A longitudinal study of idiom and text comprehension

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IDIOM COMPREHENSION IN FIRST GRADERS

The interest in studying idioms arises from the features that characterize these expressions: (a) often they are ambiguous sentences that have both a literal and a figurative meaning which significantly differ from each other (e.g. consider the literal and figurative meaning of the idiom ‘ to break the ice’) ; (b) they are conventionalized expressions, shared by the members of the linguistic community and are represented in the mental lexicon; and (c) as such they have to be acquired by children as part of the linguistic repertoire (Levorato & Cacciari, 1992; Levorato, 1993). Despite the fact that these expressions are very common in both in oral and written language (for details, see Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993), children’s ability to comprehend and use them develops during their school years, when they are already competent speakers, whereas children younger than seven tend to interpret them literally. Idiom acquisition, then, is a long lasting and complex process: it is presumably for this reason that the study of the processes underlying idiom acquisition in children, which began in the 1970s (Lodge & Leach,1975), is still a subject which arouses interest.

Idiom acquisition is based on a variety of abilities, different in nature and complexity, involving cognitive, linguistic and pragmatic competence.

Various factors affecting developmental changes in idiom comprehension have been identified, the most important of which are familiarity, semantic analyzability and context.

Familiarity with idioms refers to the frequency with which idioms occur in communication. The ‘language experience hypothesis’ states that idioms which occur frequently in the language are easier for children to understand than less frequently occurring ones. Certainly, the opportunity to encounter an idiomatic expression is an important factor, but researchers agree that exposure per se is not sufficient to explain its acquisition.

The semantic analyzability, or the degree of transparency, of idioms can account for the ease with which they are understood. This aspect refers to the similarity between the literal meaning of the constituents and their figurative meaning.

The ability to use linguistic context has been shown to be the factor which accounts most for children’s performance in idiom comprehension: it has been consistently shown that idiomatic expressions are better understood when embedded in informative contexts than when they are presented out of context. The first evidence emerged in the 1980s (Ackerman, 1982; Cacciari & Levorato, 1989; Gibbs, 1987) and more recent studies have also shown interest in this factor (Levorato & Cacciari, 1992, 1995). In order to interpret an idiom correctly, the child must be able to look for the contextual information necessary to construct a coherent semantic representation of the text and to activate the meanings associated with the idiomatic string in the light of its context.

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In order to interpret an idiom correctly, the child must be able to look for the contextual information necessary to construct a coherent semantic representation of the text and to activate the meanings associated with the idiomatic string in the light of it context.

This is the main assumption of the Global Elaboration Model (henceforth GEM, Levorato & Cacciari, 1995), which proposes that: (a) the acquisition of figurative language occurs parallel to the acquisition of the ability to process language in general rather than depending on specific mechanisms; and (b) idiom interpretation is based on the processing of the complete textual information into which it is inserted: when a coherent semantic representation of the text is constructed, the idiomatic meaning can be recognized. Young children fail to comprehend idioms because they process the text word by word, rather than searching for a global and coherent meaning of the whole linguistic context and therefore, in the first phase of acquisition, idioms are interpreted literally. In the course of their development, children set aside this exclusively literal approach and develop more mature forms of processing: the semantic information conveyed by the text/discourse in which the idiom is embedded induces a search for a figurative meaning in order to integrate incoming information with both the previous text/discourse and general knowledge. For this reason, idiomatic expressions are a good case study for the analysis of the relationship between the ability to interpret non-literal sentences and text comprehension skills; as also noted in Nippold et al. (2001), their comprehension requires both that word level and sentence level meanings be combined and that contextual information be exploited in order to make the inferences necessary to comprehend an idiom's meaning.

Whereas until the 1990s studies focused primarily on factors which favour idiom comprehension, more recent research has turned its attention to individual differences and the relationship between idiom comprehension and other linguistic abilities. The relationship between idiom comprehension and text comprehension is considered particularly interesting in the light of the importance of processing of the linguistic context. In primary school children this relationship has been studied by Levorato, Nesi & Cacciari (2004), who showed that children who were more advanced in text comprehension also gave more figurative interpretations of idiomatic expressions embedded in brief stories than children who had poor text comprehension skills. This relationship was further strengthened by the study which investigated a relation between text comprehension and idiom production (see Nesi, Levorato, Roch & Cacciari, 2006, for details). A previous study by Nippold et al. (2001) found that preadolescents' ability to comprehend idioms was related to both written and oral text comprehension skills. Taken together, these recent findings suggest that differences in idiom comprehension can be accounted for by differences in children's text comprehension skills.

