### Curriculum vitae

Ivana Bianchi

Affiliation: Department of Humanities, University of Macerata (Italy)

Position: Associate Professor. E-mail: ivana.bianchi@unimc.it

## Academic Accomplishments

1995: Graduated in Psychology at the University of Padua, Italy (110 with honours) with a thesis on "Contrariety as the perceptual foundation of empirical falsification processes".

1996-7: Post-lauream fellowship at the Institute of Psychology, University of Verona, for a research project on "Experimental Phenomenology applied to perception of images"

2002: Ph.D. in Psychology at the University of Pavia-Milan (dissertation on "The perceptual basis of opposition").

2002-4: Post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Verona (on the issue: "General Psychology applied to E-learning platforms").

2005-: Associate professor of General Psychology at the University of Macerata (Italy), Department of Humanities (section Philosophy and Human Sciences).

#### Research

Areas of Interest

The psychology of perception; The experimental phenomenology of perception; opposites in perception, language and cognition; the perception of space; visuo-spatial insight problem solving; mirror reflections and Naive optics; contrast and humour; the pleasures of the mind.

My main expertise is in **perception and grounded cognition**. I come from a tradition of studies known as the **Experimental Phenomenology of Perception**, and I've contributed to disseminate (e.g. Bianchi, Actis-Grosso, Ball, 2024; Bianchi, & Burro, 2022; Bianchi & Davies, 2019) and further develop this approach along the years, as part of a number of different studies, some of which in collaboration with Ugo Savardi and Roberto Burro (Verona University), Michael Kubovy (Virginia University), Marco Bertamini (Liverpool University, Padua University), Ian Verstegen (Penn University), Carita Paradis (Lund University), and Linden Ball (Preston University) (see our website: https://www.ephplab.com/).

Since 2000 I have been working on a systematic wide research project leading to establishing a new cognitive approach to opposites, grounded in perception. This line of research has concerned the perception of opposites (in spatial experiences, mirror reflections, and intermodal experiences) and their role in some kinds of reasoning processes (insight problem solving, hypothesis testing, humour understanding, creativity and art appreciation). This has involved using both phenomenological and quantitative methods. More in detail:

1) I've been developing various research projects on the conditions associated with the **recognition of opposition between perceptual configurations**. These projects have mostly concerned vision. We have carried out various experimental studies (with adult and child participants) on the recognition and production of figures perceived as opposite (e.g. Bianchi & Savardi, 2008; Bianchi & Burro, 2023) and on doing the same versus doing the opposite of simple motor gestures (e.g. Bianchi, Savardi, Burro, & Martelli, 2014); we have studied the perception of opposition in mirror reflections, focusing on the relationships perceived between one's own real body and its reflection and between other people bodies and their reflections (e.g. Bianchi, Bertamini, Burro, & Savardi, 2017) and how these perceptions affect naïve subjects' ability to predict the behaviour of mirror images and movements (e.g. Bianchi, Bertamini, & Savardi, 2015; Bianchi, & Savardi, 2012). We have explored imagination of what the "opposite" of a given

transformation process would be (Bianchi, Capitani, Branchini, Savardi, & Burro, 2021; Capitani, Branchini, Burro, Savardi, & Bianchi, 2020). We have demonstrated that human direct experience of space is inherently founded on the perception of opposite properties and that naïve people have a clear intuitive perception of opposition. We have also investigated some aspects concerning perception of opposition between acoustic configurations (e.g. Bianchi, Burro, Pezzola, & Savardi, 2017), and gustatory (wine) experiences (e.g. Bianchi, Branchini, Torquati, Fermani, Capitani et al., 2021).

