

## **Birmingham-Budapest International Doctoral Seminar**

### **Abstracts**

### **Plenaries**

#### **Empirical methods for researching responses to metaphor in therapy**

**Professor Dennis Tay**

**10.00 - 11.00**

Metaphors are widely used in psychotherapy. They help therapists understand and modify clients' feelings and attitudes that are often difficult to express literally. However, the basic question of how clients respond to metaphors, and indeed what they think about the use of metaphor itself, has received little attention. This is surprising given that client attitudes towards therapeutic strategies are known to influence their effectiveness. In this talk, I share findings from a recently concluded government-funded project on client responses to metaphor, focusing on the complementary use of different empirical methods including surveys, psychophysiological measurements, and discourse analysis. They allow us to investigate different aspects of client response: i) conscious vs. unconscious, ii) specific metaphors vs. the use of metaphor itself, and iii) during vs. outside therapy. The overall findings paint a generally positive picture that metaphors do 'work' for clients and affirm pluralism in therapy and metaphor research. However, disparities between therapist and client understanding of metaphor, considerable individual variabilities in response, and observed deviations of practice from theory leave us with much food for thought.

#### **Current directions in sensory language research**

**Professor Asifa Majid**

**16.00 – 17.00**

According to some views words label categories that exist independent of language. On the other hand, research over the last years has shown that languages differ in how they divide up even simple notions of sounds and smells, parts of the body, and events featuring motion and separation. These differences in how basic categories are constructed have potential consequences for how we understand the causal relations among language, thought, and culture, including the possibility of cross-culturally varied aspects of perception and cognition.