scenario (Musolff, 2016, p. 87).
3.   Metaphorical scenarios help create coherence in discourse (Musolff, 2006, p. 25).
4.   Metaphorical scenarios create "focal points" (Musolff, 2006, p. 23).
5.   Metaphorical scenarios are subject to "pervasive (though systematic) semantic variation, pragmatic modification and meta-representational commenting" (Musolff, 2016, p. 139) in the sense that metaphors remain susceptible to context-induced alternations.

Scenarios structure the reality and create coherent wholes in discourse. The cognitive function of scenarios is that they help to construct stories, prototypical 'default scenarios' that may be elaborated and modified. For example, the EU IS A FAMILY scenario in Musolff (2016) is based on the idea of "a couple who experience the ups and downs of married life" (2016, p. 32). It evokes many interrelated concepts, such as courting, divorce, flirting or romance (2016, p. 32). These concepts are then incorporated within the scenario to form "mini-narratives", for example, a parent-child narrative or "married life" as between France and Germany (2016, p. 32). Musolff notices that those mini-narratives are not "grounded in experiential basis of folk-theoretical domain knowledge" (2016, p. 33), because these scenarios are possible only in the specific political discourse and otherwise may be considered debatable or irrelevant to the prototypical meaning of a family. Musolff (2006) says that "scenarios have stereotypical status" because "they include conventionally required assumptions that may be revealed by experts to be empirically wrong but are still the default expectations that underlie the folk-theories held by non-experts" (Musolff, 2006, p. 27; Putnam, 1975, p. 249). This means that stereotypical meaning, constructed on prototypes, is a part of the folk assumptions that may be overall accepted even if proven incorrect by experts. Consequently, in metaphorical scenarios, even though they are not completely grounded in experience, stereotypical meaning makes them easily accessible.

3.   Gesture: Definitions and functions

Gestures are "every-day occurrences – the spontaneous, unwitting and regular accompaniments of speech that we see in our moving fingers, hands and arms" (McNeill, 2005, p. 3). McNeill suggests that gestures are unplanned and relatively unconscious. Kendon, more leniently, says that gestures are "manual actions (…) employed in such a way as to provide the properties of objects or actions the speaker is talking about" (Kendon, 2009, p. 39). He points out that gestures give additional information, much like adjectives in a sentence (Kendon, 2009, p. 38). Gestures are believed to have an expressive function in that they "express inner state, appeal to somebody, and represent objects and actions in the world" (Müller, 2013, p. 204).

A special subtype of gesture is metaphorical gesture, described by McNeill as those helping to "imagine the non-imaginable" (McNeill, 2009, p. 60) by presenting an abstract object as a concrete entity. The metaphors expressed in both gesture and speech are called verbo-gestural metaphors (Müller, 2008).

The subject matter of Gesture Studies is diverse and encompasses many strands of scientific enquiry (e.g., Chui, 2011; Cienki, 2013; Geet et al., 2018; Jelec, 2019; Lederer, 2015; Mittelberg, 2019). Despite its variability, all of these research avenues treat gestures as communicative phenomena that have a cognitive basis, which may be claimed of gestural metaphorical scenarios, as explained below.

3.1   Features of gestural metaphorical scenarios

Table 1 below presents a list of features characterising verbal metaphorical scenarios proposed by Musolff and gestural metaphorical scenarios. They are discussed in the following sections.

3.1.1   Mode of expression

Metaphors are expressed in different modalities (cf. Forceville, 2009). Mode is understood following Forceville: "a sign system interpretable because of a specific perception process" (Forceville, 2009, p. 22). Metaphorical scenarios I analyse here are communicated in two modes: the verbal (lexical) and the gestural mode. In Musolff's understanding, lexical items are words associated with a given "topic" (Musolff, 2016, p. 31). Gesture forms may be viewed as equivalents to lexical items present in spoken discourse. Gesture form, similarly to a lexical item, "reflects how the speaker interprets each scene and how much significance is attached to it and various kinds of information included in it" (Kimbra, 2008, p. 128). Gesture forms help to understand how a given issue is conceptualised by an individual in a particular discourse. This claim lets us reflect on individual variation in gesture