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The most recent study by Cain, Oakhill & Lemmon (2005) has extended this finding through an analysis of the role of other skills : reading and vocabulary. Cain et al. (2005) found that fourth graders who had good text reading comprehension skills were able to identify the meaning of semantically non-analyzable idioms embedded into stories, whereas this ability was scarce among poor text reading comprehenders. This study has moreover demonstrated that the relationship between idiom and text comprehension is robust even when children's reading abilities and vocabulary are controlled. This result suggests that neither poor word reading skills nor scarce knowledge of vocabulary are responsible for the relationship between idiom and text comprehension. Rather it confirms the theory that higher level cognitive and linguistic processes are involved and that good text comprehenders are more able than poor ones to benefit from contextual information to disambiguate idiomatic expressions.

In the light of these findings, the present investigation furthers the analysis of the relationship between idioms and text comprehension, making two new contributions. The first contribution concerns the use of the longitudinal method: This is the first longitudinal study aimed at identifying the developmental relationship between text and idiom comprehension. A group of children who scored as less-skilled text comprehenders on a test when they were six- to seven-year-old first graders were retested on text comprehension and idiom comprehension eight months later. We expected that if these two abilities were connected, only children who improved in text comprehension would improve in idiom comprehension as well.

Participants in this study were younger than those who participated in earlier studies; previous research considered children who had already consolidated their text comprehension abilities (second graders and beyond).

There is no evidence of a relationship between text and idiom comprehension in children who are in the early phases of literacy acquisition, when a literal interpretation is preferred (Abkarian et al., 1992; Levorato & Cacciari, 1992). The hypothesis of the current investigation can be specified as follows: the tendency to interpret idioms literally is much stronger among less-skilled text comprehenders, whose processing of the text is shallow, than skilled text comprehenders, who are able to search for a coherent meaning of the text.

The second new contribution of this study is that it is the first to take into consideration the role of sentence comprehension as a possible mediating factor of the relationship between text and idiom comprehension, so we have analyzed the relations between text and sentence on one hand and between idiom and sentence on the other hand. It is thus possible that children who are more skilled in understanding literal sentences are also more skilled in understanding figurative meanings.

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We agree with Oakhill & Yuill (1996) in their conclusion that difficulties in text comprehension are less linguistic in nature than difficulties in inference-making and in monitoring of the comprehension process. If this is true, sentence comprehension should play a lesser role in idiom comprehension than text comprehension does since idiom comprehension is more dependent on the ability to process a text adequately, on inferential capacity and on text comprehension monitoring. We also prefer this hypothesis because it is in agreement with the GEM (Global Elaboration Model), a model which has proven to be able to explain idiom acquisition: it assumes that the search for the global coherence of a text is the process underlying the understanding of idioms.

A longitudinal analysis of idiom comprehension skills and literal sentence comprehension skills in children whose text comprehension improves over time will allow the direction taken by the developmental changes of the linguistic skills examined here to be analyzed. In short, the investigation carried out here evaluated the comprehension of idiomatic and literal sentences in children who had different levels of text comprehension skills at two different moments: at six to seven years of age (first graders – Phase 1) and eight months later (second graders – Follow-up). The hypothesis that an improvement takes place in children's linguistic skills when they pass from first to second grade is legitimated by various evidence of improvements in verbal and literacy skills (Palladino, De Beni & Cornoldi, 1995). Moreover, it is reported in the literature that at the end of the second grade, a third of the children who had previously had difficulty with reading and comprehension had already improved these skills and that the differences between those who improved and those who did not were maintained over time (Greenfield Spira, Storch Bracken & Fischel, 2005).

