

Metaphoric extension and invited inference in semantic change

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Goals of this talk:

- To demonstrate that metaphoric extension (cf. Sweetser 1990) and invited inferencing (as in Traugott and Dasher 2002) are two distinct different types of semantic change.
- To argue that the set of extensions that can be explained by either model should not be seen as evidence in favor of one model over the other, but rather as a call to understand how the two processes can work together under specific conditions.

The contested examples of semantic change:

- The contested examples follow the pattern of the extended senses of *see* “know/understand”, *warm* “affectionate” and *going* referring to “futuraity” as in (1)-(3):

(1) I can *see* what you’re saying...

(www.frymybacon.com/articles/articles.php?article_ID=301)

(2) She always has a friendly and *warm* attitude...

(www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Boardwalk/3265/DSindex2.html)

(3) I’m *going* to stay here in America.

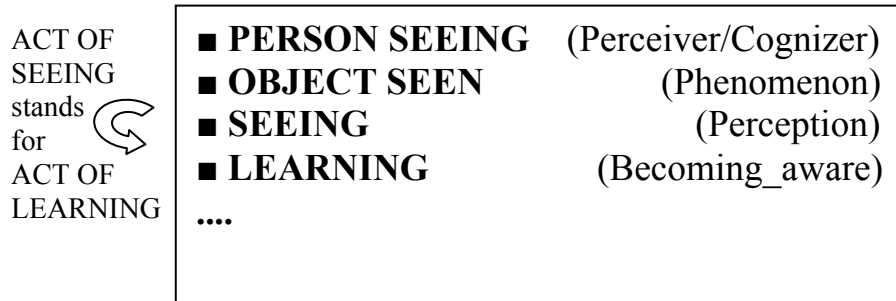
(www.montereyrepublicans.org/PressReleases/index.cfm/ID/73.htm)

- According to the metaphoric extension explanation, these extended senses reflect the conceptual metaphors KNOWING IS SEEING, AFFECTION IS WARMTH and PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS.
 - According to the invited inferencing explanation, these senses arose through the conventionalization of the inferences present in contexts such as (4):
- (4) Nou wend and *seh* wher hit be.
 Now go and see where it is!
 (c1310, Anon., *Marina*)

- Invited inferencing can be considered a frame-metonymic process, in which case the extended sense of *see* has its basis in the VISUAL LEARNING FRAME as in Figure (1):

Figure 1. VISUAL LEARNING FRAME

(inherits from Perception and Becoming_aware)



- Examples of ambiguous contexts involving *warm* and *going* are given in (5)-(6) below, and their frame-metonymic bases are illustrated in Figures (2)-(3):

(5) Oh take this *warme* kisse on thy pale cold lips.
 (1588, Shakespeare, *The lamentable tragedy of Titus Andronicus*)

(6) I'm *going* to seek him Love Gregory, / In's lands where eer he be.'
 I'm going to seek Love Gregory, in his lands wherever he is.
 (1100-1500, Anon., *Love Gregory*)

Figure 2. AFFECTIONATE CONTACT FRAME

(inherits from Sensation and Emotion_directed)

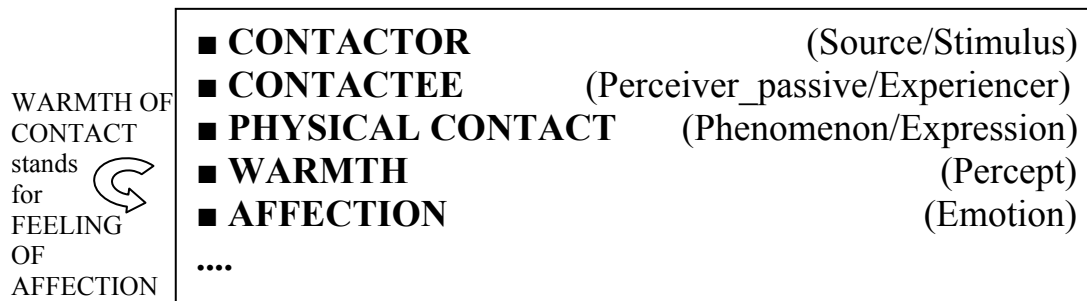
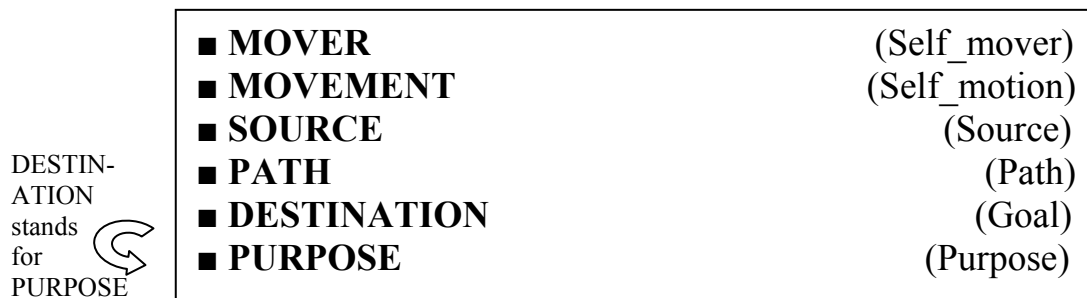