Table 1. Lexical metaphorical scenarios and gestural metaphorical scenarios:
A comparison

FEATURE	Lexical metaphorical scenarios	Gestural metaphorical scenarios
mode of expression	expressed via lexical items	expressed via gesture forms
level of control	more controlled	less controlled
role in discourse structure	create coherence for the recipient	create coherence for the recipient
role in conceptualisation	create focal points in source domains	create focal points via the process of gesture conventionalisation
individual variation	present	present

and how the gesture forms vary across speakers when they talk and gesture about
a given topic. I elaborate on this issue in Section 3.1.5.

3.1.2   Level of control

Musolff (2016) claims that some metaphors may be used on purpose, which
points to an important question: To what extent is one able to control the use of
metaphor both in language and gesture? When, if at all, is metaphor used delib-
erately (cf. Steen, 2017)? The issue of (non-)deliberate gestures has been already
thoroughly discussed. For example, Casasanto and Jasmin (2012, p. 652) propose
that deliberate gestures elicited in study conditions "reflect conscious spatializa-
tions of time". Cooperrider (2017) shares the same perspective, claiming that ges-
tures are also deliberately communicative. Deliberateness is strictly connected
with the level of control. I suggest that, while gestures may be either deliberate
or spontaneous (cf. Li, 2017), the message they convey, especially in metaphori-
cal terms, falls within 'the cognitive unconscious' (e.g., Johnson, 2018; Lakoff &
Johnson, 1999). This means that metaphorical gestures accompanying speech may
be a less conscious form of expressing metaphors.

The question of control in metaphor use stems from the assumption that lex-
ical items in Musolff's metaphorical scenarios are controlled more than gestures.
Although Kendon (2004, p. 11) says that gestures are "deliberate expressive move-
ments", they are arguably less controlled than speech. My claim here is not that
gestures are always unconscious and unintentional – they are certainly conven-
tionally and intentionally used and their conventionality has been systematically
discussed (see e.g., Kendon, 1992). Yet, due to their conventional nature, gestures
may be less controlled. Lexical items may also be well-entrenched in discourse,

but when they prompt certain scenarios, the level of metaphor activation and control may vary. Similarly, metaphorical scenarios prompt figure-background effect especially when the elements of the "default scenario" are altered (Musolff, 2016, p. 34). This claim legitimises that the "figure" elements of the scenario may be more active and better controlled than the "background" elements.

The example presented in Figure 1 below helps to explain the concept of level of control in the context of gesture-speech (mis)match unfolding in time.
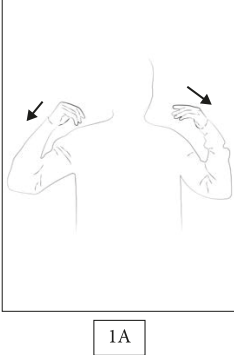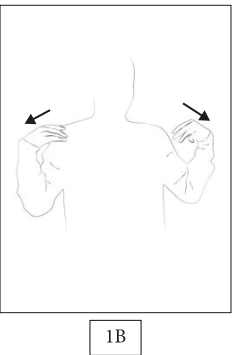
MODE	TIMELINE ⟶
GESTURAL	1A 1B
VERBAL	'…a story time when I came out as gay.' 'You feel like a weight off your shoulders.'

