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Metaphors in Imperatives:
The Case of *Come* and *Go*

Hidemitsu Takahashi

1 Introduction

It has been repeatedly emphasized that metaphor is ubiquitous in everyday language and plays a major role in our conceptualization of reality (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987, among others).[1]

The literature on metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics has discussed in considerable detail the structure of metaphors as well as the cognitive motivations behind them. Thus, according to Lakoff's Invariance Hypothesis, "metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (that is, the image-schema structure) of the source domain" (cf. Lakoff 1990: 54). Later, it was proposed that a large subset of conceptual metaphors involve "blends," — conceptual integrations that include a generic space, two or more input spaces and a blended space. In these structures, correspondences between input spaces are connected by a matching operation (cf. Fauconnier 1999; Fauconnier and Turner 2000; Turner and Fauconnier 2000, among others). In recent years, we are witnessing a growing number of corpus-based analyses of metaphor (as well as metonymy) (most notably, Stefanowitch and Gries 2006). As a natural consequence, an impressive amount of valuable data as well as important insights have come out of both introspective and quantitative

approaches.

Despite all these developments, however, previous research is insufficient in at least two respects. For one thing, not much consideration has been given to register variation. Given that a great majority of lexical items differ significantly in both frequency and usage pattern across different registers (cf. Biber et al. 1999), we might naturally expect metaphorical expressions to exhibit a parallel tendency. Second, metaphor studies have based their arguments mostly on declarative sentences. Literally no attention has ever been paid to differences between metaphors in declaratives and those in non-declarative sentences. Throughout the history of metaphor studies, declaratives have been taken for granted for analysis because written language, which is largely comprised of declarative sentences, has been examined. However, since almost all languages make distinctions among declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives either syntactically or morphologically (Sadock and Zwicky 1985), analyses of metaphors from the perspective of declarative/non-declarative dichotomy seem critically important, which are expected to greatly enhance our understanding of metaphor.

It is true that declarative sentences far outnumber non-declarative sentences in written language. In conversation, however, non-declarative sentences are a great deal more frequent than in written language, although this does not mean that non-declaratives are more frequent than declaratives. According to an extensive corpus survey made in Biber et al. (1999: 221), imperatives, for example, are more than five times more frequent in conversation than in writing. All this implies is that metaphor studies can be fruitfully complemented by a comparison of metaphors in declaratives with those in non-declarative sentences.

The present paper discusses two deictic motion verbs *come* and *go* in metaphorical uses. It has two main aims. One is to explain how often

they are used metaphorically in conversation, and exactly how they are used as metaphor -- specifically, how often metaphorical uses of *come* and *go* carry either positive or negative connotations (cf. Clark 1974; Radden 1996). The other aim is to explain how metaphorical uses of *come* and *go* are different depending upon whether these verbs appear in imperatives or in declaratives.

This paper reports the following results. First, in conversation, non-metaphorical use is noticeably more frequent than metaphorical use with both verbs - particularly, *come*. Metaphors of *come* account for only under 30% of the data and *go* around 40%. Second, in metaphor, both verbs are used a great deal more often with neutral (as opposed to positive or negative) connotations. However, in relatively rare cases where two verbs do carry connotations of either polarity, *come* tends to be used more often with positive connotations while *go* more often with negative connotations. Third, imperative uses of *come* and *go* are heavily constrained in metaphorical potential, particularly, those of *come*. It is argued that this constraint on metaphors arises primarily from the inherent meaning of the imperative construction.

Section 2 summarizes the main findings of previous studies. Section 3 reports the findings about metaphorical uses of *come and go* in declarative sentences. Section 4 reports the findings about those in imperative sentences. Section 5 discusses the findings made above, and section 6 is the conclusion.

2 Findings of past studies

Motion is among the earliest and the most important human experiences. Our perception of motion begins long before we are able to talk or walk (cf. Radden 1996). Motion verbs can be found in every language and

deictic motion verbs in particular are the most typical verbs of motion in English and probably other languages.

Come and go were first analyzed in great detail by Fillmore (1966, 1971, 1972), who observes that the main difference between *come* and *go* resides in the destination of the motion. That is, the destination of *come* may be the speaker's or the addressee's location at the time of the utterance or the time referred to in it, whereas the destination of *go* is simply somewhere other than the location of the speaker (Fillmore 1971). Fillmore employs the term "deictic center" to discuss a variety of expressions involving *come* and *go*.

