

DEBATE: LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

The following debate took place on September 23, 2022, at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Szczecin, during the annual conference of the Polish Cognitive Linguistics Association (PCLA). The debate was moderated by Brian Ball (New College of the Humanities, London, UK) and included conference keynote speakers Reinhard Blutner (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Mitchell Green (University of Connecticut, USA), Zoltán Kövecses (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary), Günter Radden (University of Hamburg, Germany), and Alexander Ziem (University of Düsseldorf, Germany).

The debate was guided by consideration of the following topics:

(1) The role of language in thinking

- Does Neo-Whorfian Hypothesis solve the problem?
- How can we causally explain the correlation between features of language and conceptual features?
- What is a causal explanation for the effects found in the quite different domains such as color discrimination, numerical concepts, the

influence of grammatical gender of words on properties of related objects (characterized as male or female)?

(2) The role of language in meaning construction

- Does linguistic information alone create meaning?
- Assuming that we use different linguistic means in different languages to express the same meaning and that, at the same time, we can evoke different conceptualizations when using the same linguistic means in one and the same language in different speakers and in one and the same speaker at different times – what is the role of individual and subjective conceptualizations in the process of meaning construction and how can they contribute to discovering general regularities linguistic research is looking for?
- How does one analyze and document linguistic meaning on a large scale, given that we arrived in the digital age where the constraints of printed dictionaries and grammars no longer prevail?

(3) The expressive dimension of linguistic acts

- What does it mean for a linguistic act to express the speaker's mental state?
- What is the role of non-verbal expressive signals in linguistic communication?
- Does linguistic communication consist in expressing thoughts?

Brian Ball: The topic of the debate concerns the role of language in thinking. In fact, there's a series of topics: the role of language in thinking, the role of language in meaning construction, and the expressive dimension of linguistic acts. There are a few questions that have been prepared. Maybe we can start with the first broad theme: the role of language in thinking. And there's an initial prompt to reflect on the question whether the Neo-Whorfian hypothesis solves the problem of that role.

Does somebody want to volunteer as having strong opinions about this or should I call on people? Maybe I could start by backing up one step from this and just asking something a little more general. This being the meeting of the Polish Cognitive Linguistics Association, I wonder whether those who are practitioners of that discipline think that there's a perspective on the Neo-Whorfian hypothesis that is taken by that approach to the study of language. Are there people who have strong feelings about the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis?

Mitchell Green: I don't have super strong feelings about it. I would say that in my experience the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis tends to be overblown and if

we look for empirical evidence for that, there is some but not a huge amount. There is a modest amount of empirical evidence for the idea that language structures thought, that it structures conceptual schemas. See for instance a paper by Maria Reines and Jesse Prinz titled “Reviving Whorf: The return of linguistic relativity” (2009). I don’t want to say that there is nothing there but I think there’s less there than is often assumed, at least in the popular version of that hypothesis.

Brian Ball: What about this other question on this first topic? How can we causally explain the relation between features of language and conceptual features?

Reinhard Blutner: Linguistic relativity states that language can influence cognition but does not completely determine it. What does that mean? I think that means that there’s a correlation between linguistic features and features of cognition. An example of correlation is that there may be one between stork population in a given region and the babies in that region. And what is the cause, how can we explain it? That storks deliver the babies? That’s what I believed seventy years ago. Another example is the grammatical gender and stereotypical properties of an object. For example in German you have *die Sonne* ‘the sun’, that’s feminine, and then you can consider the concept of SUN and check it for its female properties. In Spanish is *el sol*, that’s masculine – what are the typical features SOL in Spanish? Its conceptualization is that it’s more male-like, aggressive. And then another word is *der Mond* ‘the moon’ in German, it’s masculine, again we have those dominant male properties of the concept. In Spanish *la luna* is feminine and the concepts has with female properties. We have a correlation between the gender and the properties that are more female-like or male-like. But there is a problem with explaining the correlation; there are different models in the literature, one model is that gender features are semantically valid, there are semantic values, and the concepts are flexible, so that the concept can be changed, their salient features can be changed. It can be influenced to go into the direction of the male stereotype or the female stereotype.