- 2) As part of the studies on visual perception of opposites, we have addressed a **phenomenological psychophysical analysis of 37 basic spatial dimensions**, concerning the extension of space (e.g.: large-small, near-far), its shape (e.g. angular-rounded, regular-irregular), orientation (e.g. vertical-horizontal), and position in space (e.g. top-bottom, above-below). The results of these studies have lead **a new classification of different types of opposites based on the perceptual structure of the two poles and the intermediate properties**, which challenges more traditional descriptions of antonyms in linguistics and cognitive linguistics (e.g. van de Weijer, Bianchi, & Paradis, 2023; Bianchi, Paradis, Burro, van de Weijer, Nyström, & Savardi, 2017; Bianchi, Burro, Torquati, & Savardi, 2013; Bianchi, Savardi, & Kubovy, 2011; Bianchi, Savardi, & Burro, 2011).
- This new classification has also suggested a new point of view on linguistic phenomena such as a) **understanding negated sentences** (Bianchi, Savardi, Burro, & Torquati, 2011). In descriptive negation (e.g. "The queue at the ticket office is not long", "The shutters are not closed") the particle not certainly shifts the cursor on the dimension away from the negated property (i.e. in the examples, long and closed) and moves it towards the opposite pole. But how far towards the opposite pole? We have showed that it is usually possible to make a prediction based on the perceptual nature of the three components (the two poles and the intermediate region) in terms of whether they cover a range of properties or apply to a single point.
- b) humor and irony appreciation (Canestrari, Bianchi, & Cori, 2018; Bianchi, Canestrari, Roncoroni, Burro, Branchini, & Savardi, 2017). A key point for humor and irony understanding is perceiving and solving a contrast (often called "incongruity"). We have shown that what we know about the perceptual structure of opposites (both in terms of the conditions which make opposition between two configurations or states evident and in terms of the internal phenomenological structure of bipolar dimensions) might help us to predict the degree to which people would experience a joke or an ironic statement as humorous.
- 3) The results of our studies on the perception of opposites have also stimulated new research questions about **contrast in reasoning processes**: do we use opposites more than we think, but less than we could? (Branchini, Capitani, Burro, Savardi & Bianchi, 2021). For instance, we have investigated whether "thinking in opposites" facilitates representational change in **insight problem solving** (Branchini, Capitani, Burro, Savardi, & Bianchi, 2021; Bianchi, Branchini, Burro, Capitani, & Savardi, 2020; Branchini, Bianchi, Burro, Capitani, & Savardi, 2016), **inductive reasonining** (Branchini, Bianchi, & Burro, 2025; Branchini, Burro, & Bianchi, 2023), in **creativity** (Bianchi, & Branchini, 2023) and **art appreciation** (Bianchi, Burro, Verstegen, Branchini, & Bertamini, 2025).

The findings emerged from these research projects have been presented in various international meetings (e.g. Copenhagen, 2021; Dublin, 2016; Geneva, 2008; Graz, 2005; Liverpool, 2017, 2013; Lodtz, 2015; Lubjiana, 2009; Lund, 2024, 2017, 2016, 2014; Paris, 2021; Reno, 2024, 2025; Rome, 2023; Stokolm, 2009) and are the subject of various publications (see list of Publication section).