Both *come* and *go* have a large number of idiomatic or metaphorical phrases in which they refer not to motion but to non-motion, i.e. change of state (e.g. *come to one's senses*, *go bad*). By comparing idiomatic expressions of *come* with those of *go*, Clark (1974: 317) hypothesized that the normal state (the deictic center) should always be the destination of *come* and the destination of *go* can be characterized as the non-normal state. In other words, in Clark's analysis, *come* in idiomatic expressions tends to denote entry into a normal state while *go* departure from a normal state. Clark presents a wealth of examples like those in (1) to (3) below supporting her hypothesis:

(1) a. Mortimer went out of his mind.
    b. Lovelace came back to his senses. (Clark's exx. 1 and 2)
(2) a. He went insane (mad, berserk).
    b. *He came insane (mad, berserk). (Clark's ex. 25)
(3) a. The motor came alive again.
    b. *The motor went alive again. (Clark's ex. 33).

Clark is careful to note that her claim is not invalidated by the

absence of the expression **come hairy* intended to mean "to acquire the head of hair that people are normally expected to have" as opposed to the presence of the expression *go bald*. Although her hypothesis predicts the felicity of **come hairy*, she contends that this expression can be dealt with as a case of "fortuitous gap" (Clark 1974: 317). In other words, this, she claims, is among numerous potential idioms that could occur but in fact do not. I would rather suggest that the absence of the phrase **come hairy* is motivated by the implausibility of this phenomenon in the real world.

In his analyses of motion metaphors involving *come* and *go*, Radden (1996) delves into the cognitive motivations behind the metaphorical uses of *come* and *go*. He maintains that the conceptual metaphor CHANGE IS MOTION is prevalent across languages primarily because the image schema of motion is a good candidate for the source domain of a metaphor. It is pervasive in human experience, simply structured and well-understood (Radden, 424).

Next, Radden finds that there are many counterexamples to Clark's principle; i.e. *come* can carry negative connotations and *go* positive connotations. Included are such common expressions as *come to harm*, *come into conflict*, *come loose*, *come part* and *come under attack* as well as those like *go free* and *go straight* (all examples from Radden 1996: 432). On the basis of these findings, Radden concludes that:

> "... the deictic motion verbs *to come* and *to go* are not inherently associated with positive or negative evaluations but rather these evaluations are, amongst others, the result of the perspective from which a scene is viewed" (Radden 1996: 434).

At this point, we are left with at least two important questions

pertaining to metaphorical uses of *come* and *go*. First, how often are *come and go* metaphorical in conversation? Next, if it is true that (contra Clark) both *come and go* may carry both positive and negative connotations, which connotations are more frequent with each verb? Third, how do *come and go* in imperatives behave as metaphor? In imperative uses of *come and go*, which connotations are more frequent, positive or negative?

In the next section, we report the findings concerning the first two questions.

3 Frequencies and connotations of metaphors of *come* and go in declaratives

This paper employs as data source four fictive stories written by four contemporary American writers, *The Sky is Falling* (Sidney Sheldon, 2000), *The Pelican Brief* (John Grisham, 1992), *Malice* (Daniel Steel, 1997) and *The Deception* (Barry Reed, 1997). I collected all the declarative sentences containing *come or go* found in conversational interaction.

I chose to employ data from fictive stories for the following reasons. First, the four stories contained a total of 199 tokens of *come* and 373 tokens of *go* so that the size of data is large enough to make a meaningful generalization. Second, novels provide a clear picture of social and power relations between interlocutors, as well as contexts of situations in which a given imperative is uttered. This information is crucial in an interpretation of a given expression with certainty. Third, the data contain a wide variety of social and power relations and the samples include not only those from face-to-face conversation but also from telephone conversation. Even though the samples are not taken from the transcripts of spontaneous speech, I consider they nevertheless represent

a diverse, relatively unbiased sample of present-day spoken American English. In this regard, I agree with Toolan, who maintains that dialogues in narratives are mediated representations of actual conversations, in that "many crucial structural and functional principles are at work just as much in fictional dialogue as in natural conversation" (1994: 2689).

