



Ewelina Prażmo, ewelinaprazmo[at]gmail.com
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland

Meaningful Forms. Cognitive Analysis of the Semantic Contribution of a Font Type to a Text

In the light of the increasing application of conceptual integration theory in the study of dynamic meaning construction, we attempt to examine its multimodal dimension. Conceptual integration theory (also known as conceptual blending theory) is useful in explaining the emergent meanings and associations. The process occurs at the morphological, lexical and syntactic levels as well as across them (e.g. the meaning construction of a lexical item integrated with a certain grammatical aspect). It can use the resources of one, as well as several different languages (e.g. linguistic hybridity). However, conceptual integration may also explain meaning construction in multimodal contexts. It can bring together language, music, image, gesture and sound. In the present paper we account for the extra meanings added to the message due to the use of a certain font type. In order to do so, we apply Fauconnier and Turner's conceptual integration theory (cf. Fauconnier and Turner 2002) as well as Forceville's notion of the multimodal metaphor (cf. Forceville 2008) to the study of multimodal meaning construction. We claim that the font may strengthen the message, activate associations or even add extra semantic value to the text. Specifically, we examine the popular use of the Helvetica font in marketing, advertising and the Internet as well as other fonts used on social networking sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook). The present paper is maintained in the cognitive linguistics framework, making use of Ronald Langacker's cognitive grammar paradigm and its terminology (cf. Langacker 2008). We also espouse the cognitive semiotics perspective by studying the linguistic sign in its entirety; the form and the meaning. Conceptual integration process is represented by two input spaces functioning at two distinct sign systems. In our study the two different modes of perception are language and its graphical representation i.e. the font.