IMAGE SCHEMATA AND LIGHT:
A STUDY OF CONTRASTIVE LEXICAL DOMAINS
IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

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This paper analyzes the lexical domain of LIGHT in both English and Spanish, as an example of how one can arrive at an inventory of conceptual categories and their interrelationships through the structure of language itself, a reflection of our understanding of reality. By using a functional-lexematic lexicographic model which integrates Coseriu's Lexematics and Dik's Functional Grammar (Stepwise Lexical Decomposition) to analyze the definitional structure of semantic units, we believe it is possible to justify membership in a lexical domain as well as establish contrastive differentiation parameters, many of which have been found to coincide with Johnson's list of image schemata.

1. Introduction

Langacker (1983, 1991) has posited the existence of certain basic domains, which he defines as "cognitively irreducible representational spaces or fields of conceptual potential" (1991, 4). As specific examples of these domains, he mentions TIME, COLOR and EMOTION, but is rather vague as to how a more complete inventory can be established. At the Universities of Granada and Córdoba, an onomasiological dictionary of contrastive lexical fields is being elaborated (Martín Mingorance 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1990). In the initial stage of this project, the verbal lexicon in English and Spanish has been divided into a series of related lexical domains and field membership determined by using parameters found in the definitional structure of the lexical items themselves.

In the elaboration of the semantic architecture of the lexicon (Faber 1992), certain dimensions and differentiation parameters have been found to be recurrent within lexical fields, and thus basic to the way we perceive the world. The fact that certain of them coincide with Johnson's (1987) list of

image schemata would seem to constitute a validation of many of the asser-
tions made by cognitive linguists, giving definite proof of recurrent patterns,
shapes and regularities in, or of the ongoing ordering activities which organize
our mental representations, at a general, abstract level.

In this paper we study the image schemata manifest in the definitional
structure of the verbs within the domain of LIGHT both in English and Spanish,
as well as their metaphorical projections onto other lexical domains.

This analysis follows the model elaborated by Martín Mingorance (1990)
which entails the establishment of relations of semantic hierarchy within the
lexicon by defining non-nuclear words in terms of nuclear ones (or of al-
ready defined non-nuclear ones, as in Dixon 1982). In an effort to integrate
this model within the precepts of cognitive linguistics as developed by Lakoff
and Johnson (1980) and Johnson (1987), this study explores the way in
which our perceptual interactions and body movements within our environ-
ment generate schematic structures that make it possible for us to experience,
understand and reason about our world.

According to Johnson (1987), in this cognitive approach the schemata
that emerge first as a structure of bodily interaction, can be figuratively
developed and extended as a structure around which meaning is organized
at more abstract levels of cognition.

Following this view, we have included in the semantic analysis of our
lexical fields, not only what traditional theories would regard as literal
meanings of the verbal lexemes, but also metaphorical uses of these lexemes.
Through the analysis of the metaphorical meanings conveyed by those verbs,
it becomes obvious, as Lakoff and Johnson (1981) maintain, that metaphor
is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action.
This becomes evident in language, as figurative extensions of words take
the form of metaphorical projections from the realm of physical bodily
interactions to the mental, epistemic or logical domain.

2. The Lexical Field of LIGHT

Mary Snell-Hornby defines descriptive verbs as "a semantic complex
divisible into a core of verbal action *(act-nucleus)* and a descriptive, modi-
fying complex of elements *(modificant)* expressed in the verb's basic
definition by one or more adjectives or manner adverbs" (1983, 43).

One important aspect of her study is what she defines as the focal element in a descriptive verb. This focal element, comparable to the focus of a sentence, is the one that is stressed or weighted, and which is semantically the most central and the most important.

In the tables below we give two examples in each language, the definition structure of which is representative of the other lexemes in the field. The tables make the distinction between Act Nucleus-Modificant, thus showing the descriptivity of those verbs.

Table 1: English Lexical Field of Light Act Nucleus-Modificant Distinction.

VERB	ACT NUCLEUS	MODIFICANT
BEAM	1. SHINE	- Brightly, emitting light and warmth
	2. LOOK, SMILE	- Happy, cheerful, radiant, with unreserved satisfaction, pleasure
GLARE	1. SHINE	- Dazzling, disagreeable, fiercely
	2. LOOK	- Angrily, with hostility annoyance or dislike

Table 2: Spanish Lexical Field of Light Act Nucleus-Modificant Distinction.

VERBO	NUCLEO ACTIVO	MODIFICADOR
RESPLANDECER	1. BRILLAR	- Luz intensa, brillante
	2. EXPRESION FACIAL	- Alegría, felicidad
CENTELLEAR	1. BRILLAR	- Rayos vivos, cambiantes y rápidos
	2. EXPRESION FACIAL	- Emoción súbita (ira, rabia)

In the field of LIGHT, the nucleus of the definition is the archilexeme *shine / brillar*, in terms of which all the hyponyms are defined. Archilexematic status is determined through *Stepwise Lexical Decomposition* (Dik, 1978b), method used to establish the semantic hierarchy within lexical domains. Within the field of LIGHT, *shine / brillar* were thus found to be the most basic terms, being the nucleus of the definitions of the other members of the hierarchy.

To justify the inclusion of a verb in the field in question, it is lexically decomposed, so that its definition consists of a nuclear word (or a previously defined non-nuclear one) and one or more features which differentiate it from the preceding members of the hierarchy. The nuclear word is the *definiens* which labels the lexical dimension, and this word in turn contains a *definiens* which labels the lexical field in question. The example below gives a segment of the lexical field we have structured in both English and Spanish:

Table 3: Lexical Domains of Light in English and Spanish

LIGHT	*LUZ*

TO GIVE OFF LIGHT
  shine to give off light / to be bright.
 	
      blaze to shine extremely brightly.
 	
      flash to shine with a sudden, bright light (esp. quickly and regularly).
 	
         glint to flash quickly (usu. a metallic surface).
 	
      glare to shine with a very bright light that is difficult to look at.
 	
      gleam to shine brightly by reflecting light (esp. a clean, shiny surface).
 	
         glance to gleam (literary).
	EMITIR LUZ
	  brillar emitir luz propia o reflejada.
	    resplandecer brillar intensamente.
	
	      esplender resplandecer. <formal y muy poco usual>.
	      fulgurar resplandecer de forma muy rápