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Looking for and making sense of 'special' words

Metaphor recognition and interpretation by schoolchildren

Metaphor research with children has focused primarily on metaphor comprehension typically exploring the type of mapping(s) involved, the knowledge of domains, and age related aspects, showing that even young children can already interpret metaphor provided they have sufficient domain knowledge and metalinguistic and metacognitive skills. In general however these studies have not sufficiently taken into account that metaphor is a phenomenon of language use.

This dissertation takes a novel approach, widening the scope of analysis of children metaphor recognition and interpretation in written language by analysing the influence of age, reading comprehension and metaphor properties. The use of a three dimensional model of metaphor in language, thought, and communication brings a new perspective to metaphor studies with children. A special feature of this research is that it concerns Spanish speaking children, a language in which metaphor has received substantially less attention than in English. It is the first study that explores the presence of nominal (A is B) metaphors and verbal metaphors in Spanish texts from literature and science intended for children.

This publication may be of particular interest to psychologists involved in language development, scholars implementing metaphor research with children and teachers of language. They may find new ideas to further the learning about metaphor understanding and language development.

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