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CONCEPTUAL AND LEXICAL ASPECTS INFLUENCING METAPHOR REALIZATION IN MODERN GREEK

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Περίληψη

Στην παρούσα εργασία εξετάζονται εννοιακές και λεξικές όψεις της σημασίας στη μεταφορική χρήση στα Νέα Ελληνικά. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, εξετάστηκε η κυριολεκτική και μεταφορική χρήση 11 περιγραφικών επιθέτων σε γλωσσικά παραδείγματα παρμένα από ηλεκτρονικό σώμα κειμένων. Η μελέτη υποδεικνύει ότι επιτυγχάνεται καλύτερη ερμηνεία των παραδειγμάτων, εάν εκτός από την εννοιακή μεταφορά αξιοποιηθούν και σημασιακά στοιχεία των λεξημάτων.

Keywords: metaphor realization, conceptual metaphor, linguistic metaphor, qualia roles, lexical concordances

1. Introduction

This study focuses on metaphor realization in Modern Greek language data. Specifically, the concordances of eleven (11) adjectives extracted from an electronic corpus of Modern Greek were manually investigated. Purpose of the manual investigation was to study their combinatorial profile in literal and metaphorical uses. The analysis of the concordances has shown that in the metaphorical concordances poor explanation is obtained if only, according to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, a conceptual mapping is discussed. For this reason, it is suggested that we should take into consideration lexical

issues, in order to obtain a richer metaphorical interpretation. More specifically, the study has shown that the semantics of the lexemes involved in the figurative language influence the realization of a conceptual metaphor. In other words, qualia roles of nominals and semantic features of the predicates are necessary components for a better metaphorical interpretation.

The paper is organized as follows: section 2 presents relevant literature on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 1993, Kövecses 2010) and literature taking into consideration the interaction of conceptual and lexical factors in the use of metaphors (Moura 2006, Evans 2013). Section 3 contains a small scale corpus study on how metaphor is realized in Modern Greek language data. Section 4 concludes. The theoretical framework of this study draws mainly on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 1993, Kövecses 2010) and on Lexical Semantics theory (Pustejovsky 1995).

2. Metaphor theory

2.1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory is a widely used theory for explaining metaphor in relation to cognition. According to this theory, metaphor is the basic mechanism by which abstract conceptual domains are understood in terms of more concrete domains. Metaphors are conceptual mappings from structures in one domain (the source domain) to structures in another domain (the target domain) (Lakoff 1993a, Croft and Cruse 2004, Kövecses 2010).

B	is	A
Target domain		source domain

Let's consider the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS conceptual metaphor. In this conceptual mapping, domain B (THEORIES) is domain A (BUILDINGS) with linguistic expressions instantiating this mapping: *your theory needs support, foundations of the theory.* Metaphorical language is a surface manifestation of a conceptual metaphor, while metaphor as a phenomenon involves both conceptual mappings and individual linguistic expressions. Lakoff (1993b) argues that metaphorical mappings exist in the conceptual system independent of their linguistic expressions; metaphor is fundamentally conceptual,

not linguistic, in nature. It has to do with the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another. To put it in another way, CMT does not discuss the meanings of the words which instantiate the conceptual mapping. However, such a discussion seems helpful for a better interpretation of the metaphorical language, as it will be seen in the next sections. In the following subsection an enriched view on metaphor, which interrelates conceptual and linguistic aspects in linguistic metaphors, is further discussed.

2.2. Conceptual and linguistic factors in the use of metaphor

Originally, Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides top-down explanations for linguistic metaphors (Cameron & Deignan 2006). Namely, a conceptual mapping is discussed in relation to the metaphorical examples that instantiate it. It is essentially a theory relating metaphor to cognition. The meaning of the words has no place in those explanations. A question arises however: since conceptual metaphors are realized in language, is the realization of metaphor in language affected by that language at any point? The interdependence of conceptual and linguistic factors in the use of metaphor is proposed by Moura (2006) for personification metaphors of artifacts. Moura (2006) claims that it is difficult to see how these metaphors could be derived strictly in conceptual terms, since the personification of artifacts involves not only the conceptual frame of the relevant domain, but also the linguistically codified information that artifacts have always a specific functional role.

(1) shampoo disciplinador (a disciplining shampoo)

Examples like the above include an artifact in the position of the head noun with an adjective indicating a human property. OBJECT IS A PERSON conceptual metaphor is realized. There is a source domain (psychological properties of human beings) which is projected into the target domain (artifacts), but this mapping is directed by the semantics of the noun, i.e., the functional role restricts and establishes the possible analogies between the way an object performs its function and the way a human being acts. According to Moura (2006: 86) 'the conceptual mapping is perceived through the glasses of linguistic structure'.

Evans (2013) provides an account for the role that language plays in figurative meaning construction for STATES ARE LOCATIONS conceptual metaphor and related prepositional phrases: *in love* vs *on loan*. If metaphor is the result of a special process for construing a meaning (Croft & Cruse 2004), Evans adds another dimension in me-

aning construal. It is argued that it is difficult to maintain that conceptual metaphors are solely responsible for figurative language. Conceptual metaphors underdetermine the linguistic metaphors that show up in language use, while the language system gives rise to semantic units that are independent from conceptual metaphors. Such a conclusion is reached from the distinct collocational patterning associated with the state meanings of English prepositions like *in* and *on* which cannot be predicted by positing a general STATES ARE LOCATIONS conceptual metaphor. The kind of states that *on* selects hold for a limited period of time and contrast with salient states in which the reverse holds. Additionally, they are volitional states:

(2) on duty (off duty is the normal state of affairs), on sale (temporally limited), on red alert (not the normal state of affairs)

In contrast, the kind of states that *in* selects do not necessarily hold for a limited period of time and do not contrast with a normal state of affairs. Additionally, these states are ones people are affected and influenced by:

(3) in trouble, in danger, in love, in shock

The above examples suggest, according to Evans, that the way in which semantic arguments collocate is preposition-specific.

The studies presented above interrelate conceptual and linguistic aspects of meaning in figurative language. In the following section our study concerning metaphor realization in Modern Greek lends further support to this argument.

3. Metaphor realization in Modern Greek

In this section the focus is on how metaphor is realized in Modern Greek language data. As it has been seen in the previous section, when Conceptual Metaphor Theory is applied to real language data, interesting points concerning its application come to light. Metaphorical language is poorly explained if only a conceptual mapping is taken into consideration. The analysis of the corpus results has indicated that the semantics of the lexemes involved in the figurative language influence the realization of a conceptual metaphor. Linguistic metaphors, the instantiations of conceptual metaphors, are subject to lexical restrictions. For this reason, it is suggested that for a better metaphorical interpretation, semantic features of the predicates should be also taken into consideration.

3.1. Research methodology

It was previously mentioned that conceptual metaphors provide top-down explanations for language data in conceptual terms. The study in this section was carried out in the opposite way, in a bottom-up process. That means, the analysis started from lexical co-occurrences of figurative language, from language data, to the conceptual metaphor underlying that realization.

Target words for the electronic search were 11 descriptive adjectives:

skotinos (dark), *fotinos* (light), *skliros* (hard), *stenos* (narrow), *evris* (wide), *refstos* (fluid), *θolos* (blurry), *δiavγis* (clear), *traxis* (rough) *orimos* (mature), *tripjos* (with holes)

These adjectives prototypically attribute very specific physical characteristics to the nouns they collocate with. Additionally to their literal use, they develop metaphorical uses. The target adjectives and their concordances were extracted on the [ADJECTIVE + NOUN] and [NOUN IS ADJECTIVE] constructions.

Language data were extracted from an electronic corpus, the Corpus of Greek Texts[1] (Goutsos 2010). Each query returned about 100-150 results (50 results for *traxis*, *tripjos, refstos*, *δiavγis*, 100 for *fotinos, evris, orimos*, *θolos*, 150-200 for *stenos, skotinos, skliros*). The results were recorded and then they were manually inspected. Both literal and metaphorical uses were taken into consideration. The purpose of the study was to collect lexical concordances of literal and metaphorical adjectival uses and to study their combinatorial profile.

3.2. Theory used in the study: Lexical Semantics theory

In this study except for Conceptual Metaphor Theory, as presented at section 2, Lexical Semantics theory will be used as well. The reason Lexical Semantics theory will be used is to enrich the explanation of our metaphorical examples. LS theory provides the tools for discussing the semantics of the words instantiating the conceptual mapping. Such a discussion is then incorporated into the explanation of the metaphorical examples. In what follows, theoretical matters concerning the semantics of nominals will be discussed in brief. More specifically, according to Pustejovsky (1995), there is

1 Corpus of Greek Texts contains 30.000.000 words of oral and written texts. Found at www.sek.edu.gr

a system of relations that characterizes the semantics of nominals: qualia structure. Qualia structure specifies four aspects of word meaning for a lexical item, four basic roles, constitutive, formal, telic and agentive. These are as follows:

CONSTITUTIVE: the relation between an object and its constituent parts
FORMAL: that which distinguishes an object within a larger domain
TELIC: the purpose or the function of an object
AGENTINE: factors involved in the origin or 'bringing about' of something

In this study the formal quale and the telic quale will be considered in the data analysis. For example for the lexical item *book*, the formal quale refers to it as a physical object, while the telic quale refers to the same lexical item as information.