I think this “theory” of how gender influences our conceptualizations is nonsense. Of course, I accept the existence of a true correlation. However, this correlation must be explained in a completely different way. I guess it has to do with the cultural change during language development. The idea is that the correlations between grammatical gender and concept properties are realized during language development; it’s a kind of cultural evolution, whereby masculine gender correlates with male properties and so on.

Brian Ball: Good, so how can we causally explain the correlation between features of language and conceptual features?

Alexander Ziem: Maybe just to add a bit on your thoughts – on the other hand I think what the Neo-Whorfian hypothesis also points to is the fact that language use, to some extent, shapes the way we think, it doesn't determine it but shapes it in a way. So, the way we speak creates a reality that we engage in, a reality that we envision in this way and in that way. And of course we've got different ways to express things. Crucially, the way we choose to express things shapes the way we think of them. And this has an effect that can be studied, and I'm thinking of very simple experiments Lera Boroditsky and her doctoral student Paul Thibodeau did on framing (Thibodeau and Boroditsky 2011). They gave two groups one and the same story of a fictitious town where there was a problem with rising criminality. And there was just one word different in the story: they used the word, the metaphor *beast* in the story for one group, and the word *virus* in the other. And then the two different groups were asked how to deal with the problems of the rise in crime. What was interesting to see is that both groups gave very different views on one and the same problem, so the reality setting was kind of the same but the way they approached it was very different. As far as I remember, the *beast* group said that they need to enforce police actions on it and be serious about it, while it was very different with members of the *virus* group, who argued: well, just think of engaging in setting up social programs and suchlike. So with this example I think it's kind of nice to see to what extent just one word yields a very different framing of the situation addressed. The "reality frame" is the same but one word is enough to reframe the situation. So I think this example shows how the linguistic categories that we choose shape the way we think about a situation or state of affairs.

There are quite a few studies that are dealing with such issues. Clearly, it's not as simple as Whorf once argued, namely that the categories provided by the language we use determine the way we think. It's a bit more complex. However, I think specifically for political language and public language use, we all know that metaphors – and meaning-bearing linguistic forms in general, including grammatical constructions, think of using passive instead of active voice, have different effects on how we position ourselves towards the problem that we are addressing and casts different perspectives on one and the same issue.

Günter Radden: Yeah, I fully agree with what you said. I also know about this study and it's not completely a matter of language because it's metaphorical and it's very impressive. It's one of the few studies where we could say: well, this has really been shown to be true and there are also things like color

discrimination and so on. And it's also been shown that Russian speakers, who have distinct words for light blue and dark blue, were able to remember the color much better than people who do not have this distinction. And I think it's true that when you have a word for something, you do see things differently and I'll just give you a simple example. In American English you have graduate students and undergraduates. We don't have it in our country; I don't know if you have it in Poland. Anyway, there's a distinction which I never thought of. We just have students and there's no distinction between different types of students, so you certainly have distinctions that you have to learn in your country but whether it determines your thinking, I don't really know.

But the male and female issue, I don't really fully agree, I don't think it's true. Grammatical gender – I'm very doubtful. Many of these phenomena that have been taken as evidence of language-determined thinking have to do with other phenomena. So we have, as we know, bodily experience and lots of other factors that may interfere.

Brian Ball: Thanks very much. Maybe I can just make a comment as well. I've got a Greek colleague, Dimitris Mylonas, who's a cognitive scientist with computing background. He told me that Greek has different color words than English and many other languages, so this is why he was interested in pursuing investigation of color words and he spent some time, I think, or a colleague spent some time in a remote African village, where they apparently have no name for gray. He found that they actually would express some uncertainty about whether certain physical prompts were red or green, and this is potentially of interest because people like Kant have said that nothing can be red all over and green all over at the same time, right? We can know this without experience, but some people because of their color vocabulary according to my colleague, may experience some things as intermediate between red and green, as it were.

The other comment is that many of the examples we've had have been about some kind of conceptual, psychological or cognitive constructs that correspond to words, like color words or gender associations with words. Of course, Whorf initially also had in mind grammatical structures, which might radically differ from one language to another, and so there might be a separate kind of dependency there of thought on language.

I want to turn now to the second topic, the role of language in meaning construction and Zoltán, let me pass the mic to you.