Figure 1. The level of control in gesture: Low level of control

The gesture in Figure 1 is a large both-hand gesture indicating taking a burden off the shoulders, following the metaphor PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN IS PHYSICAL BURDEN. The gestures take place in the upper frame of the speaker's body, at the level of the shoulders. This gesture localisation corresponds to the expression "be a weight off somebody's shoulders" in speech. The psychological burden is objectified in gesture and physically taken off the speaker's shoulders. The example shows that the speaker uses both hands to make this particular gesture and the gesture is repeated (hence two depictions presented in Figure 1), suggesting a recurring character of the gesture (see e.g., Ladewig & Bressem, 2013; McNeill, 2018; Müller, 2017). Figure 1a shows roughly the same gesture, with a different verbal context. The gesture in 1a is produced with a mismatch with speech – the speaker talks about coming out, not taking weight off his shoulders (as in 1b). This example may suggest that the message conveyed in speech may differ from that conveyed in gesture not because gestures are conceptually more easily accessible to the conceptualiser but because they are less controlled. We may speculate that if a gesture is

present in discourse and pertains to the message that is not yet verbalised, then the gesture requires more conscious effort to be inhibited than speech.

As gestures are discourse- and person-specific, it is not possible to generalise the above assumption (see Section 1.1.). Nevertheless, I assume that the presence of a mismatch adds credibility to the argument as it indicates that gestures are at least less controlled and unintentionally mismatched with speech, giving them a status of natural communicative phenomena, even in uncontrolled recording environment.

3.1.3   Role in discourse structure

Musolff's understanding of coherence comes from Fillmore's definition of conceptual scenes, which are coherent and consistent conceptual frame-like structures (Fillmore, 1975). Metaphorical scenarios create coherence because they present logically connected frame-like structures in a form of a discourse-specific mini-narrative. This coherence-making conceptual device enables the discourse comprehender to decode meaning without much strain, using both words and gestures.

Coherence in Musolff's examples is accounted for by Idealised Cognitive Models (ICMs) (Lakoff, 1987), as some scenarios are a subtype of ICMs (Musolff, 2006, p. 27). Coherence arises from the common SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema underlying scenarios. Due to the stereotyped, highly generic nature of this schema and its metaphorical realisations, both lexical metaphorical scenarios and gestural metaphorical scenarios create coherence for the recipient of the message. In gestural metaphorical scenarios, coherence is prominent when a speaker employs the schema to conceptualise disclosing their orientation.

Figure 2 shows three elements of the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema. The SOURCE is presented at the very beginning of the gesture, the PATH is the movement from the SOURCE to GOAL. This generic schema underlines THE COMMUNICATION IS SENDING OBJECTS metaphor (Reddy, 1993) and its more specific realisation – COMING OUT IS GIVING AN OBJECT. This is supported by the PUOH gestures investigated by Müller (e.g., 2004, 2017). The Palm-Up-Open-Hand gestures "ground communicative actions in real world actions" and create "a stable form-meaning pairing" (Müller, 2017, p. 294), which we may treat as supporting the claim that coherence comes from a clearly delineated schematic, stable structure realised in the gestural metaphorical scenario. A similar observation about schematicity in gesture forms is made by Mittelberg (2017) who notices that POUH gestures are based on generic image schemas, such as CONTAINMENT or SUPPORT. These schemas, although not visible in the analysed sample, help to substantiate the claim about coherence by pointing to the generic conceptual mechanisms underlying gestures.
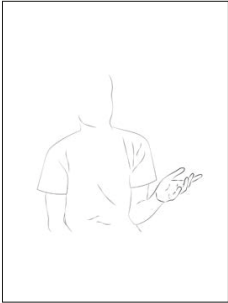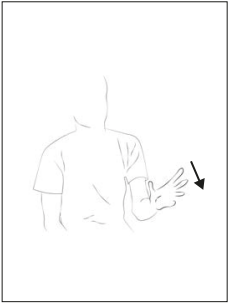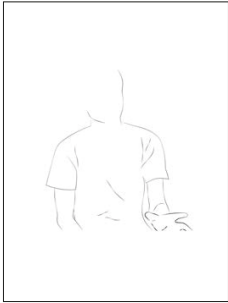
MODE			
GESTURAL	2A	2B	2C
	SOURCE	PATH	GOAL
VERBAL	'I didn't really do anything in terms of coming out.'		