The relation between text and idiom comprehension in children with poor text comprehension skills was investigated longitudinally. In the first phase of the study, six-year-old first graders with different levels of text comprehension were compared in an idiom and sentence comprehension task. Text comprehension was shown to be more closely related to idiom comprehension than sentence comprehension.
The follow-up study, carried out eight months later on less-skilled text comprehenders, investigated whether an improvement in text comprehension was paralleled by an improvement in idiom comprehension.
The development of sentence comprehension was also taken into account. Children who improved in text comprehension also improved in idiom comprehension; this improvement was, instead, weakly related to an improvement in sentence comprehension.

Identity and Language Learning
Extending the Conversation
Second edition
Bonny Norton

Revisiting *Identity and Language Learning*

Claire Kramsch notes in the Afterword of this book that the publication of *Identity and Language Learning* in 2000 captured an important shift in the spirit of the times. There is now a wealth of research that explores identity in language education, and the multiple volumes that have appeared are testament to the fact that issues of identity have become central to the field.1 ‘Identity’ features in most encyclopedias and handbooks of applied linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA) and language teaching.2 There is also an award-winning journal, the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, which focuses on issues of identity in the field of language education. Of particular interest is the number of graduate student theses and dissertations that have been written on the topic of identity, investment and imagined communities, suggesting that emerging researchers will continue this trajectory of research in the future.3 Translations of my work now appear in Chinese, Portuguese, German and French.4 Indeed, as Zuengler and Miller note (2006, p. 43), identity is now established as a research area ‘in its own right’.

As indicated in the Preface to this second edition, my purpose is not to rewrite the 2000 book, which has its own logic and coherence, but rather to reframe it with reference to ideas proposed in the book that have proved to be particularly productive in the field. In this regard, not only have poststructuralist theories of language and identity been highly influential, as scholars such as Block (2007a), Ricento (2005) and Swain and Deters (2007) note, but also the construct of investment I developed in 1995 (Norton Peirce,1995) has been taken up in diverse and interesting ways, as have subsequent ideas about imagined communities and imagined identities. There is also a growing body of research by a wide range of identity theorists that seeks to investigate the ways in which particular relations of race, gender, class and sexual orientation may impact the process of language learning and teaching.

In addition, there has been discussion on research methods associated with investigations on identity, as well as implications of identity research for exciting collaborative research with diverse scholars over more than a decade. It will focus on expanding areas of research and practice, making connections to research findings and ideas proposed in the first edition of this book.

Identity and Language Learning
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Relevance of Identity Research to Language Learning

I begin this Introduction with a backward glance at scholars such as Sue Gass (Gass, 1998), who have noted that identity theorists need to establish the theoretical relevance of identity research insofar as it affects the acquisition of a second language. Here I respond to this important and legitimate observation. The central arguments I make in this regard are summarized below and then developed more fully in subsequent sections.

(i) Work on identity offers the field of language learning a comprehensive theory that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world. Identity theorists question the view that learners can be defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual. A fully developed theory of identity highlights the multiple positions from which language learners can speak, and how sometimes marginalized learners can appropriate more desirable identities with respect to the target language community.

(ii) SLA (second language acquisition) theorists need to address how relations of power in the social world affect learners' access to the target language community; learners who may be marginalized in one site may be highly valued in another.

Identity theorists are therefore concerned about the ways in which opportunities to practice speaking, reading and writing, acknowledged as central to the SLA process (cf. Spolsky, 1989), are socially structured in both formal and informal sites of language learning. This has important implications for the conditions under which learners speak, read or write the target language, and hence opportunities for language learning.

(iii) Identity, practices and resources are mutually constitutive. This suggests that identity is influenced by practices common to institutions such as homes, schools and workplaces, as well as available resources, whether they are symbolic or material. Examination of the practices and resources of particular settings, and of learners' differential access to those practices and resources, offers a means to theorize how identities are produced and negotiated. At the same time, structural conditions and social contexts do not entirely determine language learning or use.

Through human agency, language learners who struggle to speak from one identity position may be able to reframe their relationship with others and claim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak, read or write, thereby enhancing language acquisition.

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I-IDENTITY VS *WE*-IDENTITY IN LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE: ANGLO-SLAVONIC PERSPECTIVES

The recent increase in popularity of identity studies from multidisciplinary perspectives is not just a coincidence. It is largely instigated by social factors, such as globalization, characterized, *inter alia*, by the increased incidence of intercultural encounters on a day-to-day basis in a variety of contexts and communicative domains.

