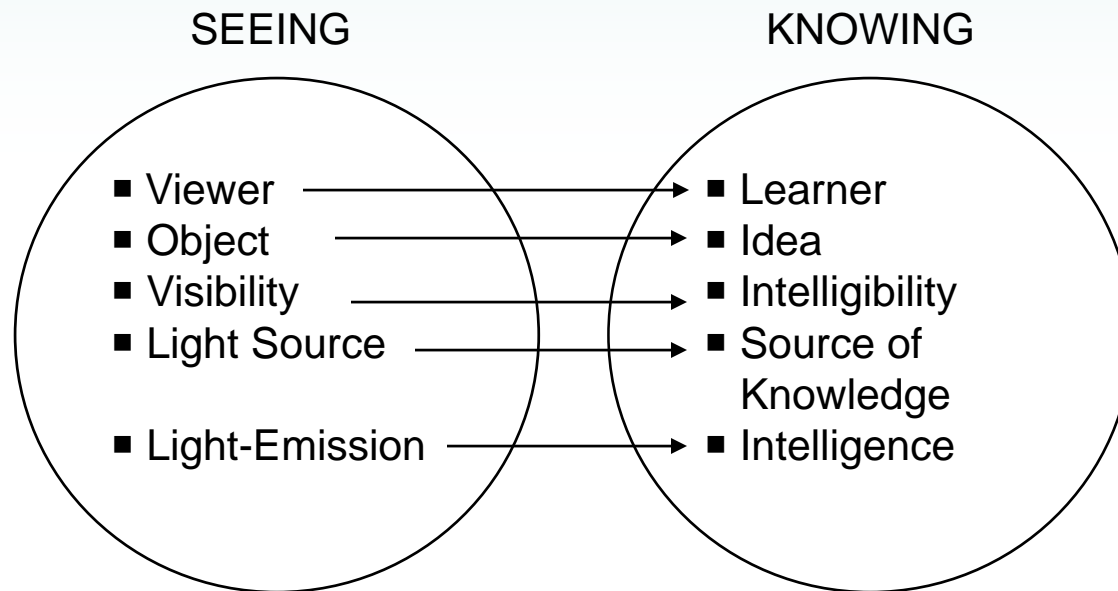


The linguistic structure of literary metaphor

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What is metaphor?

- According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, metaphors consist of structured mappings between domains, as in KNOWING IS SEEING:



- Conceptual metaphors surface in metaphoric language, as in ***bright** student, **dim** student, **brilliant** idea, a **clear** explanation, I **see** what you're saying, your answer really **illuminated** the topic, poor organization **obscured** his argument*

Constructions and devices in literary metaphor

Metaphor is represented in poetry and literature using:

- All the devices found in everyday metaphor
- Certain devices that are rare in everyday metaphor
- Devices that are absent in everyday metaphor

Grammatical constructions in metaphoric language

- Phrases that can be understood metaphorically out of context follow certain patterns (Brooke-Rose 1958, Fass 1997, Croft 2003, Sullivan 2007).
- These metaphoric phrases combine elements representing different conceptual domains (a “metaphoric” and a “non-metaphoric” item).
- ***bright student***
KNOWING IS SEEING (INTELLIGENCE IS LIGHT-EMISSION)

bright

source domain
(SEEING)

student

target domain
(KNOWING)

Grammatical constructions in metaphoric language

- Source- and target-domain items cannot be reversed in the constructions:

bright student

KNOWING IS SEEING (INTELLIGENCE IS LIGHT-EMISSION)

- the adjective *bright* indicates the source domain
- the head noun *student* indicates the target domain

intelligent light

KNOWING IS SEEING (INTELLIGENCE IS LIGHT-EMISSION)

- the adjective in this construction cannot evoke the target domain, nor can the noun evoke the source domain, to obtain the intended meaning.

Grammatical constructions in metaphoric language

Construction type:	Source-domain slot:	Target-domain slot:	Examples from corpus:
Predicating modifier constructions	predicating modifier	head	<i>bitter thoughts</i> <i>perform brilliantly</i>
Predicate-argument constructions	head	argument NP(s)	the cinema <i>beckoned</i> fire <i>guttled the embassy</i>
Copula constructions	copula-linked NP, PP, AP	head	trade unionism <i>was a difficult road</i>
Domain constructions	head	domain Adj/ Adv/ N	political <i>game</i> verbally <i>attack</i>
PP/ possessive constructions	head N	nominal in PP/ possessive NP	<i>the foundation of an argument</i>

Constructions in literary and everyday metaphor: the predicating modifier construction

- Poetry and literature make use of the same metaphors and devices found in everyday language
 - (1) Often it was someone from the community with a **bright idea** that triggered a new activity.
www.ptreyeslight.com/stories/sept20_01/dance_palace.html
 - (2) So when the faithful pencil has designed
Some **bright idea** of the master's mind ...
Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1709
 - (3) Here throve the **effulgent intellect** of matchless Verulam.
Edgar Fawcett, *The Rivers*, 1884

Constructions used mainly in literary metaphor: conditionals

- (4) If the beautiful Golden Gate is the thoroughbred of bridges, the Bay Bridge is the workhorse.