Figure 2. SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema in gestural metaphorical scenario

3.1.4   Role in conceptualisation

Because metaphorical scenarios, as structural metaphors, are endowed with a relatively rich conceptual structure, their role is to provide understanding of complex, abstract phenomena. Abstract concepts are objectified, given certain boundaries thanks to which they can be manipulated and used in scenarios as 'real' elements. Metaphorical scenarios in the verbal mode direct attention to certain elements of discourse and shift the recipient's attention away from those aspects that remain hidden. Lexical items in the verbal mode indicate lexicalised concepts. In contrast to lexicalised concepts, gesture forms are far freer and more flexible in their expression. Gestures may be more or less conventionalised (e.g., Brookes, 2005; Müller, 2018) and this conventionality (or recurrence) may be observed in gestural metaphorical scenarios.

The cognitive function of gestural metaphorical scenarios comes from the cognitive function of gestures themselves (see Calero et al., 2019; Hostetter, 2011). This function of a GMS is complementary to its communicative role. Gestural metaphorical scenarios, apart from being communicative by conveying meaning via gesture forms, help the speaker/receiver of the message understand the concept being talked and gestured about better, hence having a structuring function. I propose that their primary function, in the described context, is to help the speaker/gesturer conceptualise and structure the concept, and represent the experiences and feelings schematically. Schematicity of gestural expression is evident in the generic image-schematic understanding of coming out and its recurring

nature. Because coming out exemplifies an emotionally taxing experience, the help of gestures as diffusors and expressors of emotions and meaning may be important in the pre-verbal and verbal stage of the message conceptualisation and expression. Coming out is only one instance of such social phenomena that impacts the production of the message (other cognitively challenging concepts and their impact on gesture are discussed in Pouw et al., (2014) and Son et al., (2018)). It may be therefore assumed that gestures have a general regulatory (facilitatory) function in communicative context: they both convey the content of the discourse and reveal the emotional state of the gesturer, as has been fittingly encapsulated in calling gestures "expressive movements" (Kappelhoff & Müller, 2011).

The role of metaphorical scenarios in conceptualisation is the same at verbal and gestural level. Musolff (2006) argues that metaphorical scenarios build focal points, functioning as a reference for further metaphor use and development. Focal points, therefore, create a common space for the extension of elements in a given metaphorical scenario. In Musolff's example (2016), once the scenario of the EU as a family is established in discourse, metaphors creating the scenario are stored and passively remembered by the discourse participants, ready to be re-used and re-elaborated if necessary. It might be possible that gesture forms create focal points, but this process may be much longer because they need to recur in the discourse context and undergo at least partial conventionalisation within this discourse. It does not mean that those gestures are universally and cross-culturally known – the generic meaning and form of these gestures are recruited temporarily for the specific use within a given discourse/scenario and may recur within it.

Some gestures, however, may be conventionalised within a given discourse due to their frequency of recurrence, or may become prototypical gestures of a given speaker, executed within a particular frame of gestural space. The generic conduit metaphor COMMUNICATION IS SENDING OBJECTS directly underpins the discourse-specific metaphor GIVING AN OBJECT IS COMING OUT. These gestures, as shown later, are recruited for the specific purposes of coming out and are recurrent within the analysed sample.
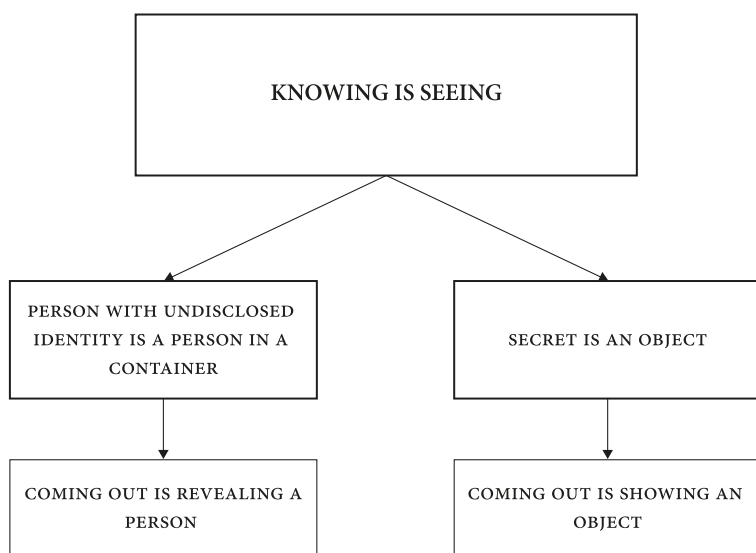
Metaphorical variation
Metaphorical variation can be seen both in lexical and gestural metaphorical scenarios. Metaphorical diversity is commented upon by Musolff (2016, p. 139) in the following way:

