

Lexical Meanings with Respect to Metaphor and Syncategorematic Modifiers¹⁾

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Lee, Heechul. 2000. *Lexical Meanings with Respect to Metaphor and Syncategorematic Modifiers*. *Linguistics* 8-2, 25-41. One of the metaphorical mappings Lakoff and Johnson (1980) consider is *Theories are Buildings*. This paper will construct detailed mappings that characterize this metaphor. It is necessary to actually "get our hands dirty" and study one metaphor in detail to really understand the theory. The paper will set up mappings for this analysis in a particular and explicit way, building upon the analyses presented in Lakoff and Johnson (1980) for the metaphor of *Love is a Journey*.

It has frequently been discussed (e.g., Austin 1964) that a word like *imitation* does not semantically modify a noun in the standard 'set intersection' way. For example, something correctly described as *imitation coffee* looks and tastes like coffee; but, whatever it is, it is not made of coffee beans. (Fillmore 1982: 133) The second half of this paper will discuss the so-called syncategorematic terms like *imitation*, which do not work like other noun modifiers. (Chonbuk National University)

1. The Metaphor of *Theories are Buildings*

Let us consider the following sentences which illustrate the metaphorical mapping Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 46) call *Theories are Buildings*:

1) a. Is that the *foundation* for your theory?

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- b. We will show that theory to be without *foundation*.
- 2) The theory needs more *support*.
 - 3) The argument is *shaky*.²⁾
 - 4) We need some more facts or the argument will *fall apart*.
 - 5) We need to *construct* a *strong* argument for that.
 - 6) I haven't figured out yet what the *form* of the argument will be.
 - 7) Here are some more facts to *shore up* the theory.
 - 8) We need to *buttress* the theory with *solid* arguments.
 - 9) The theory will *stand* or *fall* on the *strength* of that argument.
 - 10) The argument *collapsed*.
 - 11) They *exploded* his latest theory.
 - 12) So far we have put together only the *framework* of the theory.

My job in this section is to construct detailed mappings that characterize this metaphor. I will set up mappings for this analysis in an explicit way and discuss the following (Lee 1994):

- (1) The structure of the source domain. This includes the following:
 - (i) the elements of the source domain, e.g., a building has elements like a *foundation*, a *frame*, the whole building, etc.;
 - (ii) the properties of the elements, e.g., *solid*, *strong*, weak;
 - (iii) participants, that is, people involved with a building such as an architect, contractor, inhabitant, etc.;
 - (iv) the relevant knowledge about the source domain, e.g.,
 - (a) Buildings cannot *stand* up without *foundations*,
 - (b) Buildings that have *collapsed* cannot serve their function,
 - (c) Weak buildings can be *buttressed*, etc.
- (2) The specification of what parts of the structure of the source

2) *Arguments are Buildings* is the same kind of metaphor as *Theories are Buildings*.

domain are mapped onto what parts of the structure of the target domain. For example,

- (i) what aspect of a theory is a building's *foundation* mapped onto?
- (ii) What property of a theory is *solid* mapped onto?
- (iii) What is *collapse* mapped onto? And so on.

(3) The specification of salient inferences which are mapped from the source domain to the target domain. This part of the description explains why metaphorical sentences have the inferences that they have. For example, *The foundation of her theory crumbled* has certain entailments. What are they? How do they follow from the mapping?

(4) The conventional examples given above for this metaphor are not the only examples that exist in English. What others can we find? I will base my mappings not only on the examples given, but also on whatever additional examples we find.

(5) Conventional mappings can be extended to novel cases, for example, *Her theories have lots of small rooms and long, winding corridors*. I will give some examples of novel extensions. I will show how the mapping explains what the novel cases mean and what they could not mean.

(6) Do some kinds of buildings fit the *Theories are Buildings* metaphor better than others, for example, single family suburban houses, office buildings, fortresses, castles, log cabins? If so, can we explain why on the basis of the mapping?

1.1 The structure of the source domain

Let us consider the structure of the source domain.

1.1.1 The elements of the source domain (i.e., buildings)

(1) Exterior elements: walls (bricks, mortar, etc.), *foundation*, *frame* (or

framework, which also belongs to interior elements), back doors, roof, facade, windows, pillars, buttress (which also belongs to interior elements), doors, locks, keys, insulation, etc.

(2) Interior elements: ceiling, hallways, stairs, elevator, *rooms*, closet, storage, wiring, plumbing, air-conditioning, duct, etc.