One of the most difficult tasks that all researchers face in metaphor studies is to differentiate metaphorical expressions clearly from non-metaphorical. In this paper, I define metaphorical expressions of *come* and *go* as those referring to non-motion (or changes of state) in its broadest sense. Under this broad umbrella fall numerous set-phrases or idioms including (but not limited to) expressions like *She came through a lot*, *Did you come up with something new?*, *Spring is coming*, as well as *He went on and on*, *I'll have to go through this operation*, and *He will go ahead and take the risks*.

Non-metaphorical uses of *come* and *go* are of at least two kinds. One is literal use, referring to motion, as in *Bill came into my office yesterday* or *She went to his apartment*. The other is metonymical. In this case, while the expression does refer to motion, something more is conventionally implicated -- PART STANDS FOR WHOLE, as in set-phrases such as *You should go to a doctor*; *She should go out with guys more often*; *She went to bed with John*; and *you don't go to jail for taking your clothes off in your own apartment* (*Malice*, 200). To take an instance of *You should go to a doctor*, I consider this sentence metonymical because the sentence conventionally implies that the addressee should be examined by a doctor.

Table 1 shows the frequencies of metaphorical as well as non-metaphorical uses of *come* in declaratives.

Given below in (4) and (5) are instances of metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses of *come*, respectively:

Table 1: Frequencies of metaphorical vs. non-metaphorical uses of *come* in declaratives (CONV)

	TOTAL	Metaphor	Non-metaphor	Ambiguous
Pelican	22	6	16	0
Sky	54	6	47	1
Deception	74	34	36	4
Malice	49	11	38	0
	199	57(28.6%)	137(68.8%)	5

(4) METAPHORICAL USES OF *COME*

a. ... but you've got to come to some understanding with them. (*Sky*, 42)
b. I'm afraid I've come to the same conclusion as Dr. Young. (*Sky*, 173)
c. She came up with her own theory, which she has now discarded. (*Pelican*, 105)
d. It should come natural. (*Pelican*, 375)
e. I'm happy to report she seems to be coming along.
[used in the sense of "recovering from a serious injury"] (*Deception*, 349)

(5) NON-METAPHORICAL USES OF *COME*

a. By the way, when are you going to come out here? (*Sky*, 31)
b. I didn't come to ask you about that. (*Sky*, 77)
c. You're not supposed to come here unless I say so. (*Pelican*, 243)
d. I just came from seeing your daughter. (*Deception*, 109)

Ambiguous cases include examples such as *It just came in on my computer* (*Sky*, 97) and *We come from opposite cultures, opposite ends of the world* (*Sky*, 102).

Next, Table 2 below reveals the frequencies of metaphorical and

Table 2: Frequencies of metaphorical vs. non-metaphorical use of go in declaratives (CONV)

	TOTAL	Metaphor	Non-metaphor	Ambiguous
Pelican	79	29	50	0
Sky	75	24	50	1
Deception	129	66	60	3
Malice	90	27	61	2
	373	146(39.1%)	221(59.2%)	6

non-metaphorical uses of *go* in declaratives.

Given below in (6) and (7) are instances of metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses of *come*, respectively:

(6) METAPHORICAL USES OF *GO*

a. He went out of his way to make this a better world. (*Sky*, 58)
b. The entire Winthrop fortune goes to charity. (*Sky*, 84)
c. I'm not sure you should go on with it. (*Sky*, 110)
d. I'd rather go to hell for a day. (*Pelican*, 71)
e. There doesn't appear to be much going on. (*Pelican*, 96)

(7) NON-METAPHORICAL USES OF *GO*

a. Yes, we'll be going. (*Pelican*, 115)
b. I'll go to my office, wait an hour, and come back in here. (*Pelican*, 146)
c. We went in to see Donna a week later, and ... (*Deception*, 21)
d. She went to your old alma mater. (*Deception*, 241)

Ambiguous cases include examples such as *We could probably get Finnerty to go to four fifty* (*Deception*, 251) and *I can go back to work* (*Sky*, 365).