Zoltán Kövecses: I think we must add a third term to language and thought here. That third term, a concept or conceptual tool that was badly neglected in cognitive linguistic circles in the past 50 years, is context. Interestingly

enough, in their 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson I think devote about one line to the issue of context when they bring up the issue or the example *What is the orange seat?* It's impossible to say what the meaning of that expression is without knowing the context. It's unsurprising, though, it turns out to be the seat where someone sits at the table usually and they always have orange juice for breakfast. And this is not even a metaphor. But other than that, cognitive linguists and the major proponents of Conceptual Metaphor Theory do not really discuss the issue of context. Some of the discussion and interest in context can be found in psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology, where they are mostly interested in the kind of thing that Alexander mentioned: you have a word replaced by another word and that changes the context and with it the interpretation can change completely. You replace one sentence with another and it will change the interpretation.

But other than this kind of experimental work that can easily be done in a lab nothing much has happened. I thought about this for a long time and I decided to change this situation in my own work in the past fifteen years perhaps. I designed a little individual program for myself. So whenever I was traveling by plane or train over long distances, I took a newspaper or a magazine and as I read through them, I was asking myself what might have prompted this particular author to use this particular metaphor rather than another metaphor? And so I was collecting materials like this for several years and as I was flying a lot and also to the US and long distances, one of the newspapers that I read quite frequently was *USA Today*. So lots of the examples that I have found for this have to do with the American context in all kinds of ways, including political issues.

I collected hundreds of such examples and came to the conclusion that there are basically four context types that seem to influence people's choices of metaphor. I think this directly addresses the topic that we are discussing now, the issue of meaning construction, that is, how we construct meaning in a particular specific context. So there are four types of contextual factors, as I called them. One is the situational context, which is fairly obvious. You don't have to be a cognitive linguist to know that the situational context is very important, even the physical context. One example of this in metaphor research is when Frank Boers did a study of *The Guardian* editorial articles about economy. It turned out that in a 10-year time span whenever the editorial discusses economy there is a big difference between the metaphors they use depending on whether these are summer editions or winter editions. One of the things that came out very clearly is that in the winter editorials economy was often presented as a disease. The author of this research came to the conclusion that in winter most people in our part of the world get flues and all kinds of lung problems, throat problems, and ear problems and so on and so economy was presented as a disease that can be cured, as opposed

to the summer, when this was not the case at all. So what this means is that the physical context in this case has a great deal to do with the kinds of metaphors we choose, it's not just something consciously preplanned. We are heavily influenced by context.

The second factor is discourse context. In discourse, context subsumes all kinds of contextual factors, the dominant forms of discourse in a particular society at a particular time can be very influential. For a long time in Europe, for example, the Bible and what we can call the Christian way of talking about things was the dominant discourse that influenced not only theological, religious writings but all kinds of other writings. But also this type of context also includes what the participants in discourse assume or know about each other. So for example there is David Beckham, the famous English soccer star, who ended up in Los Angeles playing for the Los Angeles Galaxy. An article about him said something like *he is a shark in the ocean of footy*, using this very British English term. And again one wonders how the author of the article came to this particular metaphor? And what led me to at least a particular solution to this issue is that Los Angeles is obviously on the shore of the big ocean with lots of sharks, so what the journalist knew about David Beckham was inadvertently, unconsciously used in the metaphor that he used about the situation.

The third type of context that I have in mind that was quite prevalent in my own research is the body – and this is where I deviate very much from standard Conceptual Metaphor Theory because its major tenet is that our metaphors are embodied. There is a bodily basis for the metaphors that we use, although these metaphors emerge within a very large and long time span or time frame and they are evolutionary. Hundreds or thousands of years for the emergence of the metaphors MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN, the very early classical examples like AFFECTION IS WARMTH – it's obviously clear that these are embodied metaphors. I, however, like to think about such cases not as something unique and special but as part of our bodily context, that is, we are using our own bodies as context. What gives me some support in this is that it is not only this evolutionary kind of bodily context that influences the way we use metaphors, but also much shorter timeframes. If I broke my leg yesterday and I show up at a meeting with my leg plastered, someone can make a silly metaphorical joke about me: *that's a lame argument* or something like that. I'm just inventing this but probably it would work. And there are other bodily determinants that play a role. For example, there is another famous set of experiments by Daniel Casasanto, who did a series of cognitive psychological experiments: moral is usually considered as right metaphorically, as in the right thing to do (Casasanto 2009). Now, he looked at people's bodily specificity, for example 90% of people are right-handed, 10% are left-handed. He's set up two groups and without using any language