San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 11, 1996

- (5) if the sunset
is a spotlight then she (a stalk of grain) steals the finale
with a bow, not a curtsy.

Simon Armitage, *The Gleaners*, 1992

- (6) Let man's soul be a sphere, and then, in this,
Th' intelligence that moves, devotion is,
and as the other spheres, by being grown
Subject to foreign motions, lose their own, ...

John Donne, *Good Friday*, 1613, *Riding Westward*, 1633

Constructions used mainly in literary metaphor: relative clauses, or “qualifying phrases”

- Relative clauses account for most of Brooke-Rose’s “qualifying phrases” (1958)
- (7) The fire **that ignited inside Ethan** was impressive ...
rootedinclay.com/shana.htm
- (8) There they discours’d upon the fragile bar
That keeps us from our homes ethereal ...
John Keats, *Endymion*, 1818
- (9) The merchandise **which thou hast brought from Rome**
Are all too dear for me.
William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1564-1616

Devices unique to literary metaphor: parallelism

Christine Brooke-Rose describes this technique as a device in which “there is no pointing to the proper term (target domain concept) at all, but the repetition of the same construction, ... or other methods, implies that it is equal to the metaphoric term” (Brooke-Rose 1970:79).

(10) The crown o’ the earth doth melt. ...

O, wither’d is the garland of the war,
The soldier’s pole is fall’n ...

William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1564-1616

(11) Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,

A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Wreck of Deutschland*, 1918

Devices unique to literary metaphor: negation of the literal

(12) A clock stopped – **not the mantel's**;
Geneva's farthest skill
Can't put the puppet bowing
That just now dangled still. ...
Emily Dickinson, #287, ca.1861, 1896

(13) Light breaks **where no sun shines**.
Dylan Thomas, *Light breaks where no sun shines*,
1937

(14) And yet ... the sun might shine, **but it did not shine in her life**.
Jean Bow, *Jane's Journey*, 1991

Devices unique to literary metaphor: allegory

(15) Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood ...
Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*, 1916

(16) Over the fence –
Strawberries – grow –
Over the fence –
I could climb – if I tried, I know –
Berries are nice!

But – if I stained my Apron –
God would surely scold!
Oh dear, – I guess if He were a Boy –
He'd – climb – if He could!
Emily Dickinson, #60, c.1861

Summary

- Authors and poets use all the strategies for transmitting metaphor that are found in everyday language
- However, authors and poets **additionally** use constructions and other devices that are rare or absent in everyday language

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Domain adjectives vs. predicating adjectives

A “predicating” or “predicational” adjective can appear in the predicate/post-copula position:

- ***tall man***
- ***a man who is tall***

A “domain” adjective (cf. Levi 1978, Ernst 1984, Sweetser 1997, Ernst 2001) cannot occur in this position:

- ***a rural policeman***
- ****a policeman who is rural***

- ***a morphological classification***
- ****a classification that is morphological***

- ***an equatorial jungle***
- ****a jungle that is equatorial***

The non-predicating adjective *rural* refers to a subcategory or type of policemen, not a quality of a particular instance of a policeman.