Additionally, the ever-increasing mobility of the global workforce and other demographic groups (e.g. educational and retirement mobility tendencies, migratory movements instigated by adverse living and/or political conditions, etc.) contributes substantially to transnational diversity and heterogeneity in cultural, ethnic, religious and other terms. This is not only the case with regions traditionally perceived as immigrant (e.g. Western Europe, North America, Australia, etc.), but increasingly so with countries and regions whose demographic profile historically exhibited a higher level of cultural, ethnic and religious homogeneity (e.g. Eastern and South East Europe, Middle East, East Asia, etc.).

Global migration processes initially seem to have triggered the need for a higher and more sophisticated level of intercultural and cross-cultural awareness and communicative skills in order to make daily interaction more effective and deconstructing and redefining the complex concepts of Self and Other and aspects of their engagement and interaction.

Individually or collectively, humans routinely relate to each other and in order to do that meaningfully and consistently, they resort to a repertoire of identification (cf. Jenkins 2004). The repertoire is dependent upon socio-cultural conditions and expressed through a range of semiotic resources and modalities, including linguistic/verbal ones. It may, therefore, be possible to identify the relationship between language, culture and identity and determine the specific nature of their inter-relatedness.

Within these conceptualisations, two major universals could be distinguished, namely the *I*-orientation cultures (and their subsequent identities) on the one end of the spectrum, essentially drawing from the theoretical framework of Individualism (Hofstede 1991; Triandis 1995), and the *we*-orientation cultures (and their identities) on the other end, stemming from the Collectivist theoretical provenance and its further interdisciplinary characterizations. A more systematic and taxonomic investigation into the matter should be expected to expand and refine our understanding of the intricate relationship between language, communicative behavior and identity and their interdependence and interrelatedness across cultures and disciplinary approaches.

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Identity, language and culture: generalities and specifics

The notion of identity, understood in more general terms, refers to an individual's awareness of his or her belonging to a particular community, socio-cultural, professional, ideological, or otherwise. Based on a particular sense of belonging, an individual decides how he or she will engage with the community in question and determines the nature of the engagement. As already pointed out, humans routinely relate to each other, both on an individual and collective level, and in order to do that meaningfully and consistently, they resort to a repertoire of identification (Jenkins 2004: 7). The repertoire plays an important role in day-today interactions, verbal or otherwise, helping us to make sense of the world and of "who's who and what's what" (Jenkins 2004: 7). It is dependent upon sociocultural conditions and "forged out of shared experiences, memories and myths, in relation to those of other collective identities" (Smith 1992: 75). Identities are expressed through a range of semiotic resources and modalities (cf. Kalyango and Kopytowska 2014; Kopytowska 2015), including linguistic/verbal ones. The issues have recently been explored from the pedagogical point of view as well (Mitchell et al. 2015), having found its proper niche in postmodern educational paradigms, particularly in linguistic and intercultural education (e.g. Kurteš et al. 2017).

One of the more prominent manifestations of identity, namely the ethnic one, derives from the sense of peoplehood within a group, a culture, and a particular setting (Phinney and Ong 2007: 271). It has been studied with reference to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group, that is, a group defined by one's cultural heritage, including values, traditions, and language.

Because ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct, no single measure can assess it in all its complexity. […] [A]t the core of ethnic identity is a sense of self as a group member that develops over time through an active process of investigation, learning, and commitment. (Phinney and Ong 2007: 279)

Identity is, therefore, a multifaceted notion, defined as "far from being a simple set of static givens, […] [but] now understood to be a highly complex, multi-layered and dynamic construct, whose many dimensions interact to constitute a variable whole" (Bugarski 2012: 220). One of those facets, namely the ethnic one, includes a number of dimensions and components, including values and believes, lying in the very foundation of a specific culture and having their particular language as a reliable and authentic medium of expression. Individuals acquire and develop their identity through their interaction with other members of the community (Ting-Toomey 1999: 26). The nature of this interaction appears to be reflected in language and the discourse characteristic of a particular speech community.

