Conceptual metaphors and the organization of the lexicon
the case of *verba cogitandi*, *cognoscendi*, and *dicendi*

Matteo Tarsi
JSPS Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Kyushu University

OBJECTIVES

The overarching aim of the project is to trace the lexical-organizational patterns of selected verb meanings in the semantic spheres of thinking, knowing, and saying.

It combines traditional **comparative historical linguistics** with insights from **cognitive linguistics** (Conceptual Metaphor Theory) and **linguistic typology** (lexical typology).

METHODS

- Historical onomasiological perspective
- Morphological analysis
- Contact linguistics
- Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Kövecses 2002)
  Abstract meanings are cognitively motivated, i.e. have their roots in concrete experience. (→ *Example 1*)

PREVIOUS NOTABLE WORKS

Buck, C. D. 1949. *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.

Lexical databases
IDS — The Intercontinental Dictionary Series
CLICS[3] — Database of Cross-Linguistic Colexifications
IE-CoR — Indo-European Cognate Relationships Database
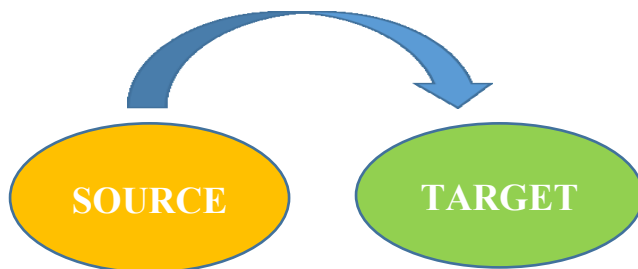
Example 1
TO LEARN IS TO FOLLOW A TRACK [e.g. a way, a teacher or teaching]
LEARNING IS A JOURNEY
PIE *$leis$-'to follow a track'→'to learn' (Ger. *lernen*, Eng. *learn*, Ger. *lehren* 'to teach' etc.).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Cognitive historical linguistics

- What metaphors are used to convey more abstract meanings?
- (→ *Example 2*)
- Are there any recurring polygenetic tendencies throughout Indo-European in diachrony? Which are they? (→ *Example 3*)
- What do recurring conceptualization schemes say about the make-up of the vocabulary related to the verbs under scrutiny? Are there any possible generalizations to be formulated?
- Which other semantic fields (targets) are lexicalized starting from the same source domains? What is the scope of a given metaphor? (→ *Example 4*)
- Which conceptualizations are 1) of common IE descent; 2) polygenetic; 3) due to language contact.

Example 2
TO KNOW IS TO HAVE SEEN Gk οἶδα 'I know', Go. *witan*, Arm. *gitel*, OIr. *rofitir* etc. 'to know' perfect formations from PIE *$u̯ei̯d$-'to see' [Lat. *video* 'I see' etc.], hence 'I have seen →I know (for I have seen)'

Example 3
TO KNOW IS TO GET HOLD OF SOMETHING, Eng. *grasp*, It. *apprendere*, *comprendere*, Go. *ganiman*, Ger. *begreifen*.

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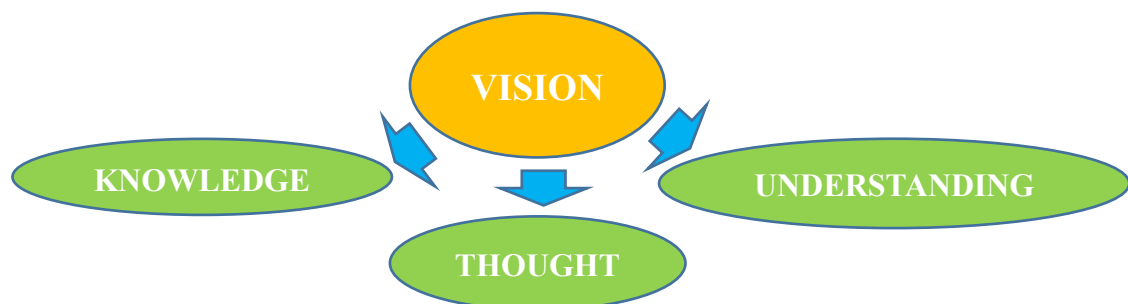
Morphology

- What morphological formations are employed in Indo-European to form the meanings under scrutiny?

- How are the meanings lexicalized? (e.g. from the same root through suffixation, from different roots, by the same verb, etc.).

- What is the relationship between verbs formed from the same roots?

