Navigating the Realities of Metaphor and Psychotherapy Research

Elements in Cognitive Linguistics

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Abstract: The ‘real-world’ commitment of cognitive linguistics is demonstrated by increasingly extensive collaboration between researchers and industry partners. Yet, there has been little critical reflection on the lessons learned from these collaborative efforts. Beginning researchers may benefit from in-depth discussion of how various practical realities inform, constrain, or otherwise shape important methodological and/or analytic decisions. This Element reflects on long-term collaborative work between a metaphor researcher and psychotherapists, offering practical advice on navigating the latent realities of this type of research. The three foundational components of psychotherapy – the therapist, the client, and the interactional setting itself – are discussed in turn, covering issues such as ethically engaging therapists in research design and data analysis, dealing with underexplored variabilities in client responses, and managing the inherent tension between spontaneity and control in an interactional setting like psychotherapy. Some thoughts on how the lessons are transferable to other research contexts are offered.

This Element also has a video abstract: www.cambridge.org/navigatingrealities

Keywords: metaphor, psychotherapy, collaborative research, practitioner engagement, client responses

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