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I-IDENTITY VS *WE*-IDENTITY IN LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE: ANGLO-SLAVONIC PERSPECTIVES

Depending on the cultural background, a person can perceive himself or herself either as an independent, autonomous individual, which is a prototypical characteristic of individualistic cultures, or as part of a group, typically recognized as the key characteristics of a culture belonging to the collectivist end of the spectrum. The division should not be taken as dichotomous, with a clear-cut demarcation line, but rather as a continuum.

Understanding these characteristics and being able to identify them is an important skill necessary for a successful interaction in intercultural encounters. Instead of utilising traditional terminological designations "individualism" and "collectivism", we propose to use synonymous labels: "*I*-culture" and "*we*-culture" (and their respective *I*- and *we*-identities), in an attempt to move away from a potential ideological baggage that the traditional terminology may now connotes.

English culture is considered to be rather individualistic, or – as we are about to explicate – *I*-oriented. When it comes to the Russian and Serbian cultures, they have traditionally been located on the collectivist end of the spectrum, but recent socio-political developments of the societies in question are purported to have influenced this position, potentially moving them towards the individualist end of the spectrum. Nevertheless, we would like to argue that both cultures are still firmly anchored in the collectivist – or *we*-orientation – tradition, as it is deeply embedded in their very fiber, which our data persuasively show. Representatives of both linguocultural traditions still seem to identify themselves with values typically associated with the collectivist culture, such as camaraderie, sociability, interdependence, empathy and care.

Lexico-phraseological level and morpho-syntactic levels

In this section we look into the lexico-phraseological and morpho-syntactic and discursive-stylistic levels in particular, searching for evidence that identity is embedded in the very fiber of the language structure.

Thus, for example, alongside *kommunikaciya* ('communication'), the Russian language has another word lexical item, namely *obschenie*, pointed out by Wierzbicka (2002) as one of the key words of the Russian language and culture.

These words are semantically rather different. *Kommunikaciya* is mainly used as a term in communication studies, mass media etc., while *obschenie* refers to informal interaction and has a semantic component of warm relations and getting enjoyment of the process. The cognate words *obschat'sya, obschitel'nyi, neobschitel'nyi, obshchitel'nost'* also have their cultural specificity. The verbs given in dictionaries as the English translation equivalents of the verb *obschatsia* ('associate', 'communicate', 'socialise',' contact', 'liaison', 'mix', etc.) do not entirely convey that specific meaning, as the semantic emphasis of the Russian word is not on the information exchange, but on keeping the interlocutor company . The lexical and phraseological field representing the concept of *obshcheniye* is one of the largest in the Russian language, often referred to as a category of Russian communicative consciousness (Sternin 2002: 11).

The tendency towards the *we*-identity of the Russian and Serbian linguocultural traditions is also manifested in their preference to performing activities together, which is also reflected in the language structure. As pointed out by Gladkova, "Russians seems to be able to conceptualise the idea of common activity much more readily than English. One needs just one word to say how many people are doing something together as a whole" (2007: 142). So it is possible to do something *vdvoem (*Ser*: udvoje)* 'two people together', *vtroem (*Ser: *utroje)* 'three people together', *vchetverom* (Ser*: učetvoro)* 'four people together', etc. On the other hand, typical Russian and Serbian expressions *delat' chto-to za kompaniyu* (Ser: *praviti društvo nekome*) (lit. 'to do something for the sake of the company') can be perceived by the representatives of the English-speaking world as a lack of initiative and overdependence (c.f. Gladkova 2007: 142).

Kill the Song—Steal the Show: What Does Distinguish Predicative Metaphors From Decomposable Idioms?

Stéphanie Caillies · Christelle Declercq

A growing body of research in cognitive sciences shows that people understand figurative language in much the same way as literal sentences. Indeed, it appears that listeners or readers can understand the figurative interpretation of metaphors, idioms, irony… without having to first analyze and reject their literal meanings. However, knowing this does not tell us exactly how figurative language is processed and whether all figurative expressions are processed in a similar way. Moreover, the definition of what is literal is still object of debate. Ariel (2002) demonstrated that literal and non literal meanings cannot always be distinguished from each other. Literal meaningwas originally assumed to be conventional, compositional, relatively context independent, and truth conditional. The problem is that the boundary is not clear-cut, some figurative expressions are compositional— metaphors and a lot of idioms—, others are conventional—most of the idioms. In this paper, we wish to (1) shed some light on how semantically similar idiomatic andmetaphoric expressions are, and how they could be defined regarding literal meanings, and (2) examine the potential differences in people's comprehension of predicative metaphors and decomposable idioms.

