

Curriculum vitae and track record

PERSONAL DETAILS

Family name, First name: *Cuccio, Valentina*

ORCID: 0000-0001-7908-4216 - URL for web site: <https://unifind.unime.it/get/person/128634>

Education and key qualifications

23/04/2007 PhD in Philosophy of Language (Supervisor F. Piazza), University of Palermo, IT
2003 MA degree in Philosophy, University of Palermo, IT

Current position(s)

Associate Professor of Philosophy of Science; Director of the Experimental Philosophy Lab
Dep. of Ancient and Modern Civilizations (DICAM), University of Messina, IT

Previous position(s)

2021-2024 Senior Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Science, DICAM, University of Messina, IT
2019-2021 Assistant Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, Dep. of Cognitive Science, Psychology,
Education and Cultural Studies (COSPECS), University of Messina, IT

Postdoctoral fellowship

2015 Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, NE (Visiting Researcher)
2013-2016 Humanities Dept., University of Palermo, IT
2013 Berlin School of Mind and Brain, University of Humboldt, DE
2012 Dep. of Neuroscience, University of Parma, IT
2007-2011 Dep. of Humanities, University of Palermo, IT

Italian national qualification

2022 Associate Professor, Philosophy of Science
2013 Associate Professor, Philosophy of Language (renewal 2017)

Fellowships:

2005 Dep. of Cognitive Science, University of Johns Hopkins, USA. Supervisor: B. Landau
2006 Instit. of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies-CNR, Roma, IT. Supervisor V. Volterra.
Child Neuropsychiatry Unit, Dep. of Neuroscience, Hospital Bambino Gesù, Roma, IT.
Supervisor S. Vicari

Supervision of Graduate students, PhD, postdoc students:

2024-2026 1 postdoc in Neuroscience. DICAM, University of Messina
Project: Metaphor and Epistemic Injustice in Mental Illness: The Case of Schizophrenia
2024 -2025 2 PhD students in Linguistics, Dept. of Language Sciences, Catholic Univ. of Chile
Dissertations's topic: Psychedelic Metaphors
2023-2024 1 postdoc in Philosophy of Science, Dep. of Medicine and Surgery, University of Parma
Project: Sensorimotor Bases of Processing Novel and Conventional Metaphors in L1 and L2

Teaching activities:

University of Messina

2021-today Philosophy of Science (BA, MA)
2019-2021 Psychobiology of Language (BA); General Psychology (BA); Psychometrics for Cognitive
Neuroscience (MA); Social Neuroscience (MA); Applied Neurosciences (MA)

University of Parma

2017-2018 Theories of language and the mind (BA)

University of Palermo

2008-2015 Social Psychology (MA); Between Philosophy and Neuroscience; The philosophical debate
after the discovery of mirror neurons (MA, BA); Philosophy of Language (BA); Language and
Cognition (BA)
2008 Sign Languages; The Acquisition of Language; Rhetoric (SEMINARS)
2007 Pragmatics of Language; Theory of Language and Communication (SEMINARS)

University of Humboldt

2012/2013 Notes on the Notion of Meaning (MA); Philosophical Roots of Embodied Cognition (MA)

Institutional responsibilities:

Member of the board for the PhD program

2023-today PhD program in Humanities, University of Messina, IT

External reviewer of PhD program

2025 Phd program in Linguistics, University of Nicolaus Copernicus. PL

- also member of the PhD defence committee

2024 PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience and Philosophy of Mind, IUSS Pavia, IT

2022 PhD in Philosophy, Science, Cognition and Semiotics, University of Bologna, IT

2021 The development and well-being of individuals and organizations, LUMSA, IT

Member of scientific committee

2021-today University of Messina – IRIB CNR Messina agreement, IT

Member of ethics committee

2020-2023 COSPECS, University of Messina, IT

Editorial activities:

2019- today ASSOCIATE EDITOR *Frontiers in Psychology*

Memberships of scientific societies:

International Society for the Philosophy of the Sciences of the Mind; Cognitive Science Society; European Society for Philosophy and Psychology; Association for Researching and Applying Metaphor; Italian Society for Logic and Philosophy of Science; Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy.

