The Persuasive Power of Metaphor and Metonymy

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A series of seven 2-hour interactive workshops:

Workshop 1 (11.00 – 12.00 Thursday 11th May) at J. Jablonskis auditorium

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/3B36gig

Creative metaphor, emotion and evaluation

In this workshop, I introduce students to the idea that metaphor in general, and creative metaphor in particular, are often used to perform evaluative functions, some of which involve emotional responses to stimuli and situations. I discuss the methodology and findings from two studies, one of which explored the use that people make of metaphor when writing film reviews, and one of which focuses on the ways in which people use metaphor to describe and evaluate workplace experiences. Through these studies, I explore the role played by valence ins driving the creative use of metaphor. We also examine the concept of creativity itself. Students will analyse examples of metaphorical language use and explore the role that they play in the expression of evaluation in different contexts.

Workshop 2 (9.30-11.30 Friday 12th May) at Computer classroom No 13

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/3Vyy8ob

On the creative use of metonymy

In this workshop we turn to the creative use of metonymy and challenge the idea that metonymy cannot be used for creative purposes. We analyse instances of metonymy in different forms of expression (both linguistic and visual including in text messaging) and explore the ways in which it used creatively and the reasons why people choose to use it in this way.

Workshop 3 (9.30-11.30 Monday 15th May) at Computer classroom No 13

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/3p7ZOE9

Metaphor and metonymy use in different discourse communities

In this workshop we explore the ways in which the discourse community can shape the ways in which metaphor and metonymy are used. We illustrate this with reference to three studies: one exploring the use of metaphor and metonymy in a children's football club, one exploring their use in a children's nursery, and one exploring their use in an academic setting. Students will look at examples of figurative language use in all three communities and explore their forms and functions.

Workshop 4 (9.30-11.30 Tuesday 16th May) at Computer classroom No 13

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/3HINL6S

Creative Uses of Metaphor and Metonymy in Advertising

In this workshop we look at studies that have investigated the factors that shape people's responses to creative and conventional metaphor and metonymy in the context of advertising and beyond. We look at the research methods employed and identify features that appear to affect the extent to which metaphor and metonymy can be considered persuasive. We explore cross-cultural variation in response to metaphors in advertising. We discuss in detail work that we have conducted in collaboration with an advertising agency that led to the refinement of a live advertising campaign.

Workshop 5 (9.30-11.30 Wednesday 17th May) at auditorium No 10

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/418BCPl

Children's metaphorical responses to time, number and music

In this workshop, we explore how children engage in metaphorical thinking when making sense of concepts relating to time, number and music. We compare their responses to those made by adults. Students will be invited to analyse the methods that are used to address this research question. The findings from this work provide insights int the important role played by metaphor in abstract thinking and the ways in which it develops in children.

Workshop 6 (9.30-11.30 Thursday 18th May) at J. Jablonskis auditorium

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/44KNJ8r

Metaphor as a lens to examine intense, emotional experiences

In this workshop, we look at how people use metaphor to make sense of and share intense emotional experiences. We discuss findings from studies designed to investigate this. Students will discuss the methods employed in this kind of study and the ethical implications of conducting this kind of work.

Workshop 7 (9.30-11.30 Friday 19th May) at Computer classroom No 13

online link to join the workshop: https://bit.ly/3NL7dU7

Variation in the Experience of Metaphor, including Metaphor use by non-typical populations

In this workshop, I further explore the relationship between metaphor and creativity by analysing the ways in which metaphor use varies across individuals. We focus in particular on the findings from a study designed to explore responses to sensory stimuli provided by synaesthetes and non-synaesthete populations. Synaesthesia is a condition whereby people have a heightened tendency to experience one sense in terms of another. In our work, we use the writings of synaesthetes as a lens through which to examine the relationships between sensory experience, emotion, metaphor, and creativity in order to reach a new understanding of creativity -- what it is, and the factors that may attend it. Student will be invited to explore writings produced by synaesthetes and to draw their own conclusions on the nature of creativity. I then bring together all the work discussed in the other workshops and consider what this tells us about the different ways in which people experience and use metaphor and the factors that shape these differences. In addition to considering the implications of the studies discussed, students will also be invited to reflect on their interactions with metaphor in their own lives.

References

Books

Littlemore, J., Turner, S. and Tuck, P. (under contract for 2023) Creative Metaphor, Emotion and Evaluation in Conversations about Work, London: Routledge.

Turner, S. and Littlemore, J. (2023) The Many Faces of Creativity: Exploring Synaesthesia through a Metaphorical Lens. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Littlemore, J., Bolognesi, M., Cheung, D., Julich, N. and Pérez-Sobrino, P (2023) Metaphor, Cultural Variation and Gender in Emotion-Colour Associations, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pérez-Sobrino, P., Littlemore, J. and Ford, S. (2021). Unpacking Creativity: The Power of Figurative Communication in Advertising, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Littlemore, J. (2019). Metaphors in the Mind: Sources of Variation in Embodied Metaphor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Deignan, A., Littlemore, J. and Semino, E. (2013). Figurative Language, Genre and Register. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-107-40203-4.

Articles

Werkmann-Horvat, A., Bolognesi, M., Littlemore, J. and Barnden, J. (2022). Comprehension of different types of novel metaphors in monolinguals and multilinguals, Language and Cognition.

Turner, S., Littlemore, J., Taylor, J., Parr, E. and Topping, A. (2022). Metaphors that shape parents' perceptions of effective communication with healthcare practitioners following child death: a qualitative UK study, BMJ Open.

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Ford, A., Littlemore, J. and Houghton, D. (2021). Got a spark with Brook?

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Winter, B., Duffy, S. and Littlemore, J. (2021). Power, gender, and individual differences in spatial metaphor: The role of perceptual stereotypes and language statistics, Metaphor and Symbol.

Littlemore J and Turner S (2019) What can metaphor tell us about the experiences of pregnancy loss and how are these experiences reflected in midwife practice? Frontiers in Communication, 4: 42.

Littlemore, J. and Turner, S. (2019). Metaphors in communication about pregnancy loss, Metaphor and the Social World, 10:1 45-75.

Pérez-Sobrino, P., Littlemore, J. and Houghton, D. (2018). The role of figurative complexity in the comprehension and appreciation of advertisements, Applied Linguistics, 40: 6, 957–991.