It's commonly assumed that idiomatic expressions have lost their metaphoricity over time and now exist as frozen metaphors. Indeed, an idiomatic expression has been traditionally defined as a locution for which the intended meaning is not derived from the meaning of the individual words comprising it (Swinney and Cutler 1979). In this framework, the figurative meaning of the expression *armed to the teeth* cannot be derived from a compositional analysis of *armed* and *teeth.* However, a growing body of literature does not support this non compositional assumption. First, it has been shown that idioms can differ in the degree to which word meanings contribute to an idiomatic meaning: the degree of compositionality (Gibbs 1992, 1993; Gibbs et al. 1989; Titone andConnine 1994a; Tabossi et al. 2008). Second, it has been shown that this compositionality degree exerts an effect on idiom comprehension. For example, Gibbs (1987, 1991) investigated the comprehension of decomposable and nondecomposable expressions by children. He found that children better understood decomposable idiomatic expressions than nondecomposable ones. Another example is provided by Gibbs et al. (1989) study on the effect of the compositionality factor on idiom processing time.

They showed that adults took significantly less time to decide that decomposable idiomatic expressions were meaningful than to decide that nondecomposable expressions were meaningful. Consistent with this result, Caillies and Butcher (2007), using a priming paradigm, found that figurative meaning of decomposable expressions was accessed earlier than that of nondecomposable ones. These results provide evidence of a psychologically relevant difference between semantically decomposable and nondecomposable idiomatic expressions, and demonstrate that some idiomatic expressions are compositional (see also, Titone and Connine 1999).

In addition to compositionality, idiomatic expressions may vary along a number of other dimensions such as familiarity (one aspect of conventionality), predictability and literality. Predictability refers to the probability that an unfinished phrase will be completed idiomatically. Literality refers to an idiom's potential for a literal interpretation. For example, the idiom *break the ice* can receive a literal interpretation whereas the idiom *eat one's words* cannot. These three dimensions, familiarity, predictability, and literality have been shown to influence the comprehension of idioms. Schweigert (1986) showed that reading times for sentences containing highly familiar idiomatic expressions were shorter than those for sentences containing more unfamiliar expressions)demonstrated that predictability influenced the time course of activation for idiomatic and literal meanings during idiom comprehension. They found that the idiomatic meaning of highly predictable expressions was accessed sooner than that of more unpredictable expressions, and that the literal meaning of more unpredictable phrases was activated sooner than that of highly predictable phrases.

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Metaphor challenges definition. One sense identifies metaphor as a type of language while another as a form of conceptual organization (Glucksberg 2001). In this paper, we were interested in the first sense, metaphor as a type of language, traditionally defined as: "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them" (Merriam Webster dictionary).

Many studies have tried to identify the dimensions that affect metaphor understanding. In this purpose, researchers have investigated metaphor comprehension and appreciation by asking participants to rate either the comprehensibility of metaphors or their aptness or goodness (Gineste and Scart-Lhomme 1999). Although comprehensibility has been clearly defined as the difficulty or the ease to comprehend the metaphor, aptness has not been defined very precisely.
For instance, Johnson and Malgady (1979) instructed their participants to rate "how good, pleasant, or appropriate the metaphor seemed to them". Several dimensions, which are in fact interrelated, have been shown to affect metaphor comprehension and appreciation.

One of these dimensions is the semantic similarity between the words used in the metaphor, though it is not clear whether words should be similar or not highly similar (Johnson and Malgady 1979; Kusumi 1987; McCabe 1983; Tourangeau and Sternberg 1981, 1982; Trick and Katz 1986). Another one is the degree of mental imagery: metaphors which evoke vivid mental imagery were usually rated as more apt and easier to comprehend (Katz et al. 1985, 1988; Marschark et al. 1983; Paivio and Walsh 1993). Finally, it has been shown that familiarity influences how the metaphor is rated and how it is understood. For instance, Blasko (1999) demonstrated that familiaritywas related to aptness and ease of comprehension, which is consistent with previous studies (Katz et al. 1983, 1985; Marschark et al. 1983). But it is important to note that these data concern off-line ratings of comprehension and appreciation, which undoubtedly involves other processes than on-line processing (Gerrig and Healy 1983).

