



On Our Mind: Salience, Context, and Figurative Language

Rachel Giora

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How do we learn to produce and comprehend non-literal language? Competing theories have only partially accounted for the variety of language comprehension evoked in metaphor, irony, and jokes. Rachel Giora has developed a novel and comprehensive theory, the Graded Salience Hypothesis, to explain figurative language comprehension. Giora contends that the salience of meanings (i.e., the cognitive priority we ascribe to words encoded in our mental lexicon) has the primary role in language comprehension and production.

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