Table 3: Frequency distributions of metaphorical uses of *come* and *go* with positive vs. negative connotations (CONV)

	METAPHOR	Positive Conn.	Negative Conn.	Neutral
come	57	21(36.8%)	2(3.5%)	34(59.6%)
go	146	14(9.6%)	27(18.5%)	105(71.9%)

The two tables (Tables 1 and 2) reveal the following points. First, while both *come* and *go* are very frequent in everyday speech, *go* is 1.9 times more frequent than *come* in my data.[2] Second, non-metaphorical uses are consistently more frequent than metaphorical uses with both verbs. *Come* is used non-metaphorically in around 70% of all the tokens and *go* around 60%.

Next, let us look at Table 3 below, the distributions of *come* and *go* in metaphor with positive or negative connotations.

Given below are instances of metaphorical expressions of *come* carrying positive, negative and neutral connotations, respectively:

(8) METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS OF *COME* WITH POSITIVE CONNOTATIONS

a. Our lives never seem to come together, do they, Jeff? (*Sky*, 150?)
b. ... but you've got to come to some understanding with them. (*Sky*, 42)
c. ... hoping you come to your senses and trust me. (*Pelican*, 212)
d. It should come natural. (*Pelican*, 375)
e. ... but it comes into effect in a couple of months. (*Deception*, 68)
f. I think you're coming along better than expected. (*Deception*, 210)
g. If you can come to a conclusion like that. (*Malice*, 25)
h. I'm sure if I came across favorably to your case, ... (Deception, 175)

(9) METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS OF *COME* WITH NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS

a. If worse comes to worst, how much am I insured for? (*Deception*, 184)
b. If you posed for it eighteen years ago, you've got to know it's out there, and it'll come back to haunt you. (*Malice*, 367)

(10) METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS OF *COME* WITH NEUTRAL CONNOTATIONS

a. They came through when it counted. (*Pelican*, 413)
b. Dante DiTullio is the toughest nut I ever came across. (*Deception*, 17)
c. Sexton comes from the polo-playing Sextons. (*Deception*, 117)
d. Why don't we just play sometime, and see what we come up with? (*Malice*, 174)
e. Because those things come out sometimes. (*Malice*, 306)

Given below are instances of metaphorical expressions of *go* used with positive, negative and neutral connotations, respectively:

(11) METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS OF *GO* WITH POSITIVE CONNOTATIONS

a. He went out of his way to make this a better world. (*Sky*, 58)
b. The operation went well. (*Sky*, 190)
c. Tyrone goes free (*Pelican*, 58)
d. Look, Charlie, the new law doesn't goes into effect for two more weeks. (*Deception*, 135)
e. It (=the session) seems to be going pretty well. (Deception, 359)
f. We're going back to normal. (*Malice*, 384)

(12) METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS OF *GO* WITH NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS

a. We've gone too far to let anything stop it now. (*Sky*, 263)
b. ... and we're watching it go down the drain. (*Sky*, 280)
c. I think the American people deserve to know what went wrong. (*Pelican*, 40)
d. Gratham's gone crazy. (*Pelican*, 317)
e. If you do it sooner, they may go nuts and ?? to court. (*Pelican*, 397)
f. Well, something went haywire. (*Pelican*, 97)
g. He went south and took the cardinal's account with him. (*Deception*, 49)
h. You don't have any idea what your mother went through. (*Malice*, 346)

(13) METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS OF *GO* WITH NEUTRAL CONNOTATIONS

a. I can't go into it all now, ... (*Sky*, 353)
b. Let me know how it goes. (*Sky*, 166)
c. She's going around asking questions, but I think it's harmless. (*Sky*, 158).
d. You must have wanted what went with it. (*Malice*, 353)
e. We go on the premise that ... (*Deception*, 15)
f. ... and we'll go over your answers. (*Deception*, 126)

We obtain the following results. First, when *come* and *go* are used metaphorically, they are used "neutrally" (i.e. without either positive or negative connotations) in more than half the tokens — *come* around 60% and *go* around 72%. Metaphors carrying either positive or negative connotations are considerably less frequent than those carrying neutral

connotations. Second, when the two verbs do carry either positive or negative connotation, *come* carries positive connotations more often than negative (36.8% vs. 3.5%) while *go* carries negative connotations more often than positive (18.5% vs. 9.6%).