> The figurative discourses (…) are characterised by pervasive (though systematic) semantic variation, pragmatic modification and meta-representational commenting. None of the speakers, writers, nor (…) any of the hearers/readers accepted the respective metaphors blindly.

This means that people who use metaphors adapt them to the specific circumstances of use. The conceptual and expressive variants within a scenario may sometimes be deliberate, although the metaphorical scenario as a whole may be beyond conscious awareness. Moreover, metaphorical thought may be altered at the individual level of conceptualisation, retaining some of the most generic and universal features of a given metaphor, crucial for understanding and communicating a given message within a discourse.

In gestural metaphorical scenarios, we observe metaphorical variation at three levels. Firstly, different speakers conceptualise different stages of coming out in their own ways, their experiences are naturally individualised and so are the metaphors they use. Besides, because metaphors are speaker-specific, they also tend to form variants within the metaphorical scenarios, underpinned by one, generic conceptual metaphor, KNOWING IS SEEING. Thirdly, the gestures may also have different forms – sometimes one hand, sometimes two hands are used to gesture about the same or similar situations or things. Examples below illustrate these levels of variation in metaphor use in gestural metaphorical scenarios.
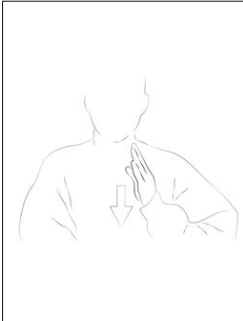

Figure 3. KNOWING IS SEEING metaphor and its coming out-specific instantiations

The figure above shows that a generic metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING creates metaphorical discourse- and context-specific projections. Here, COMING OUT IS REVEALING A PERSON is a third-level metaphor (see above), specific to coming out narratives and underpinning the process of conceptualisation. Metaphors PERSON WITH UNDISCLOSED IDENTITY IS A PERSON IN A CONTAINER and COMING OUT

IS SHOWING AN OBJECT are discourse-specific. They might be recruited from the generic metaphor at the highest level of schematicity and then be applied for the specific purposes of coming out conceptualisation. The level of schematicity of those metaphors may be different but the grounding mechanism ("perceived structural similarity", Kövecses, 2010, p.85) is similar, as seeing something is a prerequisite for learning. The diversity of metaphors created online in discourse entails the concept variation in metaphor use. Variation in metaphor use and production is a consequence of our ecological and cultural diversity (Kövecses, 2010; Littlemore, 2003, 2019; Sharifian, 2017;) coming from the individualised perception of the world. This variation is evident also in language, and if so, it may be seen in gestures.

Variation within gestural metaphorical scenarios

Coming out may be expressed differently by different speakers who use various metaphors conceptualising their experiences. The figures below illustrate this diversity in conceptualisation and gesture form. In describing gestural forms, where relevant, I adopt the description of gestures by Ladewig (2011), based on four parameters: (a) hand shape, (b) orientation, (c) movement and (d) position in gesture space and give a short description of the analysed gestural form.

MODE	
GESTURAL	4A 4B
VERBAL	'I remember being like this closeted 14-years-old.'

