

Metaphorical production in L2: the impact of genre on creativity and cultural variation

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This presentation details a corpus-based study into the written production of linguistic metaphors in L2 Spanish in two different genres: narrative texts and academic essays. As an essential component of learners' overall communicative competence, metaphorical competence has received much attention over the past few years especially because it has been found to favour vocabulary learning as well as grammar acquisition and pragmatic competence (Littlemore & Low, 2006). To date, language learning research has primarily focused on metaphor comprehension, while much less work has been devoted to investigating the production of metaphors in L2. These studies have observed that the ability to produce metaphors develops steadily as L2 proficiency increases (Nacey, 2019; Cuberos, Rosado, & Perera, 2019), that learners, just as native speakers, tend to produce metaphors in clusters, especially at advanced stages of learning (Littlemore et al., 2014), and that these clusters serve different communicative functions at each level of competence (Littlemore et al., 2014). However, little is known about the influence of genre on L2 metaphorical production. By comparing metaphorical production across narrative and academic genres, this study seeks to reveal differences in writing performance regarding the use of metaphors that result from genre-specific language demands faced by learners. One main aim is thus to measure how overall metaphor density and metaphor clusters varies per genre. A second aim is to assess the ways in which the learners' use of metaphors contributes to perform (different) communicative functions in the two focal genres.

This research examines the deliberate and non-deliberate written production of conventional, creative and transferred metaphors in narrative and academic essays produced by advanced French-speaking learners of Spanish. The corpus was collected in a guided-learning context at the Université catholique de Louvain. Metaphors were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU, Steen et al., 2010) and deliberate metaphors by applying the Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (DMIP, Reijnierse et al., 2018). Guidelines of both procedures, MIPVU and DMIP, were adapted to L2 production to examine creativity and transfer (Cuberos, Rosado, & Perera, 2019). Discrimination between novel and L1-based metaphors was performed by native speakers of French. Those cases where the cross-domain mapping was impossible to follow were not marked as L1-based or creative metaphors but as errors, considering that communication was lost. This analysis led us to include three post-tags to the main categories (direct, indirect and implicit metaphors): (1) Spanish-based metaphors, (2) L1-based metaphors, and (3) creative metaphors. Metaphor clusters were identified through a series of time analyses following Littlemore et al. (2014).

Preliminary results offer valuable insights into how L2 learners have the ability to use metaphors to create textual cohesion and how creativity and transfer have an impact on the written production of metaphors in both genres. Also, tentative results suggest that the use of metaphors in the two genre differs not in the variety of metaphors but in the metaphorical density. Finally, pedagogical implications for L2 learning will be discussed.