In summary, we have come up with the following findings. In declaratives, non-metaphorical uses are more frequent than metaphorical uses with both *come* and *go* —68.8% vs. 28.6% with *come* and 59.2% vs. 39.1% with *go*. Next, while we find tokens of *come* and *go* carrying both negative and positive connotations, the cases of neutral connotations are a great deal more frequent —59.6% with *come* and 71.9% with *go*. However, in the relatively infrequent cases in which metaphorical uses do involve connotations of either polarity, *come* more often carries positive connotations and *go* negative connotations. In section 4 below, we turn to metaphorical expressions of *come* and *go* in imperatives.

4 Frequencies and connotations of metaphors of *come* and go in imperatives

I employed as data source the same four fictive stories I used in section 3 and collected all the imperative sentences containing *come or go* uttered in conversational interactions. My survey shows that *come* and *go* in metaphor tell a somewhat different story when they occur in imperatives. First, let us begin with *come*:

As Table 4 shows, the verb *come* appeared 78 times in imperatives, used

Table 4: Frequencies of metaphorical vs. non-metaphorical uses of *come* in imperatives (CONV):

TOTAL	Metaphor	Non-metaphor	Ambiguous
78	41(52.6%)	37(47.4%)	0

metaphorically in 41 tokens (52.6%) and non-metaphorically in 37 tokens (47.4%). Statistically, metaphorical uses of *come* slightly outnumber non-metaphorical uses. What is most striking, however, is the result that only one phrase *come on* accounts for all the 41 tokens of imperative *come* in metaphor, which is used to express "an exclamatory exhortation to act." (Biber et al. 1999: 410).

The examples in (14) below illustrate the sole metaphorical use of *come* in imperatives in the present data:

(14) METAPHORICAL USES OF *COME* IN IMPERATIVES: *COME ON*

a. ... You guys are already doing background checks, aren't you? **Come on**, Gavin, you can tell me. Who's on the list? I'll never tell. (*Pelican*, 75)

b. "How's the girl?"
"Which one?"
"**Come on**, Thomas. The girl?" (*Pelican*, 75)

c. "When can we go to bed?"
"Are you sleepy?"
"Anything but. **Come on**, Darby, it's been three nights." (*Pelican*, 87)

d. "You're gorgeous when you're drunk." She lay back and closed her eyes then, and his tongue trailed tantalizingly down her stomach to her underwear, and then forced its way inside it, licking lower and lower, until suddenly her eyes flew open, and she jumped. She couldn't.
"**Come on**, baby... please..." (*Malice*, 185)

e. "Can you pull over to the side of the road?"
"What? I'm in four--lane traffic-the height of the rush hour. ...What

is it, Judy?"

"Keep your eyes on the road, Dan. What I've got to tell you isn't-"

"**Come on**, Judy, for chrissakes!" (*Deception*, 299-300)

f. "How far apart are you?" ...

"Miles, Judge," ...

"C'mon now, there's no case that can't be settled. ...

... "Judge," he said, "my young lady will be bedridden and institutionalized for the next forty years...."

"**C'mon**, **c'mon**, Mr. Sheridan, you're not in front of a jury. Cut the historionics. Let's lay the cards on the table - what's the offer and what's the demand? Ms. D'Ortega?"

This use of *come on* (as in *a* to *e*), or its shortened version *c'mon* (as in *f*), is both emotive and discourse-interactive as much as directive. Except this particular use, there was no token of *come* that can be interpreted as a metaphor, despite the fact that *come* has a wide variety of metaphorical expressions in declaratives. To put it differently, if this set-phrase *come on* is excluded from the analysis, metaphorical uses of *come* are extremely rare in imperatives.

The examples in (15) below demonstrate non-metaphorical (i.e. motion) uses of *come* in imperatives:

(15) NON-METAPHORICAL USE OF *COME* IN IMPERATIVES

a. Dana? **Come** in here. (*Sky*, 129)

b. **Come** in, Doctor. (*Deception*, 8)

c. "**Come** back in a week," he said casually, eyeing her again with obvious interest. "And let me know if you move, or find a job. Don't leave the state. ..." (*Malice*, 140)

d. It would be our pleasure. **Come** this way, please. (*Sky*, 78)

e. You **come** nosing around here again, Sheridan, and you're going to end up as part of the Jersey Turnpike. (*Deception*, 267)

