Course Description
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Course Title:
Researching Metaphor: A Qualitative and Quantitative Introduction

In this course we will take a survey of the study of the relationship between overt, explicit linguistic forms and unconscious thought. We will use theoretical and empirical insights that span the fields of linguistics, philosophy, cognitive science, and psychology. The focus is on uncovering the meanings in metaphoric expressions – such as 'fiscal cliff', 'war on terror' and 'tax relief' – in common news, blog and social media discourse, and analyze how the metaphors operate on reader's interpretation of the social issues being discussed.

There is an empirical component to this course, providing training in basic methodological tools to perform corpus analysis and data mining for information about deeper meanings in texts, such as viewpoint, bias, and metaphorically-driven framing of political and social views. The goal is to learn how unconscious conceptual metaphoric mappings operate beneath the surface linguistic form, and how to methodologically dissect these meanings to get at author's intentions and assumptions.

A secondary but important goal is to become proficient in basic computational analytic tools and methods needed to perform such analyses in an efficient and precise manner. We will use these theoretical and methodological tools to find conceptual order in the chaos of the large amounts of data facing us every day.

Theoretical questions we will be addressing include:

- What is conceptual metaphor, and how do particular language-specific and universal metaphors help structure our worldview? How do frames and cultural models work with metaphors to help this structuring?
- Does thought influence language, and vice versa, and if so, to what extent? Do metaphors 'translate' across languages? Is there systematicity in cross-linguistic similarities and differences?
- How do people categorize and experience the world around them (e.g., what is a 'color' in the real world), and further, how do they categorize abstract notions like 'love' and 'democracy'?

To tackle these and other questions, we will need to closely examine the most important tools in the cognitive linguist's toolkit – metaphor, metonymy, categorization and prototype structure, embodiment, gesture, perspective and viewpoint, neurally-based simulation and imagination, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, cultural concepts and framing, and the cognitive foundations of grammar.

Course outcomes

- Students will receive a theoretical foundation in cognitive linguistics and principles in cognitive science relevant to the study of language. Linguistic concepts are presented in the context of this broader dialogue, and language is presented as one integral component of the fabric of cognition.
- Students will acquire skills in corpus linguistic research, including small-scale data mining, performing concordances, strategic searching using regular expressions and keywords, data structure design and tagging, and working with corpora in languages other than English.
- Students will use their theoretical grounding and corpus methodology to develop and answer brief research questions in the form of short essays or one final research paper.

Readings

- Ingersoll et al. 2013. *Taming Text: How to Find, Organize, and Manipulate It*. Manning Publications.
- Benjamin Bergen. 2012. *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning*. New York: Basic Books (Bergen).
- George Lakoff. 1987. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (selected chapters)

Additional readings

Casasanto, D. (2008). Similarity and Proximity: When Does Close in space mean Close in mind? Memory & Cognition, 36(6), 1047-1056.

Coulson, Seana, and Todd Oakley. 2000. "Blending Basics." Cognitive Linguistics 11 (2000): 175–96. doi:10.1515/cogl.2001.014.

Dancygier, B. & Sweetser, E. (2014). Figurative Language. Cambridge University Press. [D&S]

Evans, N., & Levinson, S. C. (2009). The myth of language universals: Language diversity and its importance for cognitive science. Behavioral and brain sciences, 32(05), 429-448.

Evans, V., & Green, M. (2006). Cognitive linguistics: An introduction. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. [E&G]

Feldman, J. (2008). From molecule to metaphor: A neural theory of language. MIT press. [M2M]

Fillmore, C. (1982). Frame semantics. Linguistics in the morning calm, 111-137.

Fillmore, C. J., & Atkins, B. T. (1992). Toward a frame-based lexicon: The semantics of RISK and its neighbors. Frames, fields, and contrasts: New essays in semantic and lexical organization, 103.

Goldberg, Adele E. 1997. "The Relationships between Verbs and Constructions." In Lexical and Syntactical Constructions and the Construction of Meaning, 383–98.

Hampe, B. (2005). Image schemas in cognitive linguistics: Introduction. From perception to meaning: Image schemas in cognitive linguistics, 29, 1.

Lakoff, G. (1990). Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought. Basic books.

Núñez, R. E., & Sweetser, E. (2006). With the future behind them: Convergent evidence from Aymara language and gesture in the crosslinguistic comparison of spatial construals of time. Cognitive science, 30(3), 401-450.

Regier, T., & Kay, P. (2009). Language, thought, and color: Whorf was half right. Trends in cognitive sciences, 13(10), 439-446.

Regier, T., Kay, P., & Khetarpal, N. (2007). Color naming reflects optimal partitions of color space. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 104(4), 1436-1441.

Talmy, L. (1988). Force dynamics in language and cognition. Cognitive science, 12(1), 49-100.

Thibodeau, P. H., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning. PLoS One, 6(2), e16782.

Tomasello, M. (2003). Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition. Harvard Univ Press. (selected chapters)