Organization of conferences:

2025 Epistemic injustice in mental illness, University of Cagliari, IT

2025 Cognitive Tools in Action. International Conference of the Cognitive futures in the art and humanities network, University of Messina, IT

2023/2024 Philosophy of Science (SEMINAR SERIES), University of Messina, IT

2022 Language and cognition. Perspectives on the study of mind, University of Messina, IT

2022 Dual aspect accounts in language processing (WORKSHOP), University of Messina, IT

2013 Italian Society of Philosophy of Language, University of Palermo, IT

2009 Segnare, parlare, intendersi: modalità e forme, University of Palermo, IT

Member of scientific committee:

2023 Philosophy of Mind: 4E's Approach to the Mind/Brain, Portuguese Catholic University, PO

2022 9th Experimental Pragmatics Conference (XPRAG), IUSS Pavia, IT

2020 Research and Applying Metaphor (RaAM) Conference, University of Inland, NO

2020 Italian Association for Cognitive Science Conference 2020, University of Parma, IT

2019 RaAM 2019 Seminar. Univ. of Liège, BE

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

Cuccio has advanced the understanding of the embodiment of pragmatic aspects of language, particularly metaphors, integrating philosophical and experimental approaches (Cuccio et al., 2022). Her work shows that embodied metaphor processing is context-dependent, and shaped by factors such as conventionality, novelty, and linguistic proficiency (Cuccio et al., 2014; Garello et al., 2024a, 2024b). Beyond their processing mechanisms, she has shown that metaphors also serve an epistemic function, influencing how judgments are formed (Montalti et al., 2025). Philosophically, she has expanded the embodied framework to include the inferential dimension of language (Cuccio, 2016) and the role of embodied knowledge in abductive reasoning (Carapezza & Cuccio, 2018). Her experiments reveal that even logical operators, such as negation, are grounded in the sensorimotor system (Montalti et al., 2023, 2024), bridging abstract reasoning and embodied processes. She has held positions in Cognitive Neuroscience (Univ. of Messina) and obtained fellowship enabling collaborations with Vittorio Gallese (Univ. of Parma) and Gerard Steen (Univ. of Amsterdam).

In 2023, she founded the Experimental Philosophy Lab at the University of Messina, the third such lab in Italy and the only one in southern and central Italy, equipped for behavioral and physiological research. This facility enables integration of philosophical inquiry with linguistic and empirical psychology methodologies, further consolidating her influence in the study of the embodiment of metaphors and metaphorical cognition.

Grants as PI

- 2024-2026 PRIN 2022 PNRR, CUP J53D23017350001 (Unit Coordinator, deputy PI) - € 270000
Project: Metaphor and Epistemic Injustice in Mental Illness: The Case of Schizophrenia
- 2022 IMMINENT RESEARCH CENTER (neuroscience of language research line) - € 20000
Project: The neuroscience of translation. Novel and dead metaphor processing in L1 and L2
- 2015 Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, grant for highly qualified senior researchers from abroad; File number 040.11.484. Discipline: Linguistics - € 7500
Project: Metaphor and Embodied Simulation.

Track Record:

Selected publications: 10

Total number of publications: 70

- Montalti, Garello, **Cuccio** (2025), Unstable Metaphors, Uncertain Minds: How Metaphors Shape Judgments and Opinions, *Frontiers in Psychology*
- Garello, Ferroni, Gallese, Ardizzi, **Cuccio** (2024), The Role of Embodied Cognition in Action Language Comprehension in L1 and L2. *Scientific Reports*
- Garello, Ferroni, Gallese, Ardizzi, **Cuccio** (2024), From Breaking Bread to Breaking Hearts: Embodied Simulation and Action Language Comprehension. *Language, Cognition & Neuroscience*
- Montalti, Calbi, Umiltà, Gallese, **Cuccio** (2024), The role of motor inhibition in implicit negation processing: two Go/No-Go behavioral studies. *Psychological Research*
- Cuccio** (2022), The figurative brain, in García & Ibáñez, *The Routledge Handbook of Semiosis and the Brain*, Routledge
- Cuccio** & Steen (2019), Deliberate Metaphors and Embodied Simulation, in Navarro, *Current approaches to Metaphor Analysis in Discourse*, De Gruyter
- Cuccio** (2018), Attention to Metaphor. From neurons to representations. *John Benjamins*
- Cuccio** & Gallese (2018), A Peircean account of concepts. Grounding abstraction in phylogeny through a comparative neuroscientific perspective. *Philosophical. Trans of the Royal Society B*
- Gallese & **Cuccio** (2018), The neural exploitation hypothesis and its implications for an embodied approach to language and cognition: Insights from the study of action verbs processing and motor disorders in Parkinson's Disease. *Cortex*
- Cuccio** (2017), Body-schema and body-image in metaphor processing, in Hampe, *Metaphor: From Embodied Cognition to Discourse*, Cambridge University Press

PEER RECOGNITION

International invited conferences:

- 2026 RaAM specialised seminar, IUSS Pavia, IT
- 2024 Pragmatics and Philosophy, University of Messina, IT
Talk: Inferential processes underlying metaphor use in Deliberate Metaphor Theory
- 2021 Neuromania. Neurons. Mind. Cognition. University of Nicolaus Copernicus, PL.
Talk: The Biological Bases of Figurative Languages
- 2020 Workshop on Metaphor Studies, University of Genova, IT
Talk: Deliberate Metaphors and Motor Simulation
- 2016 Pragmatics and Philosophy, University of Palermo, IT
Talk: Abductive inferences in pragmatic processes
- 2015 Neuro Humanities Studies Dialogue International Workshop, University of Catania, IT
Talk: Metaphors and Embodiment
- 2014 Metaphor: From Embodied Cognition to Discourse (workshop), University of Cagliari, IT
Talk: Body schema and body image in metaphorical cognition

National invited conferences:

- 2016 For a synthetic approach to the study of language. University of Palermo, IT
- 2007 Italian Philosophical Doctorates in Cognitive Science, University of Messina, IT
- 2006 Philosophy of Mind and of Cognitive Science, University of Calabria, IT
- 2006 Philosophical Doctorates in Cognitive Science, University of Messina, IT

Selection of invited talks:

- 2015 Metaphor Lab Research Meeting, University of Amsterdam, BE; Invited by G. Steen
Talk: Deliberate Metaphors and Embodied Simulation
- 2013 Metaphor Lab Research Meeting, University of Amsterdam, BE; Invited by G. Steen
Talk: Embodied Metaphors and the notion of representation
- 2013 University of Potsdam, DE; Invited by C. Gianelli

- 2013 *Talk: Context, figurative language and motor simulation.*
Brain Language Research Colloquium, Freie Universität, DE; Invited by F. Pulvermüller
- 2013 *Talk: Idioms, context and embodiment*
Philosophical Colloquium, Humboldt Universität, DE; Invited by M. Pauen
- Talk: Figurative language and motor simulation*

Major collaborations:

V. Gallese, Embodied Language; University of Parma, IT
G. Steen, Embodied Metaphors; University of Amsterdam, BE

Research groups:

XPRAG.it network (Scientific Coordinators/SC: Valentina Bambini, Filippo Domaneschi)
Interuniversity Centre for metaphor research (SC: Micaela Rossi)
NeuroHumanities Studies Research Network, University of Catania (SC: G. Pulvirenti, R. Gambino)
PERSONA Centre-Laboratory for Research in Phenomenology and Sciences of the Person, University of San Raffaele (SC: R. De Monticelli)
Metaphor Lab, University of Amsterdam (SC: G. Steen)
Neuroscience research group, University of Parma (SC: V. Gallese)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Career breaks, diverse career paths and major life events)

29/09/2017-06/06/2018 Maternity leave (8 months and 1 week)
2016 – 2019 High school teacher of Philosophy, Psychology and Pedagogy