Some examples of *come on* were used to indicate deictically anchored movement or "pre-departure summons to move" (Biber et al. 1999: 410):

(16) a. Dana took a deep breath. "All right. We'll look for a school that's more understanding. **Come on**, Kemal." Kemal got up, glared at Mr. Henry, and followed Dana out of the office. (*Sky*, 119)

b. Dana stopped the car in front of the house. She looked at Kemal. "You're coming in with me."
"Why?"
"Because it's cold out here. **Come on**."
Dana went to the front door and Kemal reluctantly followed her. (*Sky*, 120)

According to an extensive corpus survey by Biber et al. (1999: 376), *come on* as used in conversation is the most frequent phrasal verb in any register (i.e. conversation, fiction, news and academic prose) and this phrase has three major functions: an exclamatory exhortation to act; pre-departure summons to act and meaning "to start" or "become activated." The present data reveal that of the first two functions, which are performed by imperatives, the exclamatory function to act is predominant. This particular use accounts for 41 out of 44 tokens, although the second function (i.e. pre-departure summons to act) can be found (3 out of 44 tokens). By contrast, the third function, which is performed by non-imperatives, is infrequent, as evident from the fact that in my data, none of 199 declarative tokens of *come* takes this form (One declarative

Table 5: Frequencies of metaphorical vs. non-metaphorical uses of go in imperatives (CONV):

TOTAL	Metaphor	Non-metaphor	Ambiguous
54	9(16.6%)	42(77.7%)	3

example is offered in Biber et al. (1999: 377): *The heating didn't come on this morning*).

Next, let us look at the ways in which *go* as an imperative verb behaves in metaphor.

As Table 5 shows, the verb *go* appeared a total of 54 times in imperatives, out of which 9 tokens (16.6%) were metaphorical and 42 (77.7%) non-metaphorical. What is different from the case of *come* is that non-metaphorical uses of *go* outnumber metaphorical uses.

The examples in (17) below demonstrate the imperative verb *go* in metaphor:

(17) METAPHORICAL USE OF *GO* IN IMPERATIVES

a. "Sorry we woke you up. **Go back** to sleep." (*Sky*, p. 19)

b. "Joan Sinisi is still living in Washington. I have her unlisted number for you, if you want it."
"Wonderful," Dana said. She picked up a pen. "**Go ahead**."
"Five-five-five-two-six-nine-zero." (*Sky*, p. 91)

c. Jeff's cell phone rang. "Excuse me, honey." He pressed a button and talked into the phone. "Hello?... Oh..." He glanced at Dana. "No... It's all right... **Go ahead**..."
Dana sat there, trying not to listen. (*Sky*, p. 148)

d. "Yes, " Samuels said, "if you think you need to explain it, **go right ahead**." (*Deception*, p. 358)

e. "... in fact, I told them that she was in the best mental condition I had

observed during the time that she was under treatment ..."
"Yes, **go on**."
"I said that we all broke for a ten-minute period and that Donna remained Mr. Maiden and Ms. Phillips. ..." (*Deception*, 348)

f. He beat Sexton to Greenbriar by ten minutes, took the back stairs, slipped into Donna's room without being noticed, and hid in the bathroom. He had figured it right.
"**Go on**, you haven't much time." (*Deception*, 408)

When *go* is metaphorically used in imperatives, the combinations *go on* and *go ahead* are quite frequent. They serve to instruct the addressee to continue his or her ongoing (verbal or nonverbal) activity and/or provide the speaker with some information, although there are cases denoting entry into a normal state as in the (a) example.

According to Biber et al. (1999: 377), the combination *go on* is the most common phrasal verb in LSWE Corpus. They characterize both *come on* and *go on* in imperative form as "an exclamatory exhortation to act" (ibid, 411). However, two important points of differences must be noted. First, the imperative use of *come on* (particularly as an interjection) is predominant in metaphor, whereas by contrast the imperative use of *go on* is not the most frequent metaphorical pattern. Second, while both *come on* and *go on* in imperatives are basically discourse-interactive in function, *come on* is considerably more interjectional than *go on*. Imperative *go on* is normally interpreted to mean "Please continue," so it does not involve much emotional coloring. This contrast coincides with the following findings made by Biber et al. (1999: 376). That is, *come on* is extremely frequent in conversation but very infrequent in news and never used in academic prose, whereas *go on* is common in all these two registers. One may say that *come on*, or its phonologically-reduced

version *c'mon*, has gone through the process of "subjectification" (Traugott 1989; Traugott and Dasher 2002) a great deal more than *go on*.