Figure 3. PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT FRAME

(Self_motion)



Uncontested invited inferencing:

- Some semantic extensions can be described only as invited inferencing, not as metaphor, such as *seeing* “dating” as in (7):

(7) I am *seeing* this really great girl named Sarah. She is awesome. I just had to tell everyone.

(www.fordtruckworld.com/Trucksnducks/)

There is no evidence for the existence of a conceptual metaphor SEEING IS DATING.

- Documented metaphors involve systematic mappings reflected in numerous lexical items. For example, KNOWING IS SEEING has numerous mappings including SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE ARE LIGHT SOURCES, expressed by extended senses of *bright*, *brilliant* and *illuminating* as in (8)-(10):

(8) 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)

(9) I have taken what that *brilliant* reading teacher taught me and applied it to the way I teach.

(www.mathchannel.com/Portals/0/3of3lesson.pdf)

(10) We had an *illuminating* discussion on that particular work.

(www.geocities.com/mizzenwood/features.htm)

A LIGHT SOURCE never maps to anything in the realm of DATING, such as a source of dates. Sentences like (11) are nonsensical with this reading.

(11) #That singles club is so illuminating.

- Metaphors like KNOWING IS SEEING show up extra-linguistically, such as in artwork, and in UC Berkeley’s official seal, on your handout as Figure (4). (Refer to Forceville 2002, McNeill 1992, and Cienki 1998 for more and better examples).

Figure 4. UC Berkeley seal



However, there are no visual examples of metaphor relating SEEING and DATING, so it's implausible that there is a conceptual metaphor relating these two domains.

- Furthermore, only progressive-aspect *seeing* can mean “dating”, as demonstrated by a comparison of the (a) and (b) sentences in (12) and (13) below.

(12) a. I know you're not married, but are you *seeing* anyone right now?
 (elektronicsurveillance.homestead.com/interviews_RazinBlack.html)

b. # I know you're not married, but do you *see* anyone right now?

(13) a. In fact, I heard she's been *seeing* that guy for over two years. Tom had no idea.
 (www.firstlightplayers.org/Images/PDF_Files/First%20Light%20Zone%20-%20The%20Tongue.pdf)

b. # In fact, I heard she's *seen* that guy for over two years. Tom had no idea.

Metaphor, as a conceptual process, should be able to draw from any available vocabulary, derivations, or inflections that reflect the conceptual metaphor. For example, any form of the root *brilliant* can mean “intelligent” via KNOWING IS SEEING, as in (14)-(16) below.

(14) I have a *brilliant* idea that will make a lot of money...
 (www.melaniecraft.com/faq.htm)

(15) We agree with the *brilliantly* reasoned argument in a recent letter to the Observer...
 (www.broward.com/mld/charlotte/news/columnists/doug_robarchek/9614893.htm)

(16) Elena, initially taken with the professor's *brilliance*, now finds the self-centered and ill older man an unsympathetic husband.
 (www.nytheatre-wire.com/LK99082T.htm)

- Progressive *seeing* “dating” can be explained as invited inferencing, as indicated by the DATING frame in Figure (5), and the context in (17).

Figure 5. DATING FRAME

(inherits from Personal_relationship and Perception_active+Activity_iterative)

SEEING
PERSON
REPEATEDLY
stands
for
DATING



- **DATER** (Partner_1, Perceiver_agentive)
- **PERSON DATED** (Partner_2, Phenomenon)
- **SEEING PERSON REPEATEDLY** (Perception_active + Activity_iterative)
- **DATING RELATIONSHIP** (Personal_relationship)
- ...

(17) Being so sure now that Jimmy and Mrs. Carew cared for each other, Pollyanna became peculiarly sensitive to everything that tended to strengthen that belief. And being ever on the watch for it, she found it, as was to be expected. First in Mrs. Carew’s letters.

“I *am seeing* a lot of your friend, young Pendleton,” Mrs. Carew wrote one day; “and I’m liking him more and more...”

