

## The linguistics of surprise

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Verse is created from entirely known materials (i.e., language) but has an emergent characteristic; it is able to be surprising: literary creativity is possible, and special meanings characterised by ineffability and profundity can be produced. Are these enabled by three ways in which literary language differs from ordinary language: repetition, sectioning, and counting?

In advance of considering these three issues, I explain why there cannot be a 'special literary semantics' or a 'special literary pragmatics' so meaning in literature must operate like meaning everywhere; so specialness of meaning in literature must be derivable from a general account of meaning (Relevance Theory, and Language of Thought hypothesis). I describe some of the interpretive 'special effects' in literature, and suggest some ways in which ineffability might arise, and why there is also an effect of profundity.

I consider parallelism (and rhyme), and note the McGlone-Tofighbakhsh finding of increased effects of truthfulness associated with ease of processing. I then ask whether parallelism produces hybrid concepts (referring to work by Blakemore and MacMahon).

I note that lineation is a non-linguistic mode of organization, and suggest that verse is composed by concatenation rather than by (syntactic) merge, and address some problems which this immediately presents. This helps answer the question of why verse can also be poetry: i.e., why a formal practice has valued effects.

I conclude by discussing what a theory of meter should explain (in the context of the Fabb-Halle approach), and argue that a theory should not exhaustively represent a text's metricality; that this is also a place for ineffability.