clues he presented them with a particular experimental situation in which they had to make up their minds whether they conceive of morality as right or left. Amazingly enough, left-handed people came up with moral is left. If that is valid, and he ran something like six different experiments which pointed in this direction, then I have to conclude that bodily specificity is a key factor. And it's not at all like the MORE IS UP OR KNOWING IS SEEING. And also in poetry, Emily Dickinson, and this is my observation, uses many metaphors that have to do with light and darkness, the sun and night and so on. And I began to read up on Dickinson and it turned out that she had a major optical illness so that she was very sensitive to light. There were summer months when she couldn't leave the house and so in her poetry light metaphors, sun metaphors are predominant. So I would place what is called embodiment in cognitive linguistics and the bodily basis for many metaphors in cognitive linguistics not as something isolated from everything else but as a part of our context. And what could be a better and more direct context than our own bodies. So metaphorical meaning construction is very much dependent on such contextual factors.

Finally, there is what I call the conceptual-cognitive context. This includes what people know about history (both personal and social), what their main interests and concerns are, and importantly, the conventional metaphorical system they have acquired. If there is no overriding situational, discourse, and bodily contextual factor, they simply choose a conventional metaphor from this system. Of course, all of this is a lot more complicated than how I put it here. I discuss the related issues in my 2015 book *Where Metaphors Come From*.

Brian Ball: Thanks very much for that, I take it that that's a fairly comprehensive argument for a negative answer to our question: does linguistic information alone create meaning? No it doesn't, various aspects context are crucial as well. Alexander...

Alexander Ziem: Let me add another aspect that is complementary to some extent to what you said and also to what Günter said before. As far as I understood, Zoltán, you were arguing that the selection of a certain linguistic category is motivated in different ways, and you differentiate between the different context types that motivate the choice. I think that's also what this debate on the role of language and meaning construction is aiming at: once a category is introduced, then of course it's not the linguistic category as such that encodes anything, but it prompts a frame, a complex experientially based cognitive model that points to certain directions and profiles evoked knowledge in specific ways. And I think that was one of the major starting points of cognitive linguistics in the 1970s, when Charles Fillmore

came up with the idea of semantic frames that got elaborated later on. The simple example he gave was that of *bachelor* (Fillmore 1977). Think of the meaning of the word *bachelor*. You can look it up in a dictionary and you will find probably “an unmarried man” or something like that. But that’s just a very, very tiny part of the story. If you look at the term as it appears in context, you certainly come up with a very rich cognitive model that’s not included in this dictionary meaning, addressing a certain behavior, even specific habits you might expect from someone who is called a bachelor. And why is it somewhat weird to call the Pope a bachelor? All this also points to a certain social dimension of the lexical meaning that is not included in the dictionary definition. It is not useful to assign some of these meaning dimensions to the “core” meaning and others not. Interestingly, also multiword units and probably also grammatical constructions evoke rich cognitive models. Think of *on the ground*. Having a meaning for *on the ground* requires contrasting different ways of travelling. More specifically, we have a traveling scenario in mind connected to flying and it’s quite complex if you go into the details.

If it then comes to metaphor, I think it gets even more complex because you’ve got a huge, sometimes bodily based, most of them experientially based, even metaphorical systems that are co-evoked with this metaphor. So as to the role of language in meaning construction, from this perspective, the answer would be: Well, it’s language prompting these cognitive models consisting of metaphoric framing of these kinds, and this is what helps us constructing such a rich reality that we can elaborate in different ways. That’s what opens up different interpretations of the world. You could always say, well, that’s not how I meant it. But that’s how it popped up in your mind when the category was used. Frames, cognitive models, and the meaning of conceptual metaphors – I’ll talk about all this briefly tomorrow. This is what the cognitive linguistic view on that matter, from my perspective, looks like.

Brian Ball: Thanks, that’s very helpful. I’ll pass over to Günter.