(3) Other elements: floor plan, blue prints, a whole building, etc.

Some elements are, in reality, hard to decide if they belong to exterior or interior elements. The division above follows the simplest measure.

1.1.2 The properties of the elements

(1) *foundation*: *solid*, *strong*, weak, *shaky*, (un)stable, crack(ed), (un)even, (un)level, out of whack, sticking together, etc.

(2) *frame*: *solid*, *strong*, weak, *shaky*, (un)stable, shallow, deep, crack(ed), (un)even, (un)level, out of whack, sticking together, made of wood or steel, crooked, etc.

(3) walls: (un)stable, thick, thin, soundproof, cracked, to *crumble*, to *fall apart*, torn down, etc.

(4) A door has a key hole.

(5) Back doors are an alternative way to get in or to sneak in.

(6) Closets are used to store or hide things.

(7) *Rooms* of which a building is composed

1.1.3 Participants, that is, people who are involved with a building: architects, (who draw floor plans and blue prints), wreckers, (who explode or demolish buildings), construction crew, inhabitants (people who live in a building), contractors, painters, advertising agent, etc.

1.1.4 A *foundation* is the base on which buildings are constructed. Buildings cannot *stand* up without *foundations*. If a *foundation* is not *solid* (*strong*) enough to *support* a building, the building may be *shaky* or *collapse*. Weak *foundations*, as we experience, produce cracks on their concrete mass and/or are levitated from their positions when the *foundations* become frozen and melted repeatedly in winter. Then the buildings on the *foundations* become *shaky* or crooked.

For the buildings to keep *standing* up, more *support* is needed to *shore up* or *buttress* the buildings. That is, weak buildings can be

buttressed. They will, otherwise, *collapse* or *fall apart*. On top of a *foundation*, *frame* of a building is constructed. Both a *foundation* and *framework* are important *support* for buildings. Unless the *framework* is *strong* or *solid*, buildings will be *shaky* or, in the worse case, *collapse*. The appearance of buildings is their *form*.

A building that has *collapsed* cannot serve its function. When a building does not satisfy its function due to its *collapse*, it is blown up and replaced by another one. We need to *construct* a *strong* building.

Buildings cannot *stand* up without *foundations*. A building cannot *stand* up without a *frame*, either. A building is made of wood, bricks, cement, etc. A building is composed of *rooms* and floors. A building has multiple entrances. A building can be remodeled, renovated, repaired, or added on to. A weak *frame* needs to be bolted. Closets are the places where things are stored or hidden.

1.2 The specification of mapping

This subsection will discuss what parts of the structure of the source domain are mapped onto what parts of the structure of the target domain. A building that has *collapsed* cannot serve its function. If a theory is wrong, it is not worth anything. *Collapse* is mapped onto *wrong*. A theory which is wrong is discarded. *Explode* is mapped onto *discard*. *Support* of a building is additional evidence for a theory. For a building to be *shaky* is mapped onto for a theory to be fishy. To construct a *strong* building is mapped onto to develop tenable or indisputable theory.

Buildings' *foundations* are mapped onto basic ideas or assumptions. A *frame* is mapped onto an outline of a theory. Materials out of which walls are built are facts. In other words, bricks and mortar of walls and pillars are facts. *Buttress* is mapped onto extra facts or evidence *supporting* weak points of a theory. Floor plans of a building is mapped onto hypotheses of arguments. Blue prints of a building is detailed hypotheses of a theory. An air-tight building has no cracks, nor

openings. It is *solidly* built. An air-tight theory is a theory with no defects (or flaws) in it. Keys open doors to a building. Keys are clues or hints leading to the understanding of a theory. A facade makes a building look nice when other parts of the building are a mess (or disappointing).

Stable, solid, or strong in the source domain of buildings are mapped onto *convincing* in the target domain of theories. *Deep foundation* is mapped onto *well-known* or *accepted ideas* or *assumptions*. *Weak, unstable, and shaky* are mapped onto *not convincing*. *Crumble, cracked, and out of whack* are mapped onto *inconsistent* or *incoherent*. *Thin* (wall) is mapped onto *not having enough facts*.

1.3 Inferences and entailments

Through our knowledge about the source domain of buildings, *the argument collapsed* entails the following:

- (i) The *foundation* of the argument was not *strong* enough. That is, basic ideas or assumptions of the argument were inconsistent or incoherent.
- (ii) The *framework* of the argument was not *strong* enough. That is, the outlining was inconsistent or incoherent.
- (iii) The walls of the argument were not *strong* enough. That is, the argument lacked in relevant facts *supporting* it.

If the *foundation* of a building *crumbled*, there are a limited number of alternative ways for action as follows:

- (i) The whole building is destroyed (blown up) and the *foundation* is built again followed by construction of other parts of the building.
- (ii) The building is *shored up* or *buttressed*.
- (iii) The building can be left alone. It may *collapse* in the future. This is the easiest and laziest alternative for action.

If basic ideas or assumptions on which a theory is based are wrong, inconsistent, or incoherent, there are a limited number of alternatives for action as follows:

- (i) The whole theory is disputed or discarded and started again with new basic ideas and assumptions followed by the developing of subsequent parts of the theory.
- (ii) The theory is provided with additional facts or evidence to compensate for its weak points.
- (iii) The theory is left alone. It may be worthless and thrown away.

1.4 Other examples of the metaphor

The conventional examples (1-12) given above for this metaphor are not the only examples that exist in English. This subsection deals with other examples of the metaphor.

13) Chomsky lay the *foundations* for GB.

The *foundations* of buildings are mapped onto basic ideas or assumptions.

14) He found a *hole* in her theory.

If a wall of a building has a *hole* in it, the building is vulnerable to external conditions such as adverse weather. If plumbing has a *hole* in it, problems are caused. The building will have defects either way. Due to the lack of relevant and sufficient facts as in the first case (wall), and the inconsistent line of thinking and reasoning as in the second case (plumbing), her theory has defects.

15) There are a lot of *closets* in your theory. What are you hiding in your *closets*?

Closets in a building are places where things are stored or hidden. Hiding things in *closets* metaphorically correspond to hiding relevant facts which may function against the current argument or hiding bad parts of the argument in a theory.

16) His argument is *air-tight*.

An *air-tight* building has no cracks or openings in it since it was *solidly* built. An *air-tight* theory is not to be disputed.

17) My answers to the homework assignment will *remodel* (*renovate, repair, or add on to*) Lakoff's metaphor theory.

If a building is too old or does not serve its function, it is *remodeled, renovated, or repaired*. Something may *add on to* the building for a better function. If a theory is behind contemporary theories, or has defects in it, it can be revised. Something more can be *added on to* the theory, too.

18) His theory is *monumental*.

A *monument* is a construction which is big and will last long.

19) The instructor gave us a *key* to the argument (or theory).

20) Her theory is as *stable* as a house of cards.

A house of cards does not have a *foundation* and *frames*. The cards are even not glued together.

21) Her theory is a *facade*.

A *facade* building looks good at first glance. If the door is opened,

however, the scene behind it is messy.

22) Her theory is *transparent*.

If you look inside of the windows of a simple building, you can see everything in it. A *transparent* theory has nothing new and is not complicated.

23) I am an *advertising agent* of her theory.

We buy buildings.³⁾ We are convinced of theories. An *advertising agent* does not need to buy into a theory, but tells others to buy into that.

24) I *sold* my theory to them.

We *sell* buildings to others (selling is not specific to the building metaphor, though). We convince people of our theory.

25) I could understand the theory through the *back door*.

26) A strong wind can *blow* the theory over.

27) I *entered* the theory.

We get to know about a building by *entering* it.

1.5 Some examples of novel extensions

Conventional mappings can be extended to novel cases. This

3) *Buyers* or *sellers* as entities being mapped from the source domain of buildings is not clear. (Koenig 1994) Note that we conceive of theories in economic terms in general: for example, (i) This hypothesis was *costly*. (ii) This theory has many *benefits*. So, it is not clear that *buildings* are what's sold or bought in the examples of the metaphor. It is one potential difficulty with metaphor research to know exactly which source domain expressions belong to.

subsection will deal with some examples of novel extensions. It will show how the mapping explains what the novel cases mean and what they could not mean.

28) Complex theories usually have problems with the *plumbing*.

Large office buildings with complex structure need long, sometimes winding line of *plumbing* which connects sources of supply to points of demand. Since the line of *plumbing* is long, winding, and branching to many rooms, it is likely to be interrupted, break down, and cause problems as we experience.

In a theory, there must be a line of reasoning and thinking starting from assumptions, basic ideas, and hypotheses, and linking facts with conclusions or points in the theory in a logical or plausible manner. Complex theories are likely to have a complicated, long line of thinking and reasoning to connect many subparts of the theory to each other and the line is difficult to deploy (extend) without being interrupted.

29) Her theories have lots of small *rooms* and long, winding *corridors*.

Rooms, of which a building is composed, are subparts of which a theory is composed. A lot of small *rooms* and a long winding *corridor* in a building make the building nonfunctional and hard to get around. They have a negative aspect in a theory. A theory with a lot of subparts (subsections) and association is hard to understand due to complicated composition.

1.6 Which kind of buildings?

This subsection will consider if some kinds of buildings fit the *Theories are Buildings* metaphor better than others, for example, single family suburban houses, office buildings, fortresses, castles, log cabins, etc. Office buildings fit the metaphor better than others. Office

buildings have, of course, *foundation* and *framework* which play an important role in metaphorical mapping between the two domains such as buildings and theories. On the contrary, log cabins have neither *foundation* nor *frames*. Log cabins have, if any, fewer *frames*. If the office buildings are made of bricks and mortar (for walls and *frames*), they become better examples since bricks and mortar metaphorically correspond to facts in a theory.

Office buildings are usually large and have many (small) *rooms* with long (and sometimes winding) *hallways*. The structure of these office buildings makes it possible to have metaphorical mappings between the source domain of buildings and the target domain of theories as in example (29). In contrast, single family suburban houses and log cabins have neither many *rooms* nor long *hallways*. Fortresses may have some *rooms*, but not long winding *corridors* since the complex structure of fortresses will be inefficient to serve their military functions such as protection of soldiers from and keeping out enemies in war. Castles are also a form of buildings. They have functions similar to fortresses in the sense that they protect residents in them and keep other people out with respect to privacy as in *An Englishman's house is his castle*. Castles, however, are used in fancy contexts in many cases.

Office buildings include long, winding *plumbing* since they are usually large and house many occupants while other forms of buildings do not. Thus office buildings are better kind of buildings considering example (28).

2. Syncategorematic modifiers

Fillmore (1982) discusses at the end of his article syncategorematic terms like *imitation*. As he notes, these modifiers do not work like other noun modifiers. For example, something correctly described as *imitation* coffee looks and tastes like coffee; but, whatever it is, it is not made of coffee beans. (Fillmore 1982: 133) *Imitation* brass, to take another example, does not denote the intersection of *imitation* objects and brass objects. In the second half of this paper, I will consider *imitation* and

other modifiers like: *fake, synthetic, authentic, genuine, real, true, artificial, counterfeit*. (Lee 1994) They will be applied to nouns like the following and others that may be found relevant: *pants, teeth, fur, leather, flowers, paintings, Picasso, gun, light, lamp, maple syrup, emotion, flavor, modesty, book, story, sweetener*. These combinations will be used to infer the meaning of these modifiers. It helps to think of the meaning of these modifiers in terms of frames they evoke and the circumstances that motivate their use, to paraphrase Fillmore (1982).

One way to look at the semantics of the syncategorematic modifiers dealt with here is that they are used to indicate various ways objects can be similar, but are not identical to "real" members of a category. They classify these members outside of a category in terms of the type of characteristics that are missing.

I will examine what each modifier does to the expression it modifies and explain why non-occurring examples are deviant (*imitation emotion vs. false emotion). I will also discuss why the resulting combinations mean what they mean.

2.1 Synthetic, artificial, and counterfeit

This subsection will discuss such syncategorematic modifiers as *synthetic, artificial, and counterfeit*.

- 30) a. *synthetic* wool
 - b. *synthetic* fiber
 - c. *synthetic* fur

- 31) a. *artificial* color
 - b. *artificial* bait

- 32) a. *counterfeit* money
 - b. **counterfeit* leather

Some modifiers relate to the origin of an object, and especially to the fact that objects denoted by the A+N combination share most of the characteristics of the category named by the noun alone, except the origin. This class of modifiers is as follows:

- (i) Is it the material that makes the referent of the A+N combination unidentical to the members of the category named by the noun alone
- (ii) the fabrication process or
- (iii) the absence of an institutional source verifying the existence of a legitimate source for the object?

(i) relates to *synthetic*, (ii) to *artificial*, and (iii) to *counterfeit*. *Counterfeit* is somewhat interesting. What is crucial to identifying money as *real* vs. *counterfeit* is whether it was *dubbed* real by the proper authority. Of course, the same thing goes with art, where the origin, i.e., authority of the artist is crucial. Picasso could have directed some of his students to paint for him. The paintings would still be authentic Picassos.

2.2 *Fake* and *imitation*

Some modifiers relates not so much to the origin of the object as to the intrinsic qualities of the object that are kept (or not). This subsection will discuss *fake* and *imitation*.

- 33) a. *fake* eyelashes
- b. *fake* one-dollar bill

If something is *fake*, the fact might be known by someone else. If something is *counterfeit*, however, the fact had better not be known by someone else.

- 34) **fake* sweetener

Sweetener takes place of sugar when one does not want to take in the ingredients in sugar and still wants something to taste sweet. Sweetener itself is not real. Hence **fake sweetener* is not acceptable.

35) *imitation* butter

Butter contains some amount of fat. Some people want to enjoy it without having to worry about the fat for health's sake.

36) *imitation* fur

There is no need of killing animals if we produce only *imitation* fur. *Imitation* fur is needed because of the lack of balance between supply and demand. It is needed, that is, when the latter is high and the former is low. It is also cheaper in price.

37) *imitation* brass

Brass gets rusty or changes in color. *Imitation* brass is easier to take care of.

fake seems to require only that superficial, especially visual, properties of the object are preserved, but not the functionality of the object.⁴⁾ To take art again as an example, a Platonistic or neo-Platonistic view of painting insisted that they were but *fake* objects: a painting of a flower would be a *fake* flower in that case.⁵⁾ *Imitation*, on the other hand, focuses on the preservation of functional properties of objects. Let us consider the difference between *imitation cheese* and *fake cheese*. Only the former is edible, i.e., preserves the functional properties of members of the category. My distinction of the two notions is simplified in one

4) Think of the *fake* windows of the baroque era.

5) Of course, this is not the most interesting way to look at paintings.

respect. *Fake* focuses on the exclusive preservation of the visual properties, but does not strictly say that the functional properties are absent. So, if the functional properties stem from the visual, perceptual properties, then, the object can still serve the same function. This is true of *fake flowers* or *fake eyelashes*.

2.3 Positives (*authentic, genuine, real, true*)

This subsection will discuss *authentic, genuine, real, and true*.

- 38) a. an *authentic* gun of John Wayne
b. more *authentic* Italian flavor sauce (graded property of *authentic* in contrast to *genuine*)

39) An *authentic* book

An *authentic* book is that which relates to matters of facts, as they really happened. See *genuine* for contrast.

40) *genuine* kindness

Genuine kindness is kindness which comes out naturally or when you do not think you are kind; kindness innate or native, not acquired.

41) A *genuine* book

A *genuine* book is that which was written by the person whose name it bears, as the author of it.

42) **real* sweetener

As Fillmore (1982: 133) presented for **real* pants, a notion like **real* sweetener is unintelligible, because it is impossible to imagine something

looking and functioning like sweetener on the one hand, and not counting as being genuine sweetener on the other hand.

43) a *true* love

b. *true* kindness (essence of kindness; example of kindness)

The positives (*authentic, genuine, real, and true*) do not add any meaning, but simply serve to highlight that the object referred to is not an *imitation, a fake*..... All these words are polemic in the sense that they are used to argue against a real or potential addressee that would assume that the object does not have all the relevant properties. (Koenig 1994) To describe something as *real* coffee is, for example, to do nothing more than to assert that something is coffee, against (the possibility of) somebody's suspicion that it is *imitation* coffee. (Fillmore 1982: 133)

3. Conclusion

This paper constructs detailed mappings that characterize the *Theories are Buildings* metaphor. It is necessary, as mentioned in the abstract, to actually "get our hands dirty" and study one metaphor in detail to really understand the theory. The first half of this paper discusses mappings for the analysis of the metaphor in a concrete and explicit way, based upon the analyses presented in Lakoff and Johnson (1980) for the metaphor of *Love is a Journey*.

There exists a set of modifiers whose members do not semantically modify a noun in the standard 'set intersection' way. Those members are called syncategorematic terms. (Fillmore 1982: 133) The second half of this paper discusses such syncategorematic terms as *synthetic, artificial, counterfeit, fake, imitation, authentic, genuine, real, and true*. It turns out that *synthetic* focuses on the material, *artificial* on fabrication process, and *counterfeit* on authority on the one hand, and that *fake* focuses on visual or perceptual appearance and *imitation* on

functionality. This paper made it possible to differentiate the meanings of those syncategorematic modifiers, some of which are not easy to distinguish in meaning among themselves. In conclusion, this paper shows that metaphor (Lakoff 1992) and frame (Fillmore 1982, 1985) that syncategorematic modifiers evoke play an important role in defining word meanings.

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