Among all of these dimensions, familiarity and aptness were the only ones that had been studied in on-line experiments. Blasko and Connine (1993) found that for familiar metaphors, figurative meaning was available immediately. For unfamiliar metaphors, the activation of figurative meaning depended on the aptness: when the metaphor was highly apt, figurative meaning was activated as soon as for familiar metaphors, while it needed 750 ms to be available for moderately apt metaphors. Blasko and Briihl (1997) expanded this work recording eye-movements as participants read metaphors. Highly familiar metaphors were read more quickly than less familiar metaphors. Last, Budiu and Anderson (2006) showed that metaphors were processed more rapidly and more accurately when participants repeatedly read them in different contexts while they initially adopted a bias toward a literal interpretation.

Thus, these evidences suggest that some metaphors are highly familiar and conventional and that familiarity facilitates metaphor processing. What does semantically distinguish idiomatic from metaphoric expressions? Firstly, metaphors differ from idioms in that they can not be considered as nondecomposable. Secondly, from a probabilistic point of view, metaphors are often novel and sense creative, idioms are conventional. Thirdly, while idioms are defined consensually as locutions, several metaphors are distinguished in literature as a function of the grammatical category used metaphorically: nominal metaphors, adjectival metaphors, predicative metaphors…

Given these differences, the challenge for researchers is to determine whether a single model can capture metaphors and idioms processing. Decomposable idioms and novel predicative metaphors are particularly of interest because they allow us to test hypotheses regarding the processing difference between conventional and innovative aspects of figurative language. Indeed, decomposable idioms like *eat one's words* are directly comparable to non conventional metaphors like *assassinate one's song*, both containing a transitive verb used metaphorically.

LANGUAGE AND EMOTION:
DISCOURSE_PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES
Laura Alba-Juez & Tatiana Larina

Some people might wonder if emotion has anything at all to do with language, or think that emotion cannot be a topic for serious scientific research. In fact, this has been a common belief for many years, even among linguists and other scholars. But fortunately, this was yesterday's news. Today's news is that emotion matters in every scientific field and in particular, in linguistics, because it is a key factor not only in understanding human nature, but also in the comprehension of human language and communication.

Indeed, when people feel emotions they may not only show their internal states physically (e.g. by blushing or changing their facial expression), but also perform speech acts which are interpersonal in nature and have particular consequences. And by so doing speakers manifest, and at the same time affect, certain aspects of the cognitive, social and discourse systems they belong to. Indeed, emotion affects language and at the same time is affected by language: the way we feel may influence the way we talk and express those feelings, and at the same time, the way we name or talk about emotions can affect the way we feel such emotions.

Perhaps nothing is more human than the verbal expression of emotion, for even
though other animal species may express certain basic emotions in non-verbal ways, they certainly cannot talk about them (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2016: 242). Sharing emotions is a crucial social activity which forms part of everyday conversation and interaction and helps us maintain both our mental and physical health. To express and
understand these emotions appropriately is therefore important to interpersonal relationships and individual well-being (Fussell, 2002). Furthermore, it can be said that human emotion lies at the root of verbal communication. As Russian emotiologists suggest, in the beginning was not the *Word*, but the *Emotion*, because the basis of primary and secondary nominations from the very beginning were the emotions of a person, not yet Homo Loquens, but already Homo Sentiens (Shakhovsky 2008: 10). If we do not have the motivation to talk about something, our speech will most surely be very restricted (Foolen, 2015). As Stern (1965[1931]: 54) put it, "If a thing were quite indifferent to me I would not say it". Also, if a speaker feels that her interlocutor is not interested in what she is saying, it will be hard to continue speaking. Thus, emotion in communication works in both directions: not only the speaker has to have the motivation to speak, but the interlocutor should be willing (and therefore positively predisposed, showing a positive attitude) to listen; otherwise, communication will not take place.

