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Creative use of metaphors in bilingual family interviews

This paper explores bilingual speakers' creative use of metaphor in family group interviews. Past research has shown that multilingualism can enhance the capacity to produce original, creative ideas, mainly in verbal domains (Kharkhurin 2010). However, this research has tended to focus on bilinguals in generalist terms, without focusing on specific groups of bilinguals (e.g. migrants, highly proficient bilinguals) (Fürst and Grin 2018). Furthermore, much research has tended to focus on the cognitive aspects of creativity whilst ignoring the social situation that creativity manifests itself in. This paper aims to address this gap by looking at a series of interviews, in which the participants displayed a creative use of metaphor to varying degrees depending on, amongst other factors, their social position within a family group.

As part of a larger research project that set out to explore how humans relate to their environment, the bilingual family members were asked to reflect on what the Moon meant to them in their daily lives. The Moon was chosen as a lens for investigating both emotions and perceptions of time by people from different cultures and languages (English, Polish, Mandarin and Arabic) living in a large city in the UK. Eight family groups were interviewed over a period of six months.

The findings demonstrate the family members' creative use of metaphor from a sociocognitive perspective. Creativity is interpreted here as 'the interplay between ability and process by which an individual or group produces an outcome or product that is both novel and useful as defined within some social context' (Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow 2004). This definition was used as a springboard throughout the analysis of this study to interpret the creativity displayed within the dynamics of the interview settings. Key findings of this analysis will be presented in this talk.

References

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