Processing Cost of Metaphorical and Literal Language in Neurocognitive Disorders

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Whether metaphorical language is processed and comprehended through mechanisms distinct from literal language remains a central debate in linguistics and cognitive science. While previous research has explored the essence of metaphoricity, it often fails to precisely delineate the processing costs that differentiate figurative and literal language. This study provides new empirical evidence by investigating metaphorical processing in individuals living with Neurocognitive Disorders, specifically Alzheimer's Disease (AD). This population offers a unique vantage point, as AD is frequently characterized by conceptual impairments and deficits in spatial reasoning—a domain that serves as a primary source for metaphorical mapping. By analyzing this group, we examine whether processing disparities arise not merely from temporal delays (suggesting different processing stages) but from fundamental differences in the neurocognitive and conceptual mechanisms required for successful comprehension.

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