

EMOTIONAL DOMAINS IN METAPHORICAL REASONING: EVIDENCE FROM VERBAL/VISUAL SIMULATION

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This paper looks into the effects of primary metaphorical reasoning in the activation of traumatic emotions via verbal/visual simulation. In order to answer whether verbal or visual inputs play a major role in the ways individuals recognize and understand metaphorical expressions we measured frequency and time subjects spent at integrating stimuli and sentences in comprehension tests, and the effects of this integration at retrieving emotional content from a follow-up task. In other words, priming source domains by using words or images can be said to have different effects on the way the subjects recognize mappings between sensory-motor domains and literal/metaphorical sentences. One first research hypothesis is that when the subject is primed with imagistic rather than verbal input of a primary source domain, then s/he understands more readily and accurately the metaphorical mappings between stimuli and linguistic expression, resulting in higher frequency of emotional activation. To test this hypothesis we ran a within subjects online experiment, 3 x 3 designed, which consisted of self-monitored online reading tasks. Subjects were presented to the following conditions: three levels of source domain stimuli (verbal, imagistic, control) followed by multiple choice tasks of three related sentences (metaphorical, literal, abstract). Dependable variables referred to metaphorical mapping understanding and were measured according to time (milliseconds) spent on each choice task, and frequency of metaphorical choices. Measuring activation of emotional memory was carried out in a follow-up task, which consisted of making inferences about emotional content of visual scenes displayed on a screen. Our predictions were that verbal/visual priming enhanced frequency and speed in comprehension of metaphorical mappings over control condition, having visual (imagistic) condition more effect over other conditions; and that sensory-motor source domain priming which was mapped onto metaphorical sentences had greater effect on activation of emotional content, rather than literal/abstract mappings.