(4) *book* is (formal) physical object
(telic) information

As far as the semantics of adjectives are concerned, the meaning of an adjective is determined largely by the semantics of the head it is in construction with (Pustejovsky 1995: 85). More specifically, selective binding can be seen as a device treating the adjective as a function and applying it to a particular quale within the noun that it is in composition with (Pustejovsky 1995: 129).

For example, *an opaque bulb* makes reference to the formal role of bulb, while *a bright bulb* makes reference to the telic role of bulb, illumination.

Hanks (2004: 256-7) in his discussion of the gradability of metaphor and idiom in language corpora, argues that for a word to be used metaphorically one or more of its qualia are set aside, while some other quale is emphasized. For example, for the word *storm* the qualia for its literal sense are as follows:

CONSTITUTIVE= high winds, thunder, lighting
FORMAL= atmospheric phenomenon, violent
TELIC= disturbing effect
AGENTINE= atmospheric conditions

Metaphorical expressions such as *a political storm* activate the telic quale and override the other qualia.

In this study this kind of lexical description, qualia information and selective binding, will be used not only for literal uses but for metaphorical uses as well. It is suggested that a better metaphorical interpretation for the examples can be obtained if besides conceptual metaphors instantiated in the examples, the semantics of the lexemes are taken into consideration.

3.3. Language data analysis

Having considered some of the central tenets of Lexical Semantics theory, I shall now turn to the language data. The adjectives under investigation in this study prototypically attribute very specific physical characteristics to the nouns they collocate with. As far as literal uses are concerned the adjectives *skotinos* (dark), *fotinos* (light), *skliros* (hard), *stenos* (narrow), *evris* (wide), *traxis* (rough), *tripjos* (with holes) refer to OBJECTS:

(5) *skliro trapezi* (hard table), *steni γefira* (narrow bridge), *skotini filaki* (dark prison)

As far as the adjective *refstos* (fluid), *θolos* (blurry), *δiavγis* (clear) are concerned, in literal uses they refer to SUBSTANCES:

(6) *θola nera* (blurry water), *refsti alifi* (fluid cream)

The last one, the adjective *orimos* (mature), in its literal uses, refers to FRUIT, PRODUCTS:

(7) *orima laxanika* (mature vegetable), *orimo tiri* (mature cheese)

As far as metaphorical uses are concerned, the examples are mainly based on the NON-PHYSICAL IS PHYSICAL conceptual metaphor, as suggested in Marmaridou (2006). Consider the following examples:

ABSTRACT IS PHYSICAL

(8) *fotino orosimo* (bright landmark), *δiavγis mnimi* (clear memory)

ACTION IS PHYSICAL

(9) *skotini skepsi* (dark thinking)

HUMAN IS PHYSICAL

(10) *skotinos piitis* (dark poet), *orimos politis* (mature citizen)

In the following subsections the collocational profile of four adjectives will be discussed in detail. Literal and metaphorical uses are explored, in order to show that different qualia are activated in each case.

*3.3.1. Collocational profile of skotinos (*dark*)*

Literally speaking, *dark* refers to the total or partial absence of light as in a *dark room*, which means a room in which there is little or no light. Metaphorically speaking, *dark* refers to the absence of knowledge. A literal use of the adjective is given below:

(11) I iɣrasia ke i klisura mirizan *sto skotino δomatio*.
'Humidity and mustiness were smelt in the dark room'

If the qualia of nominals are examined closer in the example above, it is found that in *skotino δomatio* the selective binding of the adjective applies on the formal quale of the nominal: *skotino δomatio* (dark room) is a room without light.