# Participation in funded projects

- ♦ PI of the Collaborative Research Constellation (a.a. 2024-2026) *Thinking in Opposites to improve Creativity (TOC): A challenging hypothesis for Cognitive Sciences and AI*, that brings together 20 scholars from the Universities of Lund, Copenhagen, Preston, Pennsylvania, Rome, Padua, Pisa, Verona, Trento, Macerata [funded by: University of Macerata, € 48.000,00]
- ♦ Scientific Responsible of the RTD-A PON a.a. 2021-2024 (Department of Human Sciences, University of Macerata; Area: Innovation; SSD M-PSI/01). Project title *Verso una profilazione psicologica del cliente: Cognitive Metrix e Digital Humanities a supporto dell'innovazione aziendale* [funded by: MUR: €87.664,00; University of Macerata: €13.000; Ferragamo conto terzi: € 20.399; Feel Blue Srl: € 7.000; total: € 128.063,00)
- ♦ PI for the Macerata Research Unit in the following research projects:
  - POR FSE 2021-2027 (a.a. 2023-2025): Project title: The use of smart sensory and psychological profiling to increase consumer satisfaction with wine and facilitate its buying process; Proponent Unit: University of Verona, Italy; Partner Unit: University of Macerata, Italy (Project code: 1695-0004-553-2023; AdR: AdR4509/23) [funded by: ESF & Veneto Region, € 34.600, 00]
  - POR FSE 2014-2020 (a.a. 2019-2020): Project title: From personality to wine preference. A scientific psychological approach to customers' profiling; Proponent Unit: University of Verona, Italy; Partner Unit: University of Macerata, Italy (Project Code: 1695-0008-1463-2019; AdR3564/20, University of Verona) [funded by: ESF & Veneto Region, € 38.262,06].
  - POR FSE 2014-2020 (a.a. 2016-2018): Project title: Towards a new lexicon for wine based on opposites: the perception and language of non-experts. Proponent Unit: University of Verona, Italy; Partner Unit: University of Macerata, Italy (Project Code: 1695-37-2216-2016; AdR3589/20, University of Verona). Project title: [funded by: ESF & Veneto Region, € 49.920,36]
- ♦ 2014: Awarded a personal ESF Short Visit Grant (Activity Title: European Network on Word Structure: Cross-disciplinary Approaches to Understanding Word Structure in the Languages of Europe. Project Title: "Are you lethargic or peppy? Neither, I'm somewhere in the middle").
- Member of the Verona Unity of Research, in the following research projects:
- COFIN 2005: National research funds: "Models of knowledge and Errors"
- COFIN 2004: National research funds: "Integration of knowledge on Experimental Phenomenology of Perception and Ontology in a relational database"
- COFIN 2002: National research funds: "The perception of objects and qualities: invariance and oppositions on reflected surfaces"
- COFIN 2001: National research funds: "Multimedia on-line laboratory on perceptual research and education"
- ♦ 1999: Awarded a Young Researchers Project (University of Verona) for a Project on "The Perception of Contraries".

### Spin-off

Co-founder and coordinator of the spin-off "Cognitive Metrix". www.cognitivemetrix.com

Participation to activities of research groups with national/international collaborations
Principal investigator of the *EPhP-Lab*, *Experimental Phenomenology of Perception* (https://www.ephplab.com/)

Promoter of the Research Facilitation Agreement (2016-2024) entitled *How the human mind makes use of contraries in everyday life*. Participants: University of Macerata (Itay), University of Verona (Italy), Lund University (Sweden), Liverpool University (United Kingdom),

University of Central Lancashire (United Kingdom), University of Virginia (USA), University of Pennsylvania (USA).

