

The Metaphor Identification Procedure and practical experience
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Since 2007, I have been working on a doctoral project which has the primary aim of investigating the 'foreign-soundingness' of learner-produced written English by comparing the metaphorical competence of advanced Norwegian learners of English with that of native speakers. To do so, I have chosen to compare the extent and characteristics of the Norwegian learners' production of metaphorical expressions with the metaphorical expressions produced in the same genre by native speakers of English. Argumentative essays collected in two computerized corpora, one corpus consisting of essays written in English by Norwegian students and the other corpus composed of essays written by native speakers of English, provide the primary source material.

After having settled upon a working definition of metaphor, the next step in such a comparative study of the production of metaphorical expressions involves the identification of those metaphors. This, in turn, raises a plethora of issues, some of which will be explored here. In this presentation, I will first discuss some of the general problems concerning metaphor identification, and then outline a newly-developed approach called the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) which is currently on offer as a potential solution to these problems. In brief, MIP is meant to be a practical, systematic, and reliable method for identifying metaphorically-used words in discourse. It first evolved through the collaboration of an international group of metaphor researchers, the Pragglejaz group, to develop a tool which takes most of the guesswork and individual variation out of metaphor identification (see e.g. Pragglejaz Group 2007, Steen 2005, Steen 2002). The initial procedure has since been refined by a group of researchers at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, with whom I have been in close contact during the course of my research.

I will here illustrate how MIP functions using material from own corpus data. In addition, I will discuss some of the challenges encountered when applying MIP to learner language rather than to the native-speaker British English with which it was developed. Finally, I will also consider some of the potential difficulties arising from the situation of applying MIP in

relative isolation, without the benefit of a group of fellow metaphor researchers who could offer advice in times of doubt.

References

- Pragglejaz Group (2007): "MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse." In *Metaphor and Symbol*, vol. 22 (1), 1-39.
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- Steen, Gerard J. (2002): "Identifying Metaphor in Language: A Cognitive Approach." In *Style*, vol. 36 (3), 386.