The examples in (18) below illustrate metaphorical uses of *go* in imperatives:

(18) NON-METAPHORICAL USES OF *GO* IN IMPERATIVES

a. "Don't **go** anywhere unless you tell me." (*Malice*, 140)
b. "**Go** shopping. **Go** to school. Find a charity you like and sit on a committee. **Go** to the movie. ..." (*Malice*, 304)
c. "Well, **go** get him." (*Sky*, 10)
d. "**Go** right in, please." (*Sky*, 60)
e. "**Go** to the service tomorrow." (*Pelican*, p. 179)

As is the case with declaratives, some instances of *go* in imperatives were ambiguous between motion and non-motion usage:

(19) AMBIGUOUS USE

a. "Let me give you some advice. Don't **go** looking for trouble, or you're going to find it. That's a promise. ..." (*Sky*, 62)
b. "Hollywood?" Jeff had repeated.
"It will be a lark, Jeff."
He nodded. "All right. **Go** for it. You'll probably be great." (*Sky*, 150)

Let us summarize this section. First, *come* in imperatives was slightly more frequent than *go*, unlike the case with declaratives, where *go* was 1.9 times more frequent than *come*. The reason for this can be attributed to the predominance of the set-phrase *come on*. Of all the metaphorical expressions of *come* and *go* (a total of 50 (41+9) tokens),

come on accounts for 41 tokens (82%). Second, metaphorical uses of *come* were, statistically speaking, more frequent than non-metaphorical uses. However, the set phrase *come on* was the only type found in my data, although this does not mean, of course, that *come* does not possess any other metaphorical, imperative expressions. However, the fact remains that except the extremely frequent use of *come on*, it is quite uncommon for *come* to be used metaphorically as an imperative verb.

Third, non-metaphorical uses of *go* far outnumbered metaphorical uses. However, in stark contrast with *come*, *go* appears metaphorically in at least several varieties, as exemplified in the forms *go on*, *go ahead*, *go around*, and *go back to sleep*.[3]

We can generalize that in imperatives, while metaphorical uses of *come and go* are both restricted either in variety or overall frequency, *come* is extremely constrained in variety.

5 Why do metaphors of *come* and *go* behave differently in imperatives?

Why are *come* and *go* as imperatire verbs not allowed to exploit their full metaphorical potentials as in declaratives? I suggest that at least two separate factors are responsible. One general factor is the primary communicative function of metaphor, which resides in **explanation**. As Deane put it (1993: 198), metaphor either serves to explain the concrete in terms of the abstract (i.e. "explicatory metaphor") or explain the concrete in term of the abstract (i.e. "expressive metaphor"). This explanatory function of metaphor does not seem to accord with the primary function of imperative utterances, which resides in making requests, giving orders and permissions. There is a potential clash in function, although some imperatives do explain ideas or giving information as in "A: *Can you tell*

me how to get to Starbucks? - Go straight ahead three blocks." The second (imperative) utterance is simply giving information (i.e. the location of Speaker A's destination).

The other relevant factor is the pressure from the meaning and pragmatic feature of prototypical imperative utterances: most importantly, AGENCY, SECOND-PERSON SUBJECT and BENEFIT (Takahashi 2000, 2004, 2007a, b, c, 2008, in prep).

Consider first the metaphorical idioms of *come* common as declarative: *come true*, *come to a consensus*, *come to my mind*, and *come to my attention* as well as *come to the understanding with them, come to one's senses* and *come apart* in my data. These expressions characteristically denote non-deliberate events involving non-agentive (more often, third-person) subjects as exemplified in *her dream* (*came true*), *the two parties (will come to a consensus)*, or *this new device* (*came to my attention*). As a result, there is a serious incompatibility between the AGENCY of prototypical imperatives and the non-agency of most metaphorical expressions of the verb *come*.

