

## Creative space building in (inter)action: the case of joint fantasy in dyadic interactions

Geert Brône<sup>1,2</sup>, Bert Oben<sup>3</sup>, Paul Sambre<sup>1,2</sup> & Kurt Feyaerts<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lessius University College Antwerp, Department of Language and Communication

<sup>2</sup>University of Leuven, Department of Linguistics

Cognitive approaches to linguistic creativity have focused primarily on the construction of hybrid or layered conceptualizations on the basis of a variety of cognitive processes, including analogical reasoning (Hofstadter 1995, Thagard *fc.*), conceptual blending and compression (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, Veale et al. 2011), frame-shifting (Coulson 2001), inferential chaining (Csikszentmihalyi 1996), deautomatization (Giora 2003) and many others. In the majority of linguistic studies, the focus is on the creative end product of these mechanisms (and their impact), rather than on choices and pathways (Weisberg 2006) that lead to that product. This can be explained by the fact that researchers generally don't have access to the *online* meaning construction processes that language users employ in producing creative output.

In this paper, we shift the focus of attention from a product perspective to a producer-centered view on creativity. More specifically, we inquire into the incremental steps that language users take in generating novel conceptualizations, like idea generation or interactional hitchhiking on ideas (Osborn 1953, Vidal 2011). In order to gain access to these online strategies of creativity, we video-recorded a series of 15 dyadic interactions (between well-acquainted peers), in which participants were instructed to jointly reflect on future applications of mobile technology (e.g. novel functions for mobile phones) (as part of the MIMIC corpus, Brône & Oben 2011). The interactive set-up triggers the verbalization of thought processes (communicating a line of reasoning to the partner) and the joint construction of creative conceptualizations (taking up input from the other). The resulting data provide a wealth of information on pathways, recruitment and composition in creative reasoning.

The corpus data will serve as an empirical basis for exploring two specific research questions:

- (1) If creativity as divergent thinking (Runko 2010) involves the recruitment of novel input on the basis of analogical reasoning (Baughman & Mumford 1995, Holyoak & Thagard 1997), and the construction of conceptual blends using that input, how does this process of creative mental space building take shape in interaction? Here we focus on the joint strategy of *domain scanning* as it unfolds in discourse, where a move by one participant (e.g. in proposing a novel conceptual blend) serves as an anchor and trigger for the co-participant, who may 'run the blend' (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) and propose novel conceptualizations on the basis of it.
- (2) How is creative space building coded linguistically? Which lexical or constructional patterns serve as *space builders* in the incremental and multimodal process of joint creativity? And to what extent do interlocutors align their linguistic and non-verbal representations (gesture, posture) (Pickering & Garrod 2004) in co-constructing novel mental space configurations? At the lexical level, this is reflected in the type of

conceptual pacts (Brennan & Clark 1996) that co-participants establish to refer to a novel conceptualization. At the grammatical level, successive steps in the joint creative process are typically framed in identical or similar forms, yielding a strong effect of dialogic resonance (Du Bois 2011).

## REFERENCES

- Baughman, W. A., & Mumford, M. D. (1995). Process analytic models of creative capacities: Operations influencing the combination and reorganization process. *Creativity Research Journal*, 8(1): 37–62.
- Brennan, S.E. & Clark, H.H. 1996. Conceptual pacts and lexical choice in conversation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 22, 1482-1493.
- Brône, G. & Oben, B. 2011. *MIMIC. A Multimodal Interaction Corpus using multi-angle video recordings and eye-tracking in dyadic setting*. Antwerpen/Leuven: University of Leuven.
- Coulson, S. 2001. *Semantic leaps: frame-shifting and conceptual blending in meaning construction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1996. *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Du Bois, J. 2001. Towards a dialogic syntax. Manuscript in press for *Cognitive Linguistics*.
- Giora, Rachel. 2003. *On Our Mind. Salience, Context and Figurative Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hofstadter, D. 1995. *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies*. New York: Basic Books.
- Holyoak, K. J., & Thagard, P. 1997. The analogical mind. *American Psychologist*, 52(1): 35–44.
- Osborn, A. 1953. *Applied imagination*. Scribner's: New York.
- Pickering, M.J. & Garrod, S.. 2004. Towards a mechanistic psychology of dialogue. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 27, 169-225.
- Runco, M. 2010. Divergent thinking, creativity and ideation. In J. Kaufman & R. Sternberg (eds), *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press: 413-446.
- Thagard, P. forthcoming. Creative combination of representations: scientific discovery and technological invention. In R. Proctor & E. J. Capaldi (eds), *Psychology of science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vidal, R.V.V. 2011. Creativity for problem solvers. *AI & Society* 23(3): 409-432.
- Weisberg, R. 2006. *Creativity: understanding innovation in problem solving, science, invention and the arts*. Hoboken: Wiley.