Figure 4. PERSON WITH AN UNDISCLOSED IDENTITY IS A PERSON IN A CONTAINER

The gesture sequence consists of two gestures. The hand in 7a curls into a fist and then (7b) becomes vertically oriented. The gesture itself comes from the central position in the gestural space to the lower position of the gestural space (as per McNeill's schematisation of gestural space in 2005), as if cutting the space before

the speaker. The above cutting gesture, accompanied by the verbal fragment in Figure 4, is a metaphorical gesture demonstrating a barrier that a person who is "in the closet" has to face, preventing them from getting out of the metaphorical container. By showing this particular gesture, the speaker situates himself inside the container. Two readings of this gesture are possible. (1) The gesture invokes the image of being either cut from the world: a fast vertical movement, shown in the drawing by an arrow, represents that the person in the closet is separated from the world. (2) This gesture may also signify that a person is closeted and then the hand of the speaker symbolises the "door" of the "closet". These two interpretations show that gesture can express many ideas at once, which seems to be in accordance with what Calbris (2011) calls "gestural polysemy" (2011, p. 5). However we interpret the gesture in this case, the primary idea is preserved: the person speaks of himself as being inside a container.
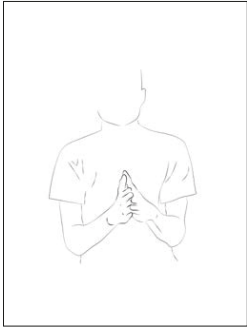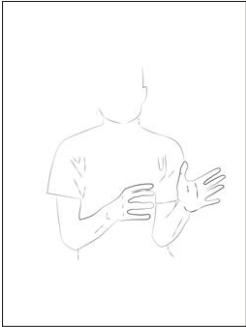
| MODE	
GESTURAL	
VERBAL	'At this point I had already come out to people at school.'

Figure 5. COMING OUT IS REVEALING A PERSON

Figure 5 shows a gesture sequence composed of two consecutive gestures. The gesture may be understood metaphorically as opening the container (the closet). In terms of movement, the 5a part of the sequence shows that the hands of the speaker touch each other, creating a kinaesthetic rendition of an obstacle (the "door" of "the closet"). The 5b part shows the process of opening the container, yet the direction of the gesture is slightly altered. Now it is tilted to the side, as if indicating a departure from the main topic discussed so far. Despite this variation, the metaphor is still preserved. A shift in gestural space is visible in the above example: in 5a the gesture occupies the central position, and later moves to the

left side, which corresponds to "people at school" in the given verbal fragment, presumably suggesting that "people at school" constitute a separate topic or are treated as less important.

Variation in gesture form
As a mode of expression in gestural metaphorical scenarios, gesture forms are also discourse- and person-specific. The following three examples show that the same metaphor may be expressed by the same underlying PUOH gesture but realised with different gesture form by three speakers.

| 6A | 6B | 6C |
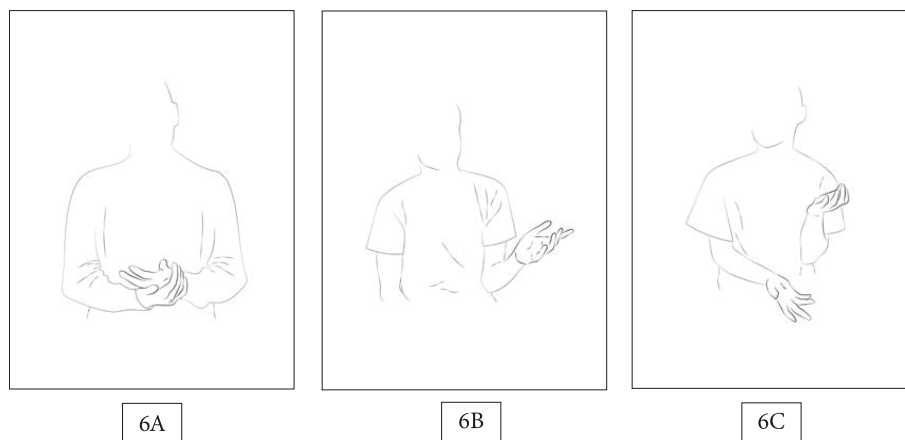
Figure 6. COMING OUT IS SHOWING AN OBJECT

