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# Processing Differences between Metaphor and Simile: Evidence from a Cross-Modal Priming Study

Xinxin Yan\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University College London – United Kingdom

## Abstract

This study investigated the processing differences between metaphors and similes by examining the activation of the literal meaning of the vehicle term during their interpretation, using an online cross-modal priming task. Results revealed a significant difference in the activation of the contextually relevant properties and superordinates between metaphor and simile by the end of their processing: while literal meaning in metaphor becoming deactivated as the processing proceeded, it remains activated throughout simile processing. Results support categorisation account's view on metaphor and simile to be processed differently. Specifically, metaphor interpretation involves constructing a broader, ad hoc concept, while simile does not.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Simile, relevance theory, cross, modal priming, ad hoc concept

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\*Speaker