Constructional combinations

- Embedded autonomy-dependence relations

*A remedy for **economic ills** ...*

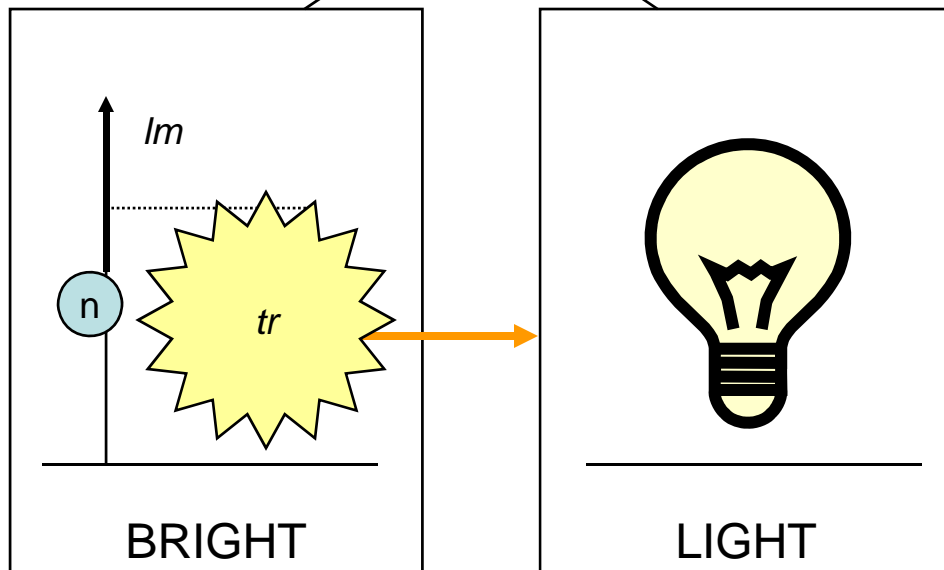
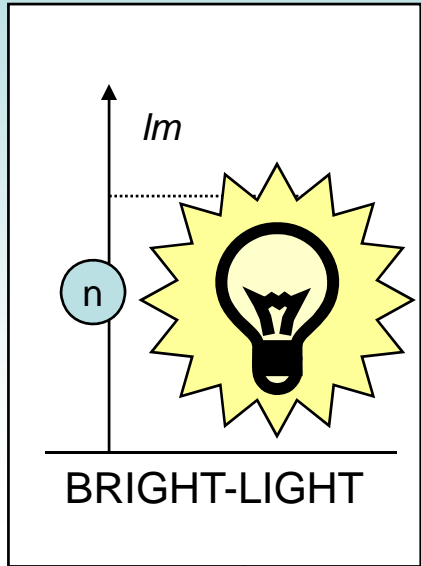
(THE ECONOMY IS A BODY)

- *xyz constructions* (cf. Turner 1991)

Inflation is a *remedy for unemployment...*

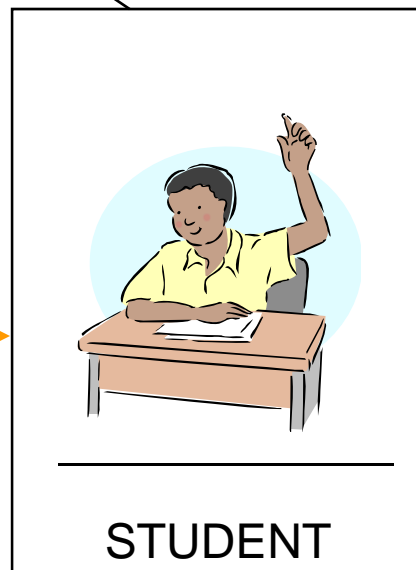
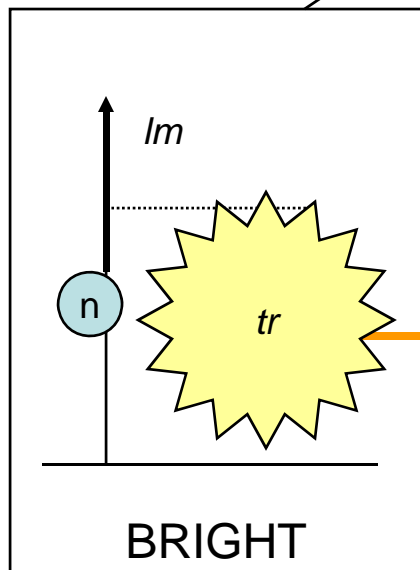
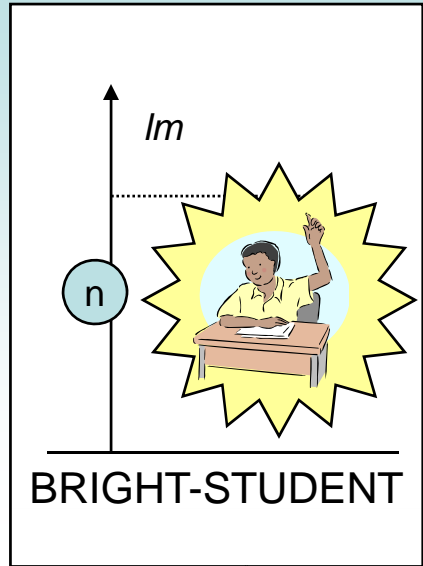
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Conceptual autonomy and dependence in a non-metaphoric predicating modifier construction



bright light

Conceptual autonomy and dependence in a metaphoric predicating modifier construction (7.8%)



bright student

Constructions in literary and everyday metaphor: the predicate-argument construction

- (4) There, I maddened! her **words stung** me.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, 1806-1861
- (5) I went to my room and secretly cried, 'cause the **words** really **stung** me and they still do if I think about it today.
pecosgirl.blogspot.com/2006_01_01_pecosgirl_archive.html
- (6) ... That's much better, that's approaching the gazebo and deliberately, fiercely writing on it, **words** that will **cauterize** the delicate, the wan and sickly passerby ...
James Tate, *Revenge of the Jagged Ambush Bug*, 1997