Consider the following metaphorical uses of the adjective:

(12) Maθeni *ti skotini plevra tus*, tis krifes epiθimies tus.
'Getting to know their dark side, their secret desire'

(13) … δievlepe to *skotino sxeδio* ton adaɣoniston
… '(he) foresaw the dark plan of the competitors'

In *skotinos* metaphorical examples, apart from the ABSTRACT IS PHYSICAL metaphor, the UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING conceptual metaphor is additionally instantiated. To illustrate this, *skotini plevra tus* in (12) and *skotino sxeδio* in (13), are things you cannot understand, based on the metaphor: something you cannot understand is something you cannot see. Furthermore, it is claimed that, besides the conceptual metaphor instantiated, the semantics of the lexemes are to be examined, in order to get a richer metaphorical interpretation. Namely, in the metaphorical uses above, the selective binding of the adjective activates the telic quale of the nominal: something *skotino* is something you cannot easily see; and through the metaphor instantiated, not easily understand.

It may be claimed that such a construal indicates that the semantics of the adjective *skotinos* in combination with the semantics of the noun it is in construction with contribute to the metaphorical meaning of the utterance.

*3.3.2. Collocational profile of stenos (narrow) and evris (*wide*)*

Literally speaking, *narrow* refers to something having little distance from side to side as in *a narrow path*, which means a path whose sides are close together. Literal uses of the two adjectives are given below:

(14) O *stenos xomatoδromos* sinexizi os to simio pu …
'The narrow dirtroad continues until the point that …'

(15) Ena *evri δelta potamu* me meɣales limnoθalases
'A wide delta of the river with big lagoons'

Again, if the qualia of nominals in the examples above are examined closer, it is found that in the literal uses, *stenos xomatoδromos, evri δelta potamu*, the selective binding of the adjectives applies on the formal quale of the nominal: *stenos xomatoδromos* is a thing taking a small area, *evri δelta potamu* is a thing taking a large area.
Consider the following metaphorical uses of the adjective:

(16) …na sizitisi me *enan steno kiklo δimosioyrafon*
… 'to discuss with a narrow circle of journalists'

(17) … na ksekinisi *enas evris δialoyos* ja ti siglisi …
… 'a wide dialogue to start about convergence'

In the metaphorical examples above the conceptual metaphor instantiated is NON QUANTITY IS NARROWNESS and QUANTITY IS WIDTH. To illustrate this, *steno kiklo δimosioyrafon* means a few people, therefore, non-quantity, a few, is narrowness. In the same manner, *enas evris δialoyos* means a dialogue with a lot of people, therefore, quantity, a lot of people is width.

Again it is argued that besides the conceptual metaphor, the semantics of the lexemes are to be examined, in order to obtain a richer metaphorical interpretation. In the metaphorical uses above, *steno kiklo δimosioyrafon, evris δialoyos*, the selective binding of the adjective activates a specific quale of the nominal: a thing being *steno*

or *evri* has the intrinsic property to occupy a few or a lot of 'points' in space. This is the quale which the adjective activates in metaphorical uses. Therefore, *steno kiklo δimosioγrafon,* means a few persons, where persons are construed as the points in the space. In the same manner, *evris δialoγos*[2] is done with a lot of persons. Persons again are understood as points in the space. Therefore, this specific quale is emphasized in metaphorical uses, while the formal quale is emphasized in literal uses.

These observations argue in favour of the claim that the semantics of *stenos* and *evris* in combination with the semantics of the noun contribute to the metaphorical meaning of the utterance.

*3.3.3. Collocational profile of refstos (*fluid*)*

Literally speaking, *fluid* refers to something which can flow and, therefore, change shape. Metaphorically speaking, *fluid* refers to an abstract entity which is not fixed and so can change. A literal use of the adjective is given below:

(18) pername apo pano *to refsto ai-lainer*
'apply after the fluid eye-liner'

In a similar way, if the qualia of nominal are examined closer in the example above, it is found that in literal uses the selective binding of the adjective applies on the formal quale of the nominal: *refsto ai-lainer* is a fluid material without stable shape.

A metaphorical use of the adjective is found in the example:

(19) *I δieθnis ikonomiki katastasi* parameni *refsti*.
'The international financial situation remains fluid'

Generally speaking, in *refstos* metaphorical examples the conceptual metaphor instantiated is ABSTRACT IS FLUID SUBSTANCE:

(20) *refsti katastasi* (fluid situation), *refsti sxesi* (fluid relation), *refsti δiaδikasia* (fluid process), *refsto kaθestos* (fluid status)

Again it can be seen that the semantics of the lexemes contribute to the metaphorical construal. In metaphorical uses the selective binding of the adjective activates the telic

2 Dialogue metonymically stands for the interlocutors.

quale of the nominal: something fluid is moving, is changing dimensions, is changing in general. Therefore, *i refsti δieθnis ikonomiki katastasi* is a situation that is changing.

