

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chappelle Susan Hunston  
Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## THE CAMBRIDGE APPLIED LINGUISTICS SERIES

The authority on cutting-edge Applied Linguistics research

Series Editors 2007–present: Carol A. Chapelle and Susan Hunston

1988–2007: Michael H. Long and Jack C. Richards

For a complete list of titles please visit: [www.cambridge.org/elt/cal](http://www.cambridge.org/elt/cal)

*Recent titles in this series:*

**Teacher Research in Language Teaching**

A Critical Analysis

*Simon Borg*

**Exploring ELF**

Academic English Shaped by Non-native Speakers

*Anna Mauranen*

**Genres across the Disciplines**

Student Writing in Higher Education

*Hilary Nesi and Sheena Gardner*

**Disciplinary Identities**

Individuality and Community in Academic

Discourse

*Ken Hyland*

**Replication Research in Applied Linguistics**

*Edited by Graeme Porte*

**The Language of Business Meetings**

*Michael Handford*

**Reading in a Second Language**

Moving from Theory to Practice

*William Grabe*

**Modelling and Assessing Vocabulary**

**Knowledge**

*Edited by Helmut Daller, James Milton and*

*Jeanine Treffers-Daller*

**Practice in a Second Language**

Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and

Cognitive Psychology

*Edited by Robert M. DeKeyser*

**Feedback in Second Language Writing**

*Edited by Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland*

**Task-Based Language Education**

From Theory to Practice

*Edited by Kris van den Branden*

**Second Language Needs Analysis**

*Edited by Michael H. Long*

**Insights into Second Language Reading**

A Cross-Linguistic Approach

*Keiko Koda*

**Research Genres**

Exploration and Applications

*John M. Swales*

**Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning**

*Edited by Bonny Norton and Kelleen Toobey*

**Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing**

*Edited by Barbara Kroll*

**Understanding Expertise in Teaching**

Case Studies of Second Language Teachers

*Amy B. M. Tsui*

**Criterion-Referenced Language Testing**

*James Dean Brown and Thom Hudson*

**Corpora in Applied Linguistics**

*Susan Hunston*

**Pragmatics in Language Teaching**

*Edited by Kenneth R. Rose and Gabriele Kasper*

**Cognition and Second Language Instruction**

*Edited by Peter Robinson*

**Learning Vocabulary in Another Language**

*I. S. P. Nation*

**Research Perspectives on English for**

**Academic Purposes**

*Edited by John Flowerdew and Matthew Peacock*

**Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition**

Foundations for Teaching, Testing and Research

*Carol A. Chapelle*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston  
Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# Figurative Language, Genre and Register

*Alice Deignan*

*University of Leeds*

*Jeannette Littlemore*

*University of Birmingham*

*and*

*Elena Semino*

*University of Lancaster*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107402034](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107402034)

© Cambridge University Press 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Figurative language, genre and register / Alice Deignan, University of Leeds; Jeannette Littlemore, University of Birmingham and Elena Semino, University of Lancaster.

pages cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-40203-4 (pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-107-00943-1 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Figures of speech—Study and teaching. 2. Metaphor—Study and teaching. 3. Languages, Modern—Study and teaching. I. Deignan, Alice. II. Littlemore, Jeannette. III. Semino, Elena, 1964-

P301.5.F53F54 2013

808'.032—dc23

2012042708

ISBN 978-1-107-40203-4 Paperback

ISBN 978-1-107-00943-1 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chappelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

For: Tim, John and Rory  
Dan, Joe and Oscar  
Jonathan, Emily and Natalie

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chappelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

<i>Series editors' preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Conventions</i>	xv
1 <i>Figurative Language</i>	1
1.1 The scope of this book	1
1.2 This book in the context of current research on figurative language	5
1.3 Our approach to figurative language	10
1.4 Aims and overview of this book	23
References	26
2 <i>A framework for analysing variation in figurative language use</i>	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 Studies of text-types and metaphor	32
2.3 Compiling, analysing and comparing corpora of text-types	38
2.4 Genre	40
2.5 From genre to register	46
2.6 Conclusion	51
References	52
3 <i>Using genre and register to analyse figurative language</i>	55
3.1 Introduction	55
3.2 Littlemore's (2001) study of academic discourse	56
3.3 Deignan and Semino's (2010) study of a speech by Tony Blair	71
3.4 Conclusion	86
References	87

