

How Different Metaphor Styles Impact on Creativity of the Poetry Receivers?

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Abstract

Poetry is one of the most creative uses of language. Yet the influence of poetry on creativity has received little attention. The present research aimed to determine how the reception of different types of poetry affect creativity levels. In two experimental studies, participants were assigned to two conditions: poetry reading and non-poetic text reading. Participants read poems (Study 1 = narrative/open metaphors; Study 2 = descriptive/conventional metaphors) or control pieces of non-poetic text. Before and after the reading manipulation, participants were given a test to determine levels of divergent thinking. In Study 1 (N = 107), participants showed increased fluency and flexibility after reading a narrative poem. In Study 2 (N = 131) reception of conventional, closed metaphorization significantly lowered fluency and flexibility (compared to reading non-poetic text). The most critical finding was that poetry exposure could either increase or decrease creativity level depending on the type of poetic metaphors.