DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE USED TO IDENTIFY AND TAG METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE USES IN THE CORPUS OF OFFICE HOURS' CONSULTATIONS

In general terms, the procedure followed to identify potentially metaphorical uses of words is the one described by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) in their article "MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse" (*Metaphor and Symbol 22*(1), pp. 1–39). It is important to note that this is a *lexical* approach to discourse, and therefore two aspects of the procedure need full explication: 1. the method used for identifying lexical units; 2. the resources used for identifying the basic senses of those lexical units. If the meaning of that lexical unit "has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context" we decided "whether the contextual meaning contrast[ed] with the basic meaning but [could] be understood in comparison with it" (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3). When this was the case, the unit was tagged as metaphorical. See note below, however, on "reification" or "personification" and the question of "comparison".

1. **Lexical units**

    In general, the lexical unit was taken to be a word, i.e. a string of orthographic characters with a white space on either side. Exceptions to this were:

    -   Compounds which, in the transcript, were written as separate words, as sanctioned by the Oxford English Dictionary (used as the basic reference for the spelling used throughout the transcripts). So, for example, 'web site' was treated as one lexical unit, based on the entry in the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007).

    -   Polywords or phrases with specific grammatical functions. For example, subordinating conjunctions like 'so/as long as' or conjunctions such as 'in order to'. When a phrase with a particular grammatical function could undergo internal modification (for example, 'a bit of X' versus 'a little bit of X') it was treated as decomposable into its component words.

    -   The reference dictionary used to identify the meaning(s) of the lexical units was the Second Edition of the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007). However, this dictionary was found not to be very helpful in identifying multi-word lexical units as such (except in the case of compounds) because what were often identified as polywords (in terms of this Dictionary, "phrases") did not stand up to rigorous analysis. For example, this resource does not distinguish between phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs, and thus identifies 'depend on' as a "phrasal verb", while it is, in fact, a verb followed by a bound preposition ('on'). In order to distinguish between these types of verbs, the reference used was the Longman English Dictionary Online (http://www.ldoceonline.com/).

- Phrasal verbs were treated throughout as fully decomposable (i.e being made up of verb + particle/adverb). This decision took into account that in most cases participants in these conversations were L2 speakers of English and it is well known that many L2 speakers do not tend to treat such combinations as unanalyzed units but decompose them (inserting different particles or adverbs, for example).

2. **Identifying the basic meanings of lexical units**

   Basic meanings are defined by the Pragglejaz Group (2007, p. 3) as "[m]ore concrete; what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.—Related to bodily action.—More precise (as opposed to vague)—Historically older. Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit".

   - The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007) was used to check what meaning(s) a lexical unit can have in contemporary English (see discussion in Pragglejaz Group [2007, p. 16]). However, this resource occasionally provided insufficiently clear definitions of words and indeed sometimes did not record some senses well attested in corpora such as the BNC (for example, "red line" or "seize" [verb] in the sense of 'to suddenly stop moving'). Because it is a learner's dictionary – and because of the limits on a volume of this length –it was found necessary to compare the entries for certain words in other dictionaries (principally the Longman English Dictionary Online) in cases where senses were conflated or insufficiently defined (for example, when a definition began "If you…" or otherwise exemplified meanings rather than explaining them).

   - Given the difficulty sometimes involved in deciding whether a particular meaning was more concrete than the contextual meaning of the lexical unit (easier to imagine, see, hear, etc.) or related to bodily action, the historical development of a lexical unit was considered of paramount significance when deciding on its basic sense. This was particularly important in this corpus because as transcripts such as UI6 or US5 show, the historically older senses of words may still be used in academic disciplines such as engineering or mathematics. Thus, the basic sense word of 'reflect' recorded in Macmillan is exemplified in the following way "if light reflects, or if something reflects light, the light shines back off that thing". This suggests that the "turn back" sense is only used in relation to light (the Longman dictionary online does not endorse this narrow sense of 'reflect', it should be noted). In the context of one of its uses in our corpus, however, we find 'reflect' employed in the following way: "so instead of going directly to the ball you would er then (.) er go

to a corner first and then it would **reflect** and hit it at a different angle" (US5: 76-78). This use of 'reflect' was found, on consulting etymological dictionaries (the Oxford English Dictionary and the Online Etymological Dictionary http://www.etymonline.com/), to be historically older than the narrow senses recorded in MEDAL, and hence justified the view that it was being used here in its basic sense rather than a metaphorical one.