- How does the lexicon evolve for those given meanings? Are there any tendencies, e.g. toward suppletion?

- How do verbs of cognitive transfer relate to verbs of perception? Is there any implicational scale (e.g. Viberg's [1984, 2001] hierarchy of perception verbs)? (Vanhove 2008 claims a crosslinguistical superiority of the auditory modality, but in the Indo-European languages vision ranks highest).

Contact-induced effects

- Are there contact-induced effects, within the same language group and/or across language groups, due to contact? E.g. Alb. *mësoj* 'to teach, learn' (< Lat. *invitiāre* 'to accustom, familiarize', cf Rum. *învăța* 'to teach, learn').

Ancient languages

- Onomasiological perspective: Which roots are used to convey the meanings under scrutiny?

- Semasiological perspective: What other meanings are attested in PIE for roots found expressing the meanings under scrutiny? What is their derivational relationship?

DATA

The data consists of a collection of lexemes from 77 Indo-European languages, from Hittite and Tocharian to Modern English and Icelandic. 3 + 1 datasets.

- **DATASET 1** 'to believe', 'to forget', 'to know1 (= Lat. scire)', 'to know2 (= Lat. cognoscere)', 'to learn', 'to remember', 'to remind', 'to teach', 'to think', and 'to understand'.

- **DATASET 2** 'to hear', 'to listen', 'to look', 'to see', 'to smell (tr.)', 'to smell (intr.)', 'to taste (tr.)', 'to taste (intr.)', 'to touch'.

- **DATASET 3** 'to affirm', 'to answer, reply', 'to ask', 'to be quiet', 'to deny', 'to explain', 'to say', 'to speak', 'to tell'.

- **DATASET 4** 'to write' 'to read'

Example 4
→ Target: KNOWLEDGE
PIE *$u̯ei̯d$- (cf. above).
PIE *$kweḱ$- 'to catch a glimpse', whence YAv. *cašte* and MP *c'š*- 'to teach'
→ Target: THOUGHT, TO RECALL A THOUGHT ('remember').
PIE *$kweḱ$- 'to catch a glimpse', whence Khot. *kät'*- 'to think'.
Maybe PIE *$mneh_2$- 'to see' (or simply 'to think'?), whence Gk μιμνήσκομαι, μνάομαι 'to remember'.
→ Target: UNDERSTANDING
PIE *$pret$- 'to see, discern, perceive, recognize', whence OPr. *issprestun* 'to understand' and Baltic cognates.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT

DATASET 1 complete and revised (as much as it was possible, and with some inevitable lacunae).
DATASET 2 90% complete, to be revised.
DATASETS 3 and 4 to be compiled (September–December 2024).

OUTPUT

Articles
Tarsi, M. [Forthc.]. PIE *$lei̯s$-. *Historische Sprachforschung*.
Tarsi, M. & S. Laker. [In preparation]. 'to teach', 'to learn', and 'to know' in Germanic.

Conference presentations
Tarsi, M. Verbs of intellectual activity in Germanic and their Indo-European semantic context — Towards a lexical-typological characterization.
Small Languages, Big Ideas, 13–14 June, 2024, Uppsala University.

PLANNED OUTPUT

Articles
- Verbs of cognition in Indo-European and their cognitive-metaphorical basis
- On verba dicendi in Indo-European

Conference presentations
Verbs of cognition in Indo-European and their cognitive-metaphorical basis.
169th meeting of the Linguistic Society of Japan, 9–10 November, 2024, Hokkaido University.

LOOKING FORWARD

• Are PIE roots with reconstructed cognitive/abstract basic meaning further analyzable as semantic developments of a concrete meaning?

Examples

PIE *$mers$- 'to forget' [Gmc, Toch., Ved.+]

PIE *$mneh_2$- 'to think' (maybe ← 'to see' (what is the relationship with PIE *men- 'to seize a thought'? [Anat.?, BSl. Celt., Gk, Gmc, IIr., Lat.+])

PIE *$(s)mer$- 'to think about, remember' [Gk, Gmc, IIr,+]

• Is it possible to explain at least some allegedly homophonous PIE roots as instances of polysemy/semantic development?

Examples

PIE *$(s)mer$- 'to think about, remember' [Gk, Gmc, IIr,+] : *$smer$- 'to get a share' [Gk, Lat.+]: Pokorny 'jemanden womit bedenken' → 'Anteil geben' (LIV^2, s.r.)