(1914, Eleanor H. Porter, *Pollyanna Grows Up*)

Uncontested metaphor:

- There are also metaphoric extensions that can’t be explained as invited inferencing, such as the uses of *bright*, *brilliant* and *illuminating* as in examples (8)-(10). People who are smart never literally radiate light, so emitting light will never lead to inferences of intelligence. Light-emission and intelligence are not elements in any one frame in the way that “seeing” and “dating” are.

Table 1. Different characteristics of metaphor and inferencing

	Metaphoric extension	Invited inferencing
Reflects the structure of an underlying conceptual metaphor	YES	NO
Occurred in ambiguous contexts	NO	YES

Primary metaphors and the metaphor/inferencing overlap:

- The contested examples all involve “primary metaphors”, such as KNOWING IS SEEING in (1), AFFECTION IS WARMTH in (2), and PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS in (3).
- Primary metaphors have a direct experiential basis, as described for example by Lakoff and Johnson (1999). They are based on frames like those we saw in Figures (1)-(3). These are the same situations that lead to invited inferencing, so it is hardly surprising that either process could lead to the extensions as in sentences (1)-(3).

The “conspiracy” and priming explanations:

- Metaphor and inferencing may have “conspired” to produce the contested examples via “parallel chaining” as described by Goossens (2003).
- This “conspiracy” between metaphor and invited inferencing explains why these contested extensions are common both throughout Indo-European languages (Sweetser 1990) and in non-Indo-European languages (Haser 2003). Additionally, the “conspiracy” model explains why the contested changes share the defining characteristics of both metaphor and inferencing, as shown in Table (2).

Table 2. Revised comparison of semantic extensions

	Metaphoric extension	Invited inferencing	Metaphor/inferencing overlap
Reflects the structure of an underlying conceptual metaphor	YES	NO	YES
Occurred in ambiguous contexts	NO	YES	YES

- Like other invited inferencing, the contested changes involved ambiguous contexts, as in examples (4)-(6).
- Like metaphoric extensions, the contested examples seem to reflect conceptual metaphor – KNOWING IS SEEING and the rest show up all the time in visual metaphor, and all the different derivations and inflections of the verb *see* can mean “know”. Compare simple-present *see* in (1) with *saw*, *seeing* and *sight* in (18)-(20) below:

(18) Pope Leo XIII clearly *saw* the intent of the evil one and composed this prayer as a protective measure and mandated it be prayed by all after every Mass.
 (www.dailycatholic.org/issue/2002Apr/apr8ed.htm)

(19) I’m not *seeing* what you are saying and you aren’t seeing what I’m saying.
 (wordpress.org/support/topic/40853)

(20) Try and sharpen your intellectual *sight* and see what I am about to say in a much more subtle way.
 (www.jancox.com/474.htm)

- *Warm* works fine too, as in *warmer*, *warmth*, and *warmly* in (21)-(23).

(21) For example, an advisor to Herbert Hoover suggested the candidate would appear to have a *warmer* personality if he had a dog.
(www.briefme.com/archive.php/article/16920)

(22) Luke wrote with *warmth* and feeling, and he also wrote in a very elevated style of sophisticated polished Greek.
(meditationforchristians.com/sec3yrcluke.htm)

(23) Feis Ros *warmly* welcomes the Gaelic Bill and congratulates the Executive in its historic move to normalise the Gaelic language and culture of Scotland.
(www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/education/inquiries/gaelic%20language/B_Feis%20Rois.pdf)

- But as you might have foreseen, we run into trouble with *going*. Like *seeing* meaning “dating”, *going* always has to have progressive aspect. Compare sentence (3), repeated as (24)a., with simple present *go* in (24)b.

(24) a. I’m *going* to stay here in America.
(www.montereyrepublicans.org/PressReleases/index.cfm/ID/73.htm)

b. # I always *go* to stay here in America.

If this particular test for metaphor turns out to be robust, this makes *going* look a lot more like invited inferencing rather than metaphor. Even if we accept a “parallel chaining” explanation for contested examples like *see* and *warm*, we may have trouble applying it to all the examples.

- An alternative explanation is suggested by Pickering and Frisson’s (2001) eye movement studies of polysemous verbs, and John Williams’ (1992) and Brisard et al.’s (1997) priming experiments, which demonstrate that language or reasoning about one metaphoric domain primes lexical items from the other. This priming effect might encourage invited inferencing in cases like the contested ones, where the conditions are right for invited inferencing to occur even without metaphor, but which happen to coincide with the structure of a metaphor.

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