As for metaphorical uses of *go*, the semantic role of the imperative subject can be somewhat more often agentive, as witnessed in such imperative phrases as *go straight to the point* as well as *go on and go* (*right*) *ahead*. This fact partly explains why metaphorical expressions of *go* in imperatives are not as restricted in variety as those of *come*. However, if we look closely at metaphorical expressions of *go*, they are more often than not non-agentive, as revealed in such examples as *the operation went well* (11b); *the new law doesn't go into effect* (11d); *it seems to be going pretty well* (11e); *we're going back to normal* (11f); *let me know how it goes* (13b); and *you must have wanted what went with it* (13d). Moreover, many of these expressions not only refer to more or less non-agentive state-of-affairs but also involve third-person subjects as

well. It must be added, however, that there are some examples involving agentive subjects as in *I can't go into it all now* (13a); *she's going around asking questions* (13c); and *we'll go over your answers* (13f). Some of these non-motion uses, though relatively few in number, can be felicitously converted into imperative sentences - notably, (13a) and (13f).

Metaphors of *go* with negative connotations do not fit into imperatives either, due to a mismatch with the BENEFIT of prototypical imperatives. They include expressions like *we've gone too far to let anything stop it now* (12a); *what went wrong* (12c); *Gratham's gone crazy* (12d); *they may go nuts* (12e); *something went haywire* (12f); and *he went south* (12g), although some of these (e.g. 12a, 12c, and 12d) are disallowed in imperatives due to their non-agentive feature as well. It is normally odd to give an order in the form *Go wrong*, *Go haywire*, *go crazy or go south* (in metaphorical sense), which refer to situations both non-agentive and non-beneficial.

6 Conclusions

The present paper has discussed the two verbs of motion *come* and *go* in metaphorical usage. By using conversation data, we have examined the behaviors of metaphors of these verbs in imperatives in comparison with those in declaratives.

This paper has reported the following results. First, in conversation, non-metaphorical uses are considerably more frequent than metaphorical uses with both verbs. Metaphorical uses of *come* accounts for only under 30% and *go* around 40%. Second, in metaphors, both verbs are used far more often with neutral (as opposed to positive or negative) connotations. However, in relatively infrequent cases where two verbs do carry connotations of either polarity, *come* prefers to be used with positive connota-

tions while *go* with negative connotations. Third, compared with the occurrences in declaratives, *come* and *go* in imperatives are heavily constrained in metaphorical potential, in particular, with *come*. It was argued that this constraint on metaphors can be attributed to the semantic and pragmatic features of prototypical imperatives: AGENCY, SECOND-PERSON SUBJECT, and BENEFIT.

The observed restrictions on metaphors of *come* and *go* are open to further investigation and need to be tested against a great deal more data to obtain a complete analysis. In addition, it remains to be explained why metaphors of *come* tends to be non-agentive (e.g. *come along*, *come across, come to the conclusion*) while those of *go* tend to be more readily agentive (e.g. *go over*, *go into*, *go all the way*). However, should it suffice here to show that imperative uses of *come* and *go* prefer a different (or far smaller) set of metaphors from declarative uses. One general implication of this finding is that non-declarative uses of other common verbs may prefer a different set of metaphors than declarative uses. Declarative and non-declarative uses of verbs may be associated with different metaphorical patterns within and across languages. I hope the present paper will stimulate further research on metaphor from this perspective.

Notes

[1] This paper uses portions of data presented in Takahashi (2007a, 2007b).

[2] In Biber et al.'s (1999: 375) survey of LSWE Corpus, the use of *go* is 2.3 times more frequent than the use of *come* in conversation.

[3] Let me mention one more difference between declaratives and imperatives regarding the metaphorical potential of *go*. *Go* can be used as a communication verb in informal speech (cf. Butters 1980; Sakita 2006):

(i) She goes, “Stay right there.　I’ll be back.” [=say]
(ii) He goes, “Oh my God!　Who is she?” [=say]
(Examples from Sakita 2006)

According to Butters (1980), as cited in Sakita, this use of *go* is not found in interrogative sentences:

(iii) *What did he go? [=say]
(iv) *How did he go? [=say]

See below that imperatives disallow this non-motion use of *go*:

(v) *Go, “you were pretty good, but others were better.” [=say]
(vi) *Go, “I’m your next door neighbor.　Do you need any help?” [=say]

In short, this special metaphorical expression of *go* seems limited to declaratives alone and to informal spoken register.

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