# List of publications

- Bianchi, I., Paradis, C., & van de Weijer, J. (2025, accepted). Perceptual structure of opposites across sensory modalities. *Language and Cognition*
- Bianchi, I., Burro, R., Verstegen, I., Branchini, E., & Bertamini, M. (2025). Cognitive and historical information can spark interest in modern and contemporary art. *Psychology of Aesthetics*, *Creativity, and the Arts*. Advanced online publication. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/aca0000764">https://doi.org/10.1037/aca0000764</a>
- Burro, R., Bianchi, I., & Raccanello, D. (2025). Improving the big five inventory-2 in an Italian context using Rasch analysis (bfi-2-r). *Current Psychology: A Journal for Diverse Perspectives on Diverse Psychological Issues, 44: 5870-5883*. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-07584-7">https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-07584-7</a>
- Branchini, E., Bianchi, I., & Burro, R. (2025). Thinking in opposites improves hypothesis testing performance in Wason's rule discovery task. *Memory & Cognition* 2025 Feb 26. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40011314 <a href="https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-025-01691-3">https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-025-01691-3</a>
- Bianchi, I., Actis-Grosso, R., Ball, L. J. (2024). Grounding Cognition in Perceptual Experience. *Journal of Intelligence*, 12; pp. 1 - 9 (ISSN: 2079-3200) https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence12070066
- van de Weijer, J., Bianchi, I., Paradis, C. (2023). Sensory modality profiles of antonyms. *Language and Cognition*, 1-15 DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2023.20">https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2023.20</a>
- Branchini, E., Burro, R. & Bianchi, I. (2023). Training people to think in opposites facilitates the falsification process in Wason's rule discovery task. *Journal of Intelligence* 11: 91 https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11050091
- Bianchi, I. & Branchini, E. (2023). Does Thinking in Opposites in Order to Think Differently Improve Creativity? *Journal of Intelligence* 2023, *11*, 85. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11050085">https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11050085</a>
- Burro, R., Branchini, E., Capitani, E., Barnaba, V., Fermani, A., Paradis, C., & Bianchi, I. (2023). Is there an association between consumers' personality traits and the sensory characteristics they look for in wine?, *Food Quality and Preference*, 105, 2023, 104767. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2022.104767">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2022.104767</a>
- Bianchi, I. (2022). <u>La figura di Manfredo Massironi</u>. In: L'occhio in gioco. Il Gruppo N e la psicologia della percezione, pp. 61-65. Silvana Editore. *ISBN* 9788836653256 [Eng. version: An Appraisal of Massironi. in: Trick of the Eye. Tre Gruppo N and the Psychology of Perception, pp. 319-321]
- Bianchi, I. & Burro, R. (2022). The Experimental Phenomenology of Perception. A Collective Reflection on the Present and Future of this Approach. *Gestalt Theory*, 44(3) 279-288. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2478/gth-2022-0018
- Bianchi, I., Truong, H., Russell, A., & Burro, R. (2022). Testing Australian standard consumers' understanding of the language used to describe wine. Journal of Sensory Studies, e12765. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/joss.12765">https://doi.org/10.1111/joss.12765</a>
- Bianchi, I., Branchini, E., Canestrari, C. & Burro, R. (2022) On pleasures of the mind related to humour and insight problem solving: an investigation of people's awareness of what they like and why, Journal of Cognitive Psychology, DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/20445911.2022.2047058;">10.1080/20445911.2022.2047058;</a> 2-s2.0-85126764761
- Branchini, E., Capitani, E., Burro, R., Savardi, U., & Bianchi, I. (2021). Opposites in reasoning processes: do we use them more than we think, but less than we could? *Frontiers in Psychology Cognitive Science*. 12, 3696; <a href="https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.715696">https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.715696</a>.

- Bianchi, I., Capitani, E., Branchini, E., Savardi, U. & Burro, R. (2021) Naïve intuitions about what constitutes "an opposite process", Journal of Cognitive Psychology, 33, DOI: 10.1080/20445911.2021.1988619
- Truong, H., Burro, R., & Bianchi, I. (2021). The sensorial experience of wine for non-experts: how the terms frequently used in Italian guidebooks are understood by standard consumers in Vietnam. *Journal of Sensory Studies*, 36 (4) e12656, DOI: 10.1111/joss.12656
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- Capitani, E., Branchini, E., Burro, R., Savardi, U., & Bianchi, I. (2020). The opposite of a transformation process. An exploration based on diagrams, *Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 32:7, 698-714, DOI: 10.1080/20445911.2020.1814307 2-s2.0-85090305131
- Bianchi, I., Branchini, E., Burro, R., Capitani, E., & Savardi, U. (2020). Overtly prompting people to "think in opposites" supports insight problem solving. *Thinking & Reasoning*, 26:1, 31-67, DOI: 10.1080/13546783.2018.1553738 2-s2.0-85060024702
- Bianchi, I., & Davies, R. (Eds) (2019). *Paolo Bozzi's Experimental Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge.
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- Canestrari, C., Branchini, E., Bianchi, I., Savardi, U., & Burro, R. (2018) Pleasures of the Mind: What Makes Jokes and Insight Problems Enjoyable. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8:2297. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02297 2-s2.0-85041002188

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