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

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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).

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

CLICS³ — Database of Cross-Linguistic Colexifications

IE-CoR — Indo-European Cognate Relationships Database

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
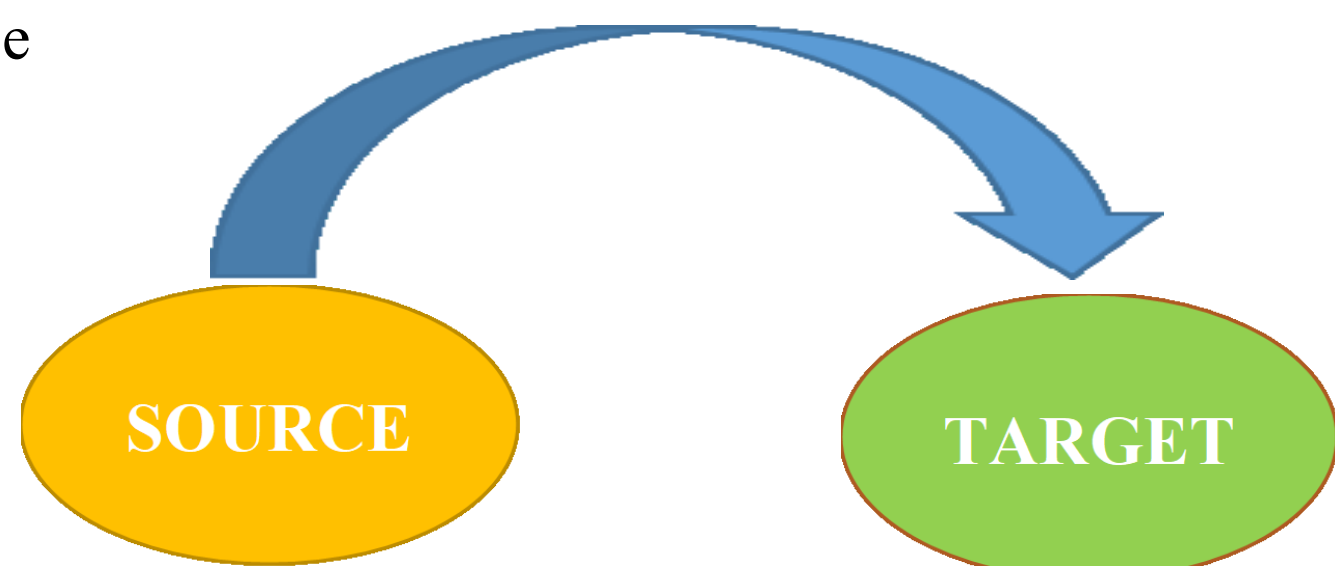
Example 1

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.).

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'.

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 *$leis$-. *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

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Cognitive historical linguistics

- What metaphors are used to convey more abstract meanings?
  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 *$ueid$-'to see' [Lat. *video* 'I see' etc.], hence 'I have seen →I know (for I have seen)'.

- Are there any recurring polygenetic tendencies throughout Indo-European in diachrony? Which are they?
  Example 3
  TO KNOW IS TO GET HOLD OF SOMETHING, Eng. *grasp*, It. *apprendere*, *comprendere*, Go. *ganiman*, Ger. *begreifen*

- 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?
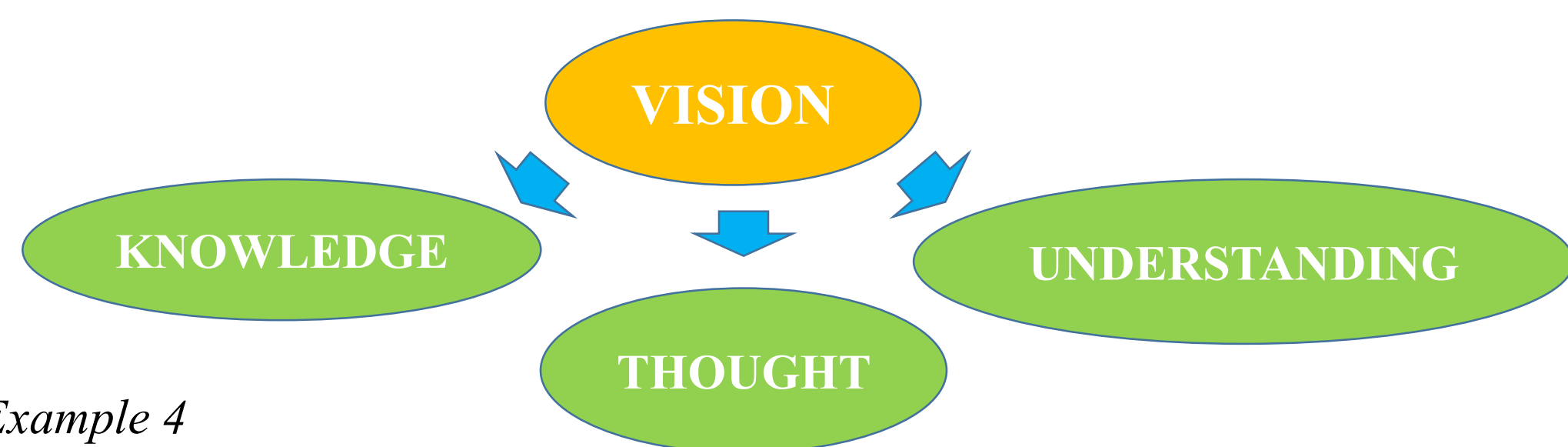
Example 4

→ Target: KNOWLEDGE

PIE *$ueid$- (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.

- Which conceptualizations are 1) of common IE descent; 2) polygenetic; 3) due to language contact?

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?

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 section in the handout !!!

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