The above gestures are the subvariant of the same metaphor, COMING OUT IS SHOWING AN OBJECT. Shape-wise, all of the above gestures are similar – the hand is slightly curled, as to represent holding an object. They differ with respect to the use of gestural space. Gesture in 6a takes place in the lower frame very close to the gesturer. In 6b, the gesture is more visible, occupying a more central, yet left-tilted side, much like in 6c, where the central frame view is maintained, but the hand is directed more towards the potential listener. Each of the speakers uses different hand-body orientation in their gestural expression. In 6a, the gesturer uses both hands to gesture, which may indicate that they want to protect the imaginary object from being seen. In 6b, we see a one-hand gesture, and in 6c, a very similar gestural form, yet two-handed. Following Ladewig and Bressem's (2013) claim that gesture conveys a different message depending on its placement in the gestural space, we can tentatively suggest that this is the case in this example. Yet, the data do not allow to elaborate on this issue.

Variation may be also observed at the level of one-hand/two-hand gestures and its scope, as in the following examples.

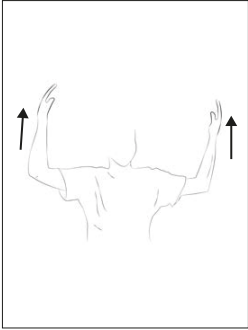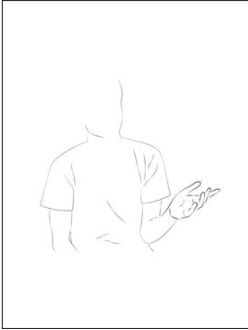| MODE		
GESTURAL	7A	7B
VERBAL	'…during this process I got involved in a theatre'	'It's like constant hiding stuff is like so terrible'

Figure 7. Individual variation in COMING OUT IS A CIRCULAR PROCESS metaphor

This isolated example of a metaphor COMING OUT IS A CIRCULAR PROCESS (movement) is realised differently by two speakers. These realisations are based on the same metaphor, but the gestural form, in terms of the four parameters, is different. As for the orientation, Figure 7a shows a flat-hand horizontal circular movement, whereas 7b – the vertical. The difference is quite visible – in the left-hand example, the gesture is directed towards the ground as if coming out occupies bounded space; the other gesture highlights more the aspect of repetitiveness. The gestural forms in 7a indicates the aspect of surface not a process, which contrasts with the verbal message. The gestural form in 8a pertains to the aspect of repetition that is gestured cyclically. A similar observation concerning gesture form is drawn by Ladewig (2014) who notices that "(…) the cyclic gesture represents the combining of details as an activity that is in progress" (Ladewig, 2014, p.1607). She also observes that, as in the above example, "gesture very often adds information not present in speech" (2014, p.1607), highlighting the fact that gesture is an independent expressive modality. Moreover, there is a difference in terms of occupied gestural space: in 7a, the hand is placed in the central position, whereas in 7b – one hand is placed more in the centre, the other – more towards left-periphery.

Variation in gesture form is visible in the above example. These two speakers do not refer to the same idea in what they say: one speaks of the process, and the other about keeping a secret and associated emotions (*terrible*). Yet, gesture seems to be underpinned by the same conceptualisation: the CYCLE image schema (Ladewig, 2014; Ladewig & Bressem, 2013), the 'semantic core' of conceptualisa-

tion (Ladewig & Bressem, 2013). The message conveyed in speech by the gesturer in 7a refers to a process both verbally and gesturally, making these two modalities co-expressive.

MODE		
GESTURAL	8A	8B
VERBAL	'Thank you for watching my big fat coming out story'	'I didn't really do anything in terms of coming out'.

