**ABSTRACT**

The paper presents four conceptual metaphors which people communicate whenever they speak and write: the CONDUIT metaphor, the DISCOURSE is MOVEMENT metaphor, the MEANING is (PHASERS OF) MATTER metaphor, and the BARRIERS metaphor. They organize our conceptualization of discourse. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate the metaphorical character of discourse to help potential readers to participate more effectively in scientific discourse by avoiding superfluous discussions about meanings of particular linguistic expressions at the expense of concentrating on what really matters. Particularly important are the mechanisms responsible for communication breakdowns revealed by the PHASES OF MATTER metaphor and the BARRIERS metaphor. Both are complementary to the CONDUIT metaphor and accurately portray those cases when sending a text from the sender to the recipient is temporarily or permanently blocked. The CONDUIT metaphor alone does not offer any account of the fact that sending even the simplest signal, whether verbal or nonverbal, from a particular sender to a particular recipient, leave alone a number of recipients, involves an incredibly complex sequence of mental and physical events , which at every point can be hindered and distorted by various obstacles. The very general, metaphorical word/ concept ‘barrier’/ “barrier” covers all kinds of ways in which effective communication is hindered and/or entirely blocked. Two kinds of barriers are distinguished: physical and mental. Physical barriers are easier to cope with than mental barriers, which are much more difficult to identify and diagnose due to lack of sufficient knowledge about their location. Two examples of mental barriers inhibiting communication in the area of broadly conceived linguistics serve as a specific memento for potential participants in the scholarly discourse.