

The dark side of conceptual metaphor

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Abstract

Zhu (2017) used the implicit association test (IAT) to assess metaphorical alignment between concepts such as black and white and good and evil. Here we asked whether self-identified Black people have similar metaphoric alignments as those who identify as White. In an initial experiment, we tested pairwise metaphoric associations between black and white, dirty and clean, and good and evil. Measured strength of the 3 alignment pairings for these 3 sets of concepts was statistically the same among Black participants as that measured by Zhu for white participants. In a follow-up experiment, we compared self-identified Black and White participants IAT-scores for race (i.e., faces) and for color (i.e., chess pieces) IATs. For White participants, mean strength of white-positive alignment was identical for race and color; Black participants showed only slight white-positive bias for race IATs, and an intermediate level of white-positive bias for color IATs.