Figure 8. Variation in gesture form: COMING OUT (SECRET) IS AN OBJECT metaphor

In Figure 8a the gesture is big and congruent with the verbal content of the message. The size of the gesture is only one of many dimensions that are person-specific. In Figure 8b the gesture is visibly smaller. It is hard to explain these differences, yet, I assume that these alternations in gesture size, significant in how coming out is conceptualised at the specific level, may confirm the generic status of the object metaphor: both gestures refer to an object, regardless of the gesture size. As for the hand shape in the above gestures, in 8a the hands are curled more than in 8b, where the gesture seems to, in terms of its movement, indicate object transfer rather than lifting something up. There is a significant difference between the gestures' placement in the gestural space. The gesture in 8a occupies the upper position, whereas in 8b, as mentioned earlier, the left side of the gestural space. The placement of these gestures seems to be relevant for their function: while the gesture in 8a in an end-video gesture that serves a global discursive function, the 8b gesture is more about coming out itself, presumably the transfer of the metaphorical object.

4.   Discussion

The notion of "coming out" is intertwined with "outing", understood as "the act of (...) revealing that a certain person is gay or lesbian, (...) usually done against the person's wishes (...)" (Halwani, 2002, p.141). This definition applies to sexual orientation but it may be broadened to any marginalised identity. Although the gestural metaphorical scenarios analysed in this paper are based on stories of voluntary coming out experiences, they can potentially account for both phenomena. Metaphorically, coming out equals leaving a bounded space, and the motion involved is self-propelled, indicating willingness and self-agency. In contrast, outing equals leaving the same bounded space due to the external force acting upon the person in the closet, forcing them to leave. This conceptual difference may be also reflected in the emotional involvement, as the voluntary leaving the space is often thought-out carefully, and "outing" involves forces out of the control of the person concerned.

I have hinted that conceptualisation of coming out is a mechanism employing objectification, defined by Szwedek (2011, p.350) as the process in which "an abstract entity is conceptualized as an object with all the latter's potential of attributes". In the analysed material, people who talk about coming out use objectification to gesturally communicate their coming out experiences. It raises the question: If objectification is the first stage of conceptualisation, how does this mechanism change over time? This issue points out to another mechanism that may take place specifically in coming out conceptualisations. Iteration, the re-occurrence of a given process in time in different contexts, may be connected with Szwedek's objectification. If, and how these two phenomena are connected needs further research.

We may also suggest, based on the assumption that gesture forms are recruited from the generic pool of metaphorical gestures, that the model can, at least partially, predict the use of gestures in the outing scenario. If coming out is based upon the idea of a voluntary action, then the forces are egocentric, when the doer is also the receiver. In the outing scenario, the source of the force is external, so the conceptualisation at the level of gestures may be different but predictable from the abovementioned force-dynamic alternations that occur across different scenarios.

5.   Conclusions

The aim of the article was to present gestural metaphorical scenario as an extension of Musolff's concept of metaphorical scenario. In doing so, I compared ges-

tural metaphorical scenarios with metaphorical scenarios in the verbal mode and proposed a sample analysis of the coming out scenario. I propose that the notion of gestural metaphorical scenario may be useful in analysing multimodal, poly-semiotic communication (Zlatev, 2018), allowing a deeper analysis of written or spoken discourse as well as gestures as a complex and language co-dependent semiotic system. Gestural metaphorical scenarios create a new research space for analysing longer stretches of discourse. This article contributes to the now developing field of queer cognitive linguistics, that offers insights into thinking, gesture, and language of LGBT+ individuals. The proposed extension of the concept of metaphorical scenario poses some questions as to its predictive value. Are we able to predict gesture forms in one scenario knowing the conceptualisation mechanisms in a related one? How recurrent, partially conventionalised gestures should be defined in the context of coherently structured gestural metaphorical scenarios? To answer these questions, we need to investigate the nature of gestural metaphorical scenarios further, as gestures themselves are, as McNeill (2013, p. 28) famously claimed, "window into the mind".

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