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## viii Contents

4	<i>Figurative language use in specialized and popular scientific written texts</i>	89
4.1	Introduction	89
4.2	Discourse communities, science and popularization	89
4.3	Metaphor in science	94
4.4	Figurative language in two research articles and a <i>New Scientist</i> article	105
4.5	Conclusion	123
	References	125
5	<i>Figurative language in spoken academic discourse between expert and non-expert interlocutors</i>	128
5.1	Introduction	128
5.2	Genre	133
5.3	Register	135
5.4	Methodology	138
5.5	Metaphor and metonymy in the exchanges	139
5.6	Conclusion	163
	References	164
6	<i>Figurative language in a children's nursery</i>	167
6.1	Introduction	167
6.2	Datasets	168
6.3	Methodology	171
6.4	Figurative language in the nursery data	172
6.5	Conclusion	187
	References	188
	Appendix	189
7	<i>Figurative language in supporting and reporting on children's football</i>	191
7.1	Introduction	191
7.2	Figurative language use in professional football journalism	192
7.3	Datasets	194
7.4	Methodology	199
7.5	Differences in figurative language use between the reports and the supporters' discourse	201
7.6	What figurative language is used to talk about	210
7.7	Players' understanding of figurative language use	217
7.8	Figurative language use and understanding within a genre–register framework	224
7.9	Conclusion	227
	References	229

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

	<i>Contents</i>	ix
8	<i>Figurative language in the ‘simplification’ of canonical literary works: Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet</i>	231
8.1	Introduction	231
8.2	Shakespeare’s <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	232
8.3	The simplified version of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> in <i>Shakespeare Made Easy</i>	239
8.4	The adaptation of figurative language in the <i>Shakespeare Made Easy</i> version of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	242
8.5	Conclusion	263
	References	265
9	<i>Figurative language, creativity, and multimodality in the communication of chronic pain in two different genres</i>	267
9.1	Introduction	267
9.2	Pain and communication	268
9.3	Conventional figurative resources for the expression of pain in English	270
9.4	The McGill Pain Questionnaire	273
9.5	The <i>Perceptions of Pain</i> artworks	279
9.6	Conclusion	298
	References	302
10	<i>Conclusion</i>	305
10.1	Introduction	305
10.2	Research methodologies	306
10.3	Figurative language and genre	307
10.4	Figurative language and register	312
10.5	Concluding remarks	316
	References	320
	<i>Index</i>	321



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Series editors' preface*

It is by now well known that figurative language, including metaphor and metonymy, is pervasive in everyday language, so much so that we tend to notice it only when it is novel or unfamiliar to us. Novelty comes about when a speaker coins a new metaphor, but unfamiliarity may occur because a metaphor that is common in a particular discourse community is not found outside that community. This book explores a number of case studies to reveal the extent to which specific groups use figurative language that outsiders may find strange or puzzling, and the role this language plays in contributing to group cohesion.

The book covers a range of discourse communities and discourse situations, both spoken and written: popular science texts, lectures in an academic setting, talk on the touchline of a children's football match, talk among staff at a children's nursery, patients' descriptions of pain, and simplified literary texts. The chapter on descriptions of pain extends the modality to artwork produced by pain sufferers. In each case there is an 'insider' group (for example, academic experts, adult coaches of the football team, nursery staff) and 'outsiders' (for example, students, boys being coached in football, and new members of staff). The studies in this book focus on the texts produced in each case, identifying and classifying instances of figurative language, but they also investigate in detail the responses of the 'outsider' group to the figurative language. For example, they discuss how the density of metaphor at key points in an academic lecture may lead to students' misunderstanding of how information is to be interpreted and evaluated, or how the young football players and their coaches create different understandings of the metaphors used to describe individual players. The authors of the book make a unique contribution in relating the study of figurative language specifically to discourse communities and specifically to genre and register.