The analysis adopted in the above subsections suggests that in metaphorical uses and in the collocational patterns discussed, one quale of the noun is emphasized and the others are set aside (Hanks 2004). It also suggests that meaning construction in metaphorical examples is influenced by the semantics of the lexemes being involved in them.

3.3.4. From concordances to meaning construction

At this point, we shall turn to the overall meaning construction. In the above subsections the collocational profile of four adjectives was discussed in detail. The same goes for the collocational profile of the rest of the adjectives under investigation. All the adjectives examined in this study are found in table 1. The table shows metaphorical concordances for each adjective and explains the construction of meaning for each of them. In the meaning construction part (Conceptual Metaphor + Lexical Semantics) it is shown how the conceptual metaphor interfaces with the semantics of the words (qualia): in all adjectives studied, in the metaphorical patterns[3] found in table 1, the telic quale of the noun is activated (+), while the formal quale is set aside.

3 It should be mentioned that the metaphorical collocational patterns of the adjectives in many cases are more than one. Compare *steno kiklo δimosioγrafon* to *stenos filos* (close friend) and *steni parakoluθisi* (close / frequent watch). One of them is found in the table.

			Lexical semantics	
adjective	**metaphorical concordances**	**Conceptual metaphor**	**Formal quale**	**Telic quale**
skotinos (dark)	maθeni *ti skotini plevra tus*, tis krifes epiθimies tus 'getting to know their dark side, their secret desires'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT + UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING	without light	cannot easily be seen (+)
fotinos (light)	ipirxan mono kapjes *fotines morfes,* kapja simvola 'there were only some light figures, some symbols'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT + UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING	with plenty of light	can easily be seen (+)
θolos (blurry)	i simerini *θoli katastasi* 'the today's blurry situation'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT + UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING	has lost its clarity	cannot see inside it (+)
δiavγis (clear)	ke i δio aftes *protasis* ine *δiavγis* 'both suggestions are clear'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT + UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING	allows the light to go through it	can see clearly inside it (+)
stenos (narrow)	na sizitisi me *enan steno kiklo δimosioγrafon* 'to discuss with a narrow circle of journalists'	NON QUANTITY IS NARROWNESS	taking a small area	occupy a few "points" in space (+)
evris (wide)	na ksekinisi *enas evris δialoyos* ja ti siglisi 'a wide dialogue to start about convergence'	QUANTITY IS WIDTH	taking a large area	occupy many "points" in space (+)
refstos (fluid)	*i δieθnis ikonomiki katastasi* parameni *refsti* 'the international financial situation remains fluid'	ABSTRACT IS FLUID SUBSTANCE	without stable shape	change (dimensions) (+)
orimos (mature)	terjazi se mja *orimi kinonia* 'suits a mature society'	HUMAN IS FRUIT	at the upper stage of growing	ready for making good use of it (+)

skliros (hard)	*skliri maxi* ja ti niki me ti Real 'hard fight for the win with Real'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT + PLAY IS WAR	solid composition	resistance to pressure (+)
traxis (rough)	oles tus se ena *traxi epagelma* 'all of them in a rough job'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT	anomalous surface	is difficult, is tiring (+)
tripjos (with holes)	anafores sto *tripjo sistima eleyxon* 'reports on the 'with holes' checking system'	ABSTRACT IS OBJECT	with holes (out of bad or long use)	initial appearance is altered, not usable (+)

Table 1 | *From concordances to meaning construction*

4. Concluding remarks

In a bottom-up study, our study from metaphorical language data extracted from a corpus to the conceptual metaphor underlying the data, lexical concordances in [ADJECTIVE + NOUN] and [NOUN IS ADJECTIVE] constructions were compared in literal and metaphorical uses. In metaphorical uses two basic components of meaning were found: a conceptual mapping between two domains, a conceptual metaphor, and additionally, activation of a specific quale or semantic feature of the nominal through the selective binding of the adjective. Therefore, it may be claimed that in linguistic metaphors rich metaphorical interpretation is obtained if conceptual metaphor together with the semantics of the lexemes involved in the data are taken into consideration.

We conclude this section by noting that lexical aspects seem to place certain restrictions on metaphorical uses. These observations help us in understanding of how language serves to communicate metaphor.

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