



## Figurative Language Across Cultures

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### Metaphors and Linguistic Variability

#### Abstract

In this lecture, I will talk about the interplay between bilingualism and creativity, applied to metaphor, and about how people who speak different languages tend to process the same metaphorical stimuli in different ways. In this second part I will illustrate a case study based on a metaphoric filmic advertisement of a perfume, which was shown to a sample of American English native speakers (USA), a sample of Spanish native speakers (Spain) and a sample of Persian native speakers (Iran).

In the first part, I will describe two behavioral studies that I conducted with colleagues. The first focuses on the processing of creative metaphors that are perceived to be 'easy' (e.g., *beaches are grills*) and 'hard' (e.g., *silence is an apron*), by English monolinguals and then by multilinguals English native speakers. The results show a higher degree of cognitive flexibility in multilinguals vs. monolinguals. The second study focuses on a comparison between monolinguals and multilinguals in their processing of literal expressions (e.g., *a simple idea*), familiar expressions based on conventional metaphors (e.g., *a bright idea*), creative extensions of conventional metaphors (e.g., *a grey idea*), and creative expressions based on novel conceptual metaphors (e.g., *a damp idea*).

In the second part I will describe the methods and results that allowed us to demonstrate that language and culture affect the way we construct metaphors, based on the same multimodal input.