This book demonstrates the practical value of the close study of figurative language. The study of a simplified literary text demonstrates both the mechanisms and the consequences of reducing linguistic

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

xii *Series editors' preface*

complexity in texts. The chapter on popular science demonstrates how a public understanding of key concepts such as environmental change is influenced by the language used to talk about it. The study of students listening to lectures leads to precise implications for how small changes in the presentation of information might enhance their comprehension. Such useful findings stem from an approach that contributes to the academic study of figurative language, and reinterprets it in relation to concepts of genre and register. At the same time, the study extends beyond academic considerations and into the workplace, the classroom, and popular consciousness.

*Figurative Language, Genre and Register* is written with clarity by three researchers with real insight and passion for their subject. It will appeal to those for whom this is a new topic as well as to experts in metaphor and metonymy. It is a very welcome addition to the series.

Carol A. Chapelle and Susan Hunston

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgements*

We would like to thank the many people who have helped us in the writing of this book. First and foremost, we thank Susan Hunston, the editor of the series, who has provided us with constant encouragement from the outset. We are also grateful to Anna Linthe and Joanna Garbutt at Cambridge University Press, who have been tremendously helpful at all stages in the development of the book.

We are indebted to our families who have provided support and encouragement throughout. A number of people have helped us by reading through and commenting on drafts of the various chapters, as well as discussing our ideas and providing useful feedback. These include: Alan Cienki, Nicholas Groom, Almut Koester, Fiona MacArthur, Daniel Malt, Oliver Mason, Deborah Padfield, Mireille Ravassat, Michael Toolan, and members of the Discourse Analysis research cluster at Birmingham University.

We are especially grateful to all those who helped us in the data-gathering process, namely Oliver Draper, Phil Draper, Michael Hubbard, Polly Liyen Tang, Oscar Malt, Peter Richardson, Annie Rubienska and James Turner. Our warmest thanks go to Polly Liyen Tang for all the time that she spent in the nursery collecting recordings of spoken data and then transcribing and helping to analyse these recordings. We would like to thank her, and the anonymous nursery staff members who appear in the recordings, for allowing us to use these data and to analyse them within our framework. Finally, we are indebted to Deborah Padfield for her feedback on Chapter 9, and for sharing with us her experience of carrying out her project at the INPUT Pain Management Unit at London's St Thomas's Hospital.

Finally we would like to thank our anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments, which helped give our book a clear direction.

The authors and publishers acknowledge the following sources of copyright material and are grateful for the permissions granted. While every effort has been made, it has not always been possible to identify the sources of all the material used, or to trace all copyright

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chappelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

xiv     *Acknowledgements*

holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include the appropriate acknowledgements on reprinting.

The extracts on pp. 281, 283, 285-288, 290-294, 296-298 reproduced by kind permission of Deborah Padfield and Dewi Lewis Publishing, Stockport, UK, 2003.

Figures 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4, from *Perceptions of Pain*, are reproduced by kind permission of Dewi Lewis Publishing and Deborah Padfield; © Deborah Padfield.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chappelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Conventions

### Speech transcription conventions

[ ]	paralinguistic utterance (e.g. laughing)
!	exclamation or animated intonation
...	pause
?	words spoken with clear rising intonation are followed by a question mark “?”
,	words spoken with slightly rising intonation are followed by a comma “,”
.	words spoken with falling intonation are followed by a full stop “.”
l	overlapping utterance
/water/	words between slashes show uncertain transcription
/?/	inaudible
O:h	a colon (:) following a vowel indicates a lengthened vowel sound
↑	a step up in pitch
↓	a step down in pitch
CAPITAL LETTERS	capital letters are used when a speaker gives extra emphasis to a syllable, word or phrase
<b>bold text</b>	bold text is used when the words are accompanied by a gesture
^	use of gesture between words

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-40203-4 – Figurative Language, Genre and Register

Alice Deignan Jeannette Littlemore and Elena Semino Carol A. Chapelle Susan Hunston

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi *Conventions*

Gesture annotation conventions

LH	left hand
RH	right hand

Conventions used for indicating different types of figurative language

solid underlining	metaphorically used word
dotted underlining	metonymically used word
dashed underlining	open-class word included in a simile