

Different metaphorical construals of time affect valence estimations of temporal events

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Two different metaphors are typically used to describe motion in time (Gentner et al. 2002): in "ego-moving" metaphors, temporal events remain static, while the conceptualizer is the moving entity (e.g., "we are approaching the holidays"). Alternatively, in "time-moving" metaphors, it is the temporal events what moves, while the conceptualizer remains static (e.g., "the holidays are approaching"). Psycholinguistic research has proposed that the choice depends on the valence of the temporal event (Margolis & Crawford, 2008; Soriano & Piata 2022). Thus, we choose ego-moving metaphors for positive events, and time-moving metaphors to describe negative temporal events (e.g., "the deadline is approaching"). Laboratory experiments have confirmed this hypothesis using a very constrained experimental paradigm, which is based on answering the question "Wednesday's meeting has been moved forward two days" (e.g., Boroditsky & Ramscar, 2002) which has different answers depending on the adoption of an ego-moving perspective ("Friday") or a time-moving perspective ("Monday").

The present paper moves out of this paradigm; we presented English (N=99) and Spanish (N=42) speakers with ego-moving and time-moving versions of the same temporal events, which were divided into "positive", "neutral" and "negative" using Warriner et al (2003) norming database. Our results confirmed the existing hypothesis: participants judged the temporal events more positively (using a 9-point Likert scale) when they met the same events in an ego-moving context. This applied to stimuli in the three valence bands, positive, neutral and negative. The theoretical repercussions of these results are discussed and future works suggested.

References

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