

Preface

In view of the increasing differentiation and the development of multimodal forms of communication, research in recent years increasingly focused on the analysis of metaphors that (also) manifest themselves on a non-linguistic level. These include, for example, metaphors in images, gestures or music. For the interpretation of non-verbal metaphors, existing cognitive linguistic and other metaphorically-driven approaches open up ways of interpretation that need to be advanced when metaphorical communication is characterized by multimodality: language and gestures, for example, occur simultaneously in face-to-face communication, while the combination of text and image is ubiquitous in text types such as comics and advertisements. In the case of video clips – see the field of marketing – there is even a combination of three channels. Particularly in light of the rapid development of multimedia and multimodal communication formats on the Internet and our knowledge about the omnipresence and structuring dimensions of metaphors, metaphor research should turn its attention to non-verbal and multimodal forms of metaphor – also with regard to corresponding theoretical approaches.

Research desiderata in this field include, *inter alia*, the analysis of different types of interplay between modalities (complementary, contradictory, redundant) and the various functions of multimodal metaphors (e.g. illustrative, heuristic, persuasive), as well as the study of more established and newly developed text types, forms of communication and different communicative situations (e.g. face-to-face, quasi-synchronous, synchronous). Cultural contrastive observations hold the potential to provide information to the extent to which the uses and combinations of different types of metaphor are culturally specific.

This special issue, enriched by two other contributions, aims to contribute and further the development of the theoretical discussion. It offers insights into the significance of multimodal metaphors through various empirical and conceptual studies.

Sabine Heinemann provides a research overview of multimodal metaphors with an emphasis on advertisements, posters and political cartoons. She focuses on two areas in which the interweaving of the linguistic and figurative levels is traditionally widespread. In addition to a brief outline of the conceptual theory

of metaphor, its extension through blending theory and the field of visual metaphor, the author discusses the advantages of a definition of multimodal approaches with reference to the assumption of a continuum dealing with exemplary works from the two chosen fields of application.

Molly Pan and Dennis Tay criticize the rationale of qualitative approaches in works on multimodal metaphors, which makes it almost impossible to reveal generalizable structural elements. They conduct a quantitative analysis of 66 Chinese video advertisements and systematically examine the connection between metaphor signals, functions and product types for 197 metaphors. The procedure offers insights into the significance of connections between the three aspects mentioned above and provides empirical evidence for developing generalizable structural features.

Adeline Terry's study focuses on multimodal metaphors in videos. Her qualitative study uses the well-known American sitcom, *How I Met your Mother* as an empirical example. The article is devoted to the question of how creative metaphors, which refer to taboo topics (referred to as *X-phemisms*), are based on a combination of at least two modalities, and by doing so generate humor.

Marco Agnetta is interested in a different form of multimodality. His study of metaphor as a 'hinge element' between language and setting in the parable aria of the 18th century shows that research on multimodal metaphor can not only be usefully applied to more recent communication, but also holds the potential to create new perspectives on classical text types.

The penultimate article in this volume, which is not thematically tailored to the multimodal metaphor, deals with the so-called shepherd metaphor. It is the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration between a team of authors from the Ruhr University Bochum (Juliane Bienert, Manfred Eikermann, Paul Fahr, Christian Schwermann, Anna Kristina Wand, Maren Veronika Ziegler-Bellenberg), which combines findings from Germanic medieval studies and sinology. The approach of using the example of spatially and temporally distant literatures to systematically develop linguistic context determination procedures offers an interesting methodological impulse for a possible transfer to the analysis of multimodal metaphors. The authors conclude that, at least in the area of linguistically driven embedding procedures, clear parallels can be identified between German and Chinese texts, a finding that suggests that these could be – hypothetically speaking – universal in character.

The last article is not concerned with the multimodality of metaphors too, but thematically relates to it and originates from the Center for Religious Studies (Ceres) at Bochum University. Volkhard Krech examines the metaphors used in religious communication (e.g. in sermons). The specific nature of religious communication and its metaphors, as he shows, lies in the mapping of the immanent onto the transcendent. Krech defines and reconstructs this creation of religious meaning through metaphors in a step-by-step analysis based on Peirce's semiotics as a complex process. With its theoretical recourse to Peirce and the processual nature of metaphorical use of signs, the article also offers a theoretical approach to metaphor.

The six contributions presented here combine a variety of methodological approaches to (multimodal) metaphor, in which the use of language, image, sound and a wide range of textual and communicative locations are assigned to a variety of functions. We hope that scholars in the field of multimodality will find the insights published here stimulating and will be inspired to further research on multimodal metaphor with their own studies.

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