3. **Decisions about whether the contextual meaning contrasted with the basic meaning but could be understood in comparison with it**

Most cases were fairly straightforward in terms of identifying metaphorical/non-metaphorical senses of lexical units in context. For example, the definition of 'by-pass' (verb) in the MEDAL taken to be its basic sense is "to avoid the centre of a town or city by using a road that goes round it". In the context in which it was used in this corpus (the topic was computer security) the meaning of the verb is metaphorical: "you can run something else or that you can by-pass authentication" (US5: 150). However, certain cases were not so straightforward and in some of these cases extra tags were used.

- The procedure followed for identifying the unconventional uses of words and phrases by the L2 speakers of English was the same as for the other lexical units. However, it was occasionally difficult to classify these unconventional uses as potentially metaphorical or simply errors. When they were identified as potentially metaphorical – though not conventional in English – an additional tag was used: {UNC}

- Certain words and phrases were found to convey both literal and metaphorical senses at once. This was particularly associated with words from the domain of sight. For example, when a lecturer said "I have some NOT so good responses to some questions and you will see what people have done in the past" (UE7:91), both the basic sense (to notice something or someone using your eyes) and the metaphorical sense of "to understand" are present. These cases were identified as conflations and the tag {CONF} was added.

- Not all uses of words and phrases could confidently clearly be identified as metaphorical or not. For example, when talking about topics in relation to information displayed on a computer screen, participants might use locational expressions such as "here" or "there" which could be interpreted as literal (referring to a particular place on the screen) or metaphorical (referring to virtual space). In these cases, we followed the procedure developed by researchers in the Metaphor in Discourse Project (VU Amsterdam) and tagged these as cases of "when in doubt leave it in": {WIDLII}

- Reification (or the use of ontological metaphors) poses a particular challenge for metaphor identification because in these cases it often happens that there are no clear grounds for establishing how the contextual meaning can be understood *in comparison with* the basic one, unless one takes it that anything can, in principle, be understood in comparison with anything else. For example, when a lecturer says to a student "hopefully also comments saying this is good this is the right <u>line</u> this is a <u>strong</u> <u>argument</u>" (UE1:326), there is a clear contrast between the basic senses of 'line' and 'strong' ("a long thin mark" and "physically powerful and healthy" respectively) and their meaning in context. However, the grounds for the comparison are difficult to spell out because processes such as the logical reasoning being referred to here cannot be said to possess a sufficiently well defined structure of their own that justifies seeing the contextual meanings of these words as being based on a comparison. Rather, the metaphorical use of these words *imposes* a structure on the topic (logical reasoning) and it is from there that we can deduce a meaningful comparison

4. **Metaphor resonance in discourse**

If we look at the entries for an adjective such as 'basic' in the MEDAL, we find that the word no longer appears to have any relation with the sense retained by the noun 'base' ("the bottom part, edge or surface of something") , which has to do with physical structure. Hence, in the context of an utterance such as "some of the basic books" (UI7:77), there is no contrast between the contextual meaning of this word and its meaning as recorded in the dictionary: "forming the main or most important part of something". However, when this same word was used alongside words to do with physical structure, used metaphorically to describe the sources of knowledge needed to be consulted in preparing for an upcoming exam ("I do need you to have that <u>foundation level</u> first" [UI5: 275]), this seemed likely to trigger a metaphorical understanding of 'basic', recalling its relation to 'base'. Cases such as these were given the tag {METRes}.