Image-text Multimodality: The Case of Internet Memes
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The interest in multimodal (image-text) artifacts has been growing among social scientists and scholars of communication and media studies, matching the exponential growth of the presence and importance of memetic (and related) usage in our communicative landscape. In this talk, I will describe several salient areas of image-text multimodality where the emerging patterns are important to cognitive linguistic approaches to form and meaning.

The talk will consider several selected aspects of memes in order to show their specificity as linguistically valid artifacts. I will start by clarifying the way in which memes profile subjectivities such as meme-maker, meme-viewer, and meme-character. I will then look at how the 'space and layout' of a meme (top/bottom, labelling, grid-like structure, etc.) is used to deliver specific aspects of meaning. Various examples will further demonstrate how memetic form and meaning rely on cognitive concepts such as frame metonymy, categorization, constructional meaning, and figuration, and also how memetic discourse affects the use of standard linguistic forms in English (such as articles, pronouns, adverbial clauses, speech and thought representation constructions, etc.). Overall, the talk will argue that memes represent form/meaning patterns closely resembling linguistic constructions, while refining these formal configurations to serve the needs of multimodal artifacts, as well as creating conventions that locate meaning at the intersection of image and text. Finally, I will show how memes influence other multimodal artifacts (such as ads) and how the multimodal form inspires various types of creativity.

Internet memes offer two ways to enrich our view of correlations between meaning and form and also between language and images: they give us tools to better understand the nature of multimodal communication, while also prompting new insights into the underlying patterns in linguistic communication.

Note: The research described here has been conducted in co-authorship with Lieven Vandelanotte. It will appear in a monograph *Internet Memes: Patterns of meaning emergence across image and text*, to appear from Cambridge University Press.