Günter Radden: Yeah, I fully agree with both views. Language does have prompts for meaning extensions and meaning construction. We could almost say that basic experiences, bodily experiences, may go without further meaning construction. They are understood immediately by everybody. Then you have metaphor and you have metonymy, and you elaborate on them, if you say *on the one hand, on the other hand*: you use your body but you mean something abstract. So the metaphor opens up a whole new world, abstract world, which we could not understand without some basic notions that we have, maybe based on our bodily experience. And I want to also come back to something that’s also been discussed and I think we also had in mind the way people or cultures understand space. And of course the way we experience space with

front and back and left and right is for us the most natural way of doing so. But then there are other cultures. Guugu Yimithirr is a language that has a cardinal system of orientation, that is, they always would evoke spatial notions such as north, south, east, or west, and northwest and southeast and so on, and they can't imagine that it could be different, that there could be another way, "our" way of expressing spatial dimensions that is based on our body, which is much more subjective and hard to learn for them. But it's not only a matter of spatial orientation but also of temporal orientation, the spatial notions are metaphorically extended to time, so they would also express time in terms of east and west and so on. So I think we are born in cultures where we take our body as basically the point of orientation and other languages take a more objective view. If you want to say so, that view is more rational and less subjective.

Brian Ball: Yeah, thanks very much. Your talk of *on the one hand, on the other hand* reminds me that in certain languages the word for 'five' is basically a hand, right? And so again, it's bodily. All this sounds like a pretty comprehensive rejection of the thought that linguistic information alone creates meaning, there's aspect of context and also cognitive models that supplement the language and then go on to create meaning.

The other two questions on this slide strike me as having something of a methodological feel, and I wonder if people want to comment very briefly about that before we move on to the third topic. So one is basically about the relationship between subjective psychological things and linguistic things proper, one might think, and the second one is basically, given that there are big datasets, can we make use of that fact?

Mitchell Green: I don't have a whole lot to say about the datasets but I'll try to address the first of the two questions as I understand it. And that is just to emphasize that at least from the perspective of the philosophy of language, we'd want to say "meaning" means lots of different things. So, at least from where I live in terms of research, there are different notions, one of which is meaning as understood in terms of literal content, which is itself not always uniquely determined by the literal meaning of the words that are produced in a sentence. For example, they are often context sensitive in ways that are well understood now. So there's literal content and there's what is implied either by means of the so-called conversational implicature, as opposed to conventional implicature. I'd also say there are expressive dimensions of language use, particular utterances. So, for me at least, there are lots of different levels of meaning and I've been trying to argue for a notion of organic meaning, maybe in addition to those but it seems to me it's helpful

to start out with talk of the sorts of meanings that are publicly accessible and then on top of that, there's another, even more confusing layer that is idiosyncratic, subjective responses that might be generated in me because of my own particular, distinctive personal history. I'm not sure that I'd call that meaning of a sort that's particularly germane in communication but I think I'd probably be in the minority on this issue. But the main point that I'd want to say is to throw a little bit of, if not cold then cool water on the notion of meaning. Let's divide it into different dimensions and see whether that will give us some theoretical traction, at least in my own research it has done so – for example, I distinguish between different notions of meaning in an early chapter of my textbook *The Philosophy of Language* (Green 2020).

Brian Ball: Thanks very much, Mitch. Any thoughts on the kind of the new world order of big data before we move on to talk about expression?

Alexander Ziem: Well, just very briefly. Because the linguistic conference here is called *Cognitive Linguistics in the Year 2022*, and one could wonder what's new, what's happened in the last years, last decade. I think, indeed, a lot has happened, we might not be aware of it fully just because we are part of the community and we are working in it. What I think is new, looking back to the 1990s or in the early years of this century, is that we now have available huge datasets and strong methods to deal with these datasets. That opens up a new floor for investigating language from an empirical, specifically quantitative perspective. But not only this, it also makes it possible to reframe or to improve the way we usually tend to represent meaning and grammatical structures, for example in dictionaries or in reference grammars. Now, we could use online resources that help – and that don't have any restrictions in terms of space and ways its entries are represented. We can also regularly update entries and include new findings regardless of the scope and level of detail. I work in constructicography, the art of developing dictionary-like (digital) repositories of a language's constructions in the lexicon-grammar continuum. Building a constructicon means to represent and document meaning on all levels of abstractions, ranging from lexical meaning to constructional meaning, including meaning of grammatical structures and conceptual metaphors as well as image schemata, so basically of all meaning-bearing linguistic forms. That's what I am – as a construction grammarian – primarily interested in. A constructicographic view on language opens up new options as to how we can overcome the limits of the traditional dictionary-grammar distinction on the one hand, and the way of presenting what we think a language is made of, namely all entities that carry meaning and all structures that help us to combine meanings to more complex meanings. Construction grammarians would like to combine both

– and I think that’s an important progress we made in the last years. Let’s see how far we can get.

