

## **Empirical evidence for the figurative structure of emotions**

**Session conveners:** Avgustina Biryukova, Dylan Glynn and Mai Kumamoto,  
University Paris 8 Vincennes – St. Denis

This theme session brings together quantitative and qualitative research that seeks to identify socio-culturally shared structures in the conceptualisation of emotions. It focuses specifically on the role of figurative language in that conceptualisation. Its aim is twofold:

### **1. Descriptive Aim**

Empirical descriptions of the role of figurativity in the structure of emotion concepts and the language used to describe them.

### **2. Methodological Aim**

Develop empirical tools for the description of socio-culturally shared conceptual structures, with specific reference to emotions and figurativity.

The federating theme of the research presented with respect to these two aims is the acceptance of three (largely unproblematic) theoretical proposals. Firstly, if we accept the Usage-Based Model of language (Langacker 1987), then linguistic structure is a result of repeated contextualised use. Secondly, if we accept a weak form of Linguistic Relativity, that linguistic structure reflects conceptual structure (Wierzbicka 1985, Lakoff 1987), then language should be a primary source of evidence for such structure. Thirdly, if we accept Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 1987), that metaphoric representations in language are systematically used to structure abstract non-experientially basic concepts, then the role of figurativity in the structuring of emotions (abstract concepts par excellence) should be important. Accepting these three proposals entails that in order to understand and describe emotion concepts, we need to examine contextualised language use, with special attention paid to figurative language.

A large amount of research has focused on the second and third assumptions (Kövecses 1986, Glynn 2001, Ogarkova & Soriano 2014 inter alia). Furthermore, over recent years, attempts from different methodological perspectives have approached emotion concepts adopting the first two assumptions (Fabiszak & Hebda 2007, 2010; Glynn 2007, 2014; Díaz-Vera 2011; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2013; Türker 2013; Krawczak 2014, 2015, Ogarkova et al. 2016; Ogarkova & Soriano 2018; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2017; Silva Soares da Silva 2020; inter alia). However, to date, relatively little research (Stefanowitch 2004, 2006; Glynn & Nordmark 2013; Glynn & Matusevich 2016, 2017, Ogarkova & Soriano 2018; Silva Soares da Silva 2021) has taken on board all three assumptions, combining the study of usage and relativity and figurativity. Evidently, developing an approach that can produce falsifiable descriptions (sensitive to socio-cultural variation) of non-observable phenomena (such as emotion concepts), which also accounts for metaphoric structuring, is a non-trivial endeavour. It is this endeavour that the theme session undertakes.

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