

# **Metaphor and Language Development**

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## **Outline**

What is metaphor

What are the qualities of the use  
of metaphor

The use of metaphor in a group  
process

*Metaphorical example:*

The Matrix (1999)

**The essence of metaphor is  
understanding and  
experiencing one kind of thing  
in terms of another**

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

## **Conceptual metaphor theory**

Metaphors are about concepts of meaning, and about communicating these concepts

Our entire conceptual system is determined by metaphors

Metaphors shape our perceptions and influence our attitude and behaviour

*Metaphors are "a way of thinking and a way of seeing"*  
*(Morgan, 1986)*

## **Criticism**

Something figurative cannot be used in a scientific investigation

Propensity to turn abstract into an object

## **Metaphors in a social context**

Sharing of mental thoughts  
during play around images and  
metaphors

Generation of new jargon

Sharing of emotions in a natural  
way

Developing a shared mental  
model

Facilitates a better understanding  
of subject under discussion

## **Workshops**

Focus on upcoming organizational changes

Look for applicable images in stack of photos

Image to become a metaphor for the organization, the proposed change and impact

## **Observations**

A metaphor makes people talk in one language, emergence of new jargon

Participants show open and integer attitude

Impact of organizational hierarchy

## **Further research**

Empirical research on impact of metaphors in an organizational context

Specific value of metaphors as a language generating facilitator

**Thank you for your attention**