In the 20th century, linguistics was mainly concerned with the referential function of language and the linguistic code per se. Language was seen as an abstract and logical instrument for dealing with factual information. The also true fact that language is strongly affected by and loaded with emotion was almost completely disregarded. But towards the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, the world of scientific and humanistic research started to reflect upon the fact that language/discourse is much more than a code or some grammatical, morphological or phonological rules: the pragmatic, cognitive and emotive dimensions of human communication transcend the linguistic code, and this had to be reflected upon and shown in the research. Thus the world of linguistics geared towards what has now been called "the emotional turn" (Le Doux, 2000). Linguists started to study the phenomenon from a more objective, scientific point of view and thus came to the conclusion that indeed, as Ochs and Shieffeling had already pointed out back in 1989, "language has a heart". As several authors have now observed, emotion is undoubtedly a very important part of every kind of communication, and can be found at all the levels of linguistic description. Moreover, as many authors have stated (e.g. Myagkova 2000, Shakhovsky 2008), any word is discursive and can be emotionally charged.

LANGUAGE AND EMOTION:
DISCOURSE_PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES
Laura Alba-Juez & Tatiana Larina

Thus, it can be said that we are currently experiencing the emergence of a new interdisciplinary field, namely *emotion linguistics*, or *emotiology* (an already well established term in Russian), which is based on different theories of emotions coming
from various disciplines, such as philosophy, biology, cognitive science, psychology,
social studies, neurology, information science, or existentialism (Shakhovsky 2008: 21).

The linguistics of emotion, therefore, has an interdisciplinary nature, because it
encompasses and goes through a number of paradigms of modern linguistics and science in general — communicative, cognitive, pragmatic, discursive, culturological. This multifarious nature of current research on emotion is the result of the logical and
unavoidable development of psychologically oriented linguistics, which has found out that emotion affects all mental, verbal and non-verbal activity, and that it permeates all levels of human language. According to Shakhovskiy (2008: 383), this is not a thesis or a hypothesis, but an axiom.

As Lüdtke (2015: ix) observes, the emotional turn in linguistics is the way "for
finally conceptualizing the wholeness of language", for advancing from "individual rational logos" into "intersubjective emotional dialogue". However, this does not mean that the old rational paradigm has to be discarded; on the contrary, we strongly believe that the old and the new paradigms should 'unite forces' in order to acquire a better understanding of what human language is and how it operates. Thus, the rationalistic paradigm is now being *supplemented* by the emotion-integrating paradigm, and this involves, among other things, the consideration of linguistic heterogeneity, a certain openness to analyze and understand the transgression of linguistic norms, a spatialization of linguistic phenomena, or the consideration that, even if language shows arbitrariness in some respects, it also displays motivation in some others. Things are no longer black or white in linguistics, let alone in the subfield of discourse studies, and this is precisely what is exciting about it: language is a very complex, pragmatic dynamical system (van Gelden, 1998) and the sub-system of emotion within language is complex and dynamic as well. Thus, under this new light, we see the expression of emotion as a pragma-linguistic phenomenon which shows the relationship *brain-body-world* within a dynamical system (Gibbs 2010), which reflects the sequential cyclic structure *sense-think-act* in Dynamical System Theory1 (Alba-Juez & Alba-Juez 2012).

And precisely because of its complexity, the concept of emotion is difficult to define, which makes the researcher inevitably ask many questions, such as *What exactly is an emotion? Can emotions be measured through observation of brain, body and language? Should emotion be differentiated from cognition? How many emotions can we feel and/or express?* There seems to be no consensus among psychologists, sociologists anthropologists, linguists or neurologists when it comes to answering these and other questions, and cannot give any 'right' answers here. Better, these questions make us reflect upon the fact that, because of its variety and complexity, the study of emotion has to be a multi- and interdisciplinary endeavor (linking cognitive, cultural, linguistic and physiological phenomena, among others).

Our view in this respect is that emotion in language has both universal and language/culture-specific characteristics, and is in line with the findings of research on both sides. For instance, the results of a study on prosodic universals in discourse particles (Pistor 2016) show that prosody has the universal functions of "primarily discourse-pragmatically organizing communication, and secondarily emotionally communicating the attitude of the speaker" (2016: 872).