And I think that also points to the topic addressed here: language and meaning construction. To be precise, it would be great to have a resource that presents and document all linguistic entities that carry meaning with all the relations holding between them on all levels of abstraction. We have to bear in mind that there is no such thing as linguistic islands, constructions are not unrelated, rather they are related in many ways, and to have that worked out is the long-term project that I think is worth being realized. It’s a project that might also provide some further insights into the role of language in meaning construction.

Brian Ball: Thanks. That was a really pregnant remark with lots in it and I imagine we might hear eventually from the audience about projects that pursue some of these methods that you’re talking about. But we should move on to the next collection of issues about the expressive dimension of linguistic acts. I know Mitch will have some things to say about this.

Mitchell Green: Thanks very much. Well, I’ve got a sort of account of what it is for a linguistic act to express a speaker’s psychological state, and it goes roughly as follows. As I said this morning, expressing a psychological status is a matter of signaling. Design, transmission of information and the signaling in question is involved, is pertinent to a psychological state, so I can signal things that are not psychological but I can also signal things about my state of mind, where state of mind for me is going to be comprising four different types of states: cognitive states like beliefs, memories, predictions, expectations; affective states: emotions and moods; conative states: plans, intentions, and so on; and experiential states: phenomenal experiential types, how we experience things perceptually, etc. And for all I can tell, all four types of states are capable of being expressed, not just in contrast to being referred to. I can refer to my experience of the smell of a lemon, for example, but I think I can also express that experience, at least if I’ve got the right kind of ingenuity. Language gives me lots of tools for expressing cognitive and affective and conative states. My view is that language is less good at expressing experiential states, although metaphors are an important tool that we can often invoke for that purpose but I also think that visual and other types of artifacts that we can create are things that can help us be expressive as well. Just to clarify a bit further: we express beliefs by making statements, and words can be used to express conative and affective states as well. However, with experiential states as I understand these (such as the sour taste of the lemon), we can refer to that experience, but expressing it requires in some

sense showing that experience. I believe it is not impossible to do this in language, but it takes ingenuity. For example, a gifted poet might express experiential states in language. I discuss those things in my article “Imagery, expression, and metaphor” (Green 2017).

So that’s a story about how that goes and I consider expression something that can be driven by intentions but doesn’t have to be, some of our expressive behavior, like the unintentional grimace that I make when I taste something. It means I eat something that doesn’t taste very good, it’s an expression of my disgust perhaps but it’s not something I have to do intentionally. So it seems to me expression is interesting for my purposes, an interesting link between thoughtful, self-conscious, deliberate communicative acts on the one extreme, and completely visceral, brute, not necessarily even communicated acts that might show aspects of myself without actually being designed to communicate information. So for me, expression lives in that middle space, and I think it’s for my purposes of interest, because it gives us some clues as to how contemporary languages might evolve. That’s a very brief story about longer theories.

Alexander Ziem: Just a question, Mitch: when we’re talking about language expressing mental states, what does that mean? What do you mean by *expressing*? From a linguistic and specifically from a cognitive linguistic point of view I would argue that the conceptual categories, including frames, conceptual metaphors, cognitive models and so on, prompted by linguistic units, don’t mirror a mental state but they conceptualize it in specific ways. So my question is: what’s the relation between language and mental states? From a cognitive linguistic point of view, I would argue, once you use a linguistic category, you always conceptualize the referent addressed in a specific way. There is no thing-in-itself. My point is: language doesn’t mirror mental states but the linguistic categories rather shape the mental states addressed in a certain way. For example, metaphors like *boiling with rage* do not mirror an emotion but rather offer options for conceptualizing mental states that are inaccessible for others by definition. Is that in line with your view?

