

Course description

Course title: Mental Spaces and Blending in Language for Specific Purposes

Instructor: Esther Pascual

Course level : PhD, intermediate

Course description

Language –in discourse and interaction- is treated in terms of dynamic contextualized conceptualisation. The mental configurations that situated language use prompts in the minds of addressees are analyzed vis-à-vis their communicative goals and the overall socio-cultural context of interpretation. The theoretical framework used is Fauconnier’s (1985) theory of mental spaces, later developed into conceptual integration theory or ‘blending’ (Fauconnier & Turner 1994). This theory accounts for the cognitive process of conceptualizing something as fused with something else. The focus is on the following topics:

1. Conceptual integration in humor (joke: “I asked the bartender for something cold and full of rum, and he recommended his wife”)
2. Conceptual integration in persuasion (advertisement: “If chocolate were the food of Gods, heaven would be in Birmingham”)
3. Conceptual integration in journalistic discourse (news headline: “Superman is dead” for “Christopher Reeve, the actor famous for playing Superman, is dead”)
4. Conceptual integration in instructional discourse (teacher to class: “This orange is the sun and this marble the Earth, which turns around the sun like this”)

These topics will be studied through the analysis of naturalistic data from cartoons, commercials, legal arguments, and classroom discourse. Both verbal and audio-visual material will be dealt with. Students are also required to bring and discuss real-life examples of their own.

Day-to-day program

Lecture 1: Mental spaces and conceptual integration

Lecture 2: Conceptual integration in humor

Lecture 3: Conceptual integration in persuasion

Lecture 4: Conceptual integration in journalistic discourse

Lecture 5: Conceptual integration in instructional discourse

Reading list

Course readings:

Lecture 1:

- Fauconnier, G. & M. Turner. 1998. Conceptual Integration Networks. *Cognitive Science* 22(2): 133-187.
- Pascual, E. 2002. *Imaginary Trialogues: Conceptual Blending and Fictive Interaction in Criminal Courts*. Utrecht: LOT 68.

Lecture 2:

- Coulson, S. 1995. Analogic and Metaphoric Mapping in Blended Spaces: Menendez brothers virus. *CRL Newsletter* 9(1).
- [Also in: 1996. The Menendez Brothers Virus: Analogical Mapping in Blended Spaces. In: A. Goldberg (Ed.). *Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language*. Palo Alto, CA: CSLI.]
- Coulson, S. 2001. What's so Funny: Conceptual Blending in Humorous Examples. In V. Herman (ed.). *The Poetics of Cognition: Studies of Cognitive Linguistics and the Verbal Arts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lecture 3:

- Joya, A., J.F. Sherry & J. Deschenesa. 2009. Conceptual Blending in Advertising. *Journal of Business Research* 62(1): 39-49.
- Coulson, S. & E. Pascual. 2006. For the Sake of Argument: Mourning the Unborn and Reviving the Dead through Conceptual Blending. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 4: 153-181.

Lecture 4:

- Brône, G. & K. Feyaerts. 2005. Headlines and Cartoons in the Economic Press: Double Grounding as a Discourse Supportive Strategy. In: G. Jacobs & G. Erreygers (Eds.). *Language, Communication and the Economy*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- White, M. & H. Herrera. 2003. Metaphor and Ideology in the Press Coverage of Telecom Corporate Consolidations. In: R. Dirven, R.M. Frank & M.Pütz (eds.). *Cognitive Models in Language and Thought: Ideology, Metaphors and Meanings*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Lecture 5:

- Fauconnier, G. 2001. Conceptual Integration. Invited presentation at the "Emergence and Development of Embodied Cognition Symposium. 3rd International Conference on Cognitive Science. Beijing, China, August 27-31, 2001.
- Williams, R.F. 2008a. Guided Conceptualization: Mental Spaces in Instructional Discourse. In: T. Oakley & A. Hougaard (eds.). *Mental Spaces in Discourse and Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Background and additional readings:

- Coulson, S. 2001. *Semantic Leaps: Frame-shifting and Conceptual Blending in Meaning Construction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Fauconnier, G. [1985] 1994. *Mental spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fauconnier, G. 1997. *Mappings in Thought and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fauconnier, G. & M. Turner. 1994. Conceptual Projection and Middle Spaces. University of California, San Diego. *Technical report 9401*.
- Fauconnier, G. & M. Turner. 1998. Principles of Conceptual Integration. In J.-P. Koenig (red.). *Discourse and Cognition*. Stanford: CSLI.
- Fauconnier, G. & M. Turner. 2000. Compression and Global Insight. *Cognitive Linguistics* 11: 283-304.
- Fauconnier, G. & M. Turner. 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Oakley, T. & A. Hougaard. 2008. *Mental Spaces in Discourse and Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.