# Lexicalisation evidence in metaphor processing

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In comprehending a metaphor such as *anger is a volcano*, we infer the conditions which must hold so that the implied analogy between *anger* and *volcano* is feasible and comprehension is limited by the economic management of cognitive resources (Relevance Theory, Sperber & Wilson, 1986a, 1986b, 1995; poetic effects, Pilkington, 1992). Relevance Theory suggests that in doing so we match only relevant properties of *anger* and *volcano*, whereas the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993) claims there are systematic patterns in how we map from one domain to another which are ultimately inherent to the human mind. I will present evidence from my own experiments that English and German native speakers systematically disagree in their judgements of the meaningfulness and plausibility of highly lexicalised metaphors and that second language learners approximate the judgements of native speakers, i.e. that, at least for highly lexicalised metaphors, the intended metaphoric meaning might be acquired as an idiomatic meaning rather than relying on inference of plausible attribute mappings or relying on conceptual metaphoric domain mappings. This might be evidence that there is a change in the mode of the inferential processing involved in metaphor comprehension, which changes with the degree of lexicalisation (salience, Giora, 2003).

# References

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