Mitchell Green: Thanks for that, yes, I think so. A sort of core notion that I would use in my account of expression is that of showing, making manifest, and there are different types of showing according to my account, there is showing in such ways to make something knowable, epistemically accessible, showing in such ways to make something actually perceptible, and then showing in such ways as to give us a sense of how something feels, sounds, tastes, etc. Those are different ways of showing as far as I’m concerned. And showing does not have to be transparent, it can be translucent, and

so it doesn't have to be bereft of conceptualization. So think about looking through a very clean and very clear, unblemished window, you're going to see more or less an unmodified visual scene, whereas if you've got a window that's dappled or in some other way modified from relatively complete purity, you're going to still see through it but there will be some modification and so for me lots of expressive behavior involves that translucent relationship rather than a transparent relationship.

Alexander Ziem: That's what I meant by *conceptualization*.

Mitchell Green: That's what I think you meant. So I think I can countenance that and actually take it as an interesting and useful refinement of the approach that I would have, because I think it's good to know the ways in which things like metaphors and other ways in which we use language in order to express ourselves don't give others, as it were, a completely clear window into our states of mind but often give us a colored, tainted, modified, distorted viewpoint. And so I want to have it both ways, essentially. I want expressive behavior to give others a view into my mind but without assuming that that view has to be completely limpid.

Alexander Ziem: Yeah, I would even go one step further by saying we don't have direct access to it because direct access to mental states would essentially mean that there is no need for any "vehicle" for conceptualizing it, and that's obviously debatable. I think that's something that points to the first issue that we had about the role of language and thinking. If you want to communicate your mental states, you have to use language or any other vehicle, including non-linguistic behavior, to communicate them and once you do so, you have them in a specific way.

Mitchell Green: I would just add maybe a qualification: I don't think that conceptualization is in conflict with directness, so that the fact that I can conceptualize something, conceptualize this as a book or notebook, doesn't mean that I don't also perceive it directly. And I've got a different set of arguments that would say when it comes to things like emotions, when I display an emotion on my face, especially for the so-called basic emotions such as anger, fear, surprise, disgust, it's possible for others to not just know about my emotional state but actually to perceive my emotion. So I think there's an argument that sometimes we communicate our emotions by making them perceptible, that is, not using language. So communication for me is a broader notion than linguistic communication. So that's the first one, the second one would be: perception, I guess for me the direct-indirect distinction cuts, as it were, orthogonally between what we can perceive and what

we can't perceive, so I'd want to sort of spend some time kind of dwelling on that on a different occasion. But in general, I do agree that linguistic forms of communication, I mean, I'd be willing to sign on to the following hypothesis that linguistic forms of self-expression tend to conceptualize and also modify, sometimes even distort, the things that we're expressing and thereby keep others from having a direct experiential access to our states of mind. And yet they enable us to share our mental states with others in powerful ways, and that's not always for the good. When we talk about expressive language of the sort that we find in things like slurs, for instance, we often find expressive behavior that is maybe morally problematic. And yet, students of language want to understand how that works, and I think it's an important key to understanding how slurs have the power that they do: they are expressive of various types of attitude and those attitudes aren't just expressed but they often provoke others to share those same attitudes. You have to make special effort not to be brought up into that attitude, largely because those slurs bring in metaphors which we can't help but have activated in our minds when we hear them. And so once you've got a metaphor activated, like your example of virus or beast, it's hard to compartmentalize that in such a way that you're not affected in spite of your best efforts not to be.

Reinhard Blutner: I think the question was what expression means, to express something, right? And many people say music is a language, it is like a language, or they talk about the language of love. And I think I agree with Igor Stravinsky that music cannot express anything. It can only express itself. I think that's a great idea. The German critic Eduard Hanslick says the same, and this is the interpretation of "express". Many people in the field of music share this idea.

Günter Radden: Just coming back to your questions, the role of non-verbal expressive signals and linguistic communication. I'm thinking of Bühler, who a long time ago already distinguished different types of functions of communication and this would be phatic communion (Bühler 1934). Phatic communion is of course present all the time. I also want to mention that there are sign languages, and a sign language of course is also a fully grammatical language. They have some iconic aspects, but not necessarily, and you can express basically all the ideas that we are familiar with also by using a sign language, so communication is not restricted to verbal languages. If you go home and don't say a word, then of course you're in trouble. So it's not just thoughts that are communicated but it is much more than that. We like cats when they purr. So, also humans are purring when they speak.

Brian Ball: Thanks, it's a really nice example to close and to thank our panelists for this stimulating discussion. Thanks very much.

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