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### **Cross-modal iconicity: The Bridge between Image and Metaphor**

The capabilities to recognize what images represent and to understand complex metaphors are vital for humans. Both rely on our fundamental mental resource to perceive similarities and differences within the same but also across different sensory areas and different cognitive domains. Much successful research in several disciplines has been dedicated to in-depth investigations of these and related areas. Yet there are few attempts to form a broad account of the essential interrelations among various ways of connecting perceptual and cognitive entities to each other through resemblance. The semiotic notion of iconicity is well suited for such a task. Iconicity is representation based on similarity, and *cross-modal iconicity*, which is an extremely widespread phenomenon, should be understood as iconicity that crosses the borders of different kinds of material, spatiotemporal, and sensorial modes, and, furthermore, the border between sensory structures and cognitive configurations. For instance, a visual entity may resemble and thus iconically represent something that is auditory or abstractly cognitive. The aim of this paper is to suggest a general theoretical framework for conceptualizing cross-modal iconicity and relating different kinds of mono-modal and cross-modal iconicity to each other in terms of degrees of iconicity. More specifically, the aim is to present a conceptual model that makes it possible to bridge the alleged gap between image and metaphor by way of outlining cross-modal iconicity. It is argued that perception and conception of images and metaphors should be understood as the two extremes in a continuum of iconic representation where cross-modal iconicity bridges the apparent gap between mono-modal, sensory-based iconicity and cognitive iconicity. The argumentation is based on both theoretical and empirical research from disciplines such as semiotics, psychology, cognitive science, and neurology.