In the contemporary research on conversation, the metaphor is believed to convey feelings, values and emotions (Todd and Low 2010). The metaphor also helps reducing anxiety and shaping thought processes, expressing attitudes and forming conceptualizations (Cameron and Maslen 2010).

According to Contemporary Theory of Metaphor (Lakoff 1993), metaphorical expressions are products of mappings between conceptual domains. Hence, metaphor allows speakers to comprehend abstract concepts in terms of more concrete ones. Metaphorical expressions are often multimodal, that is verbal, gestural or graphical. Multimodal metaphors in conversation are products of the process of creating metaphoricity jointly by communicants (Cienki and Müller 2008). Therefore, this process may be treated as participatory sensemaking. Additionally, metaphors expressed in both words and gestures reveal speakers' creativity and dynamism in conceptualization (Chui 2011). However, excerpts from conversations with metaphorical expressions often show how one interlocutor attempts to “impose the metaphor” on the other (see Gibbs and Franks 2002 for a review or Cameron and Maslen 2010), instead of letting him or her to develop their own metaphorical expressions. The aim of this study is to present how multimodal metaphors can be elicited and developed in conversation without “imposing the metaphor”.

The material for analysis was extracted from Clean Coaching conversations collected especially for this project. Conversations were recorded in Polish, with two coaches and 50 participants. The topic of conversations is the future and career plans. Clean Coaching (Pieśkiewicz and Kołodkiewicz 2011; Sullivan and Rees 2010) is a metaphor elicitation method in which the coach facilitates client’s own metaphors development without imposing his or her (coach’s) metaphorical expressions. The coach is using specific questions with repetitions of client’s words and/or gestures to bring client’s attention to what he or she says and how it could be developed into multimodal metaphors. Clean Coaching was developed by David Grove (1989) as a “clean language” for psychotherapy applications and it’s been already used not only as a coaching technique (Sullivan and Rees 2010) but also as a research method (Tosey 2011).

To describe participatory sensemaking, multimodal metaphors were identified using Metaphor Identification Procedure for words (Pragglejaz 2007) and Metaphor Identification Procedure- GESTURE (MIP-G) for gestures (Cienki 2017). Our initial results suggest that coach’s verbal repetitions increase the number of metaphorical expressions generated by the client, whereas coach’s gestural repetitions lead to shared mental representations of topic and content of the conversation of the coach and the coachee. Therefore, our data provides evidence that participatory sensemaking and client’s development of multimodal metaphor can be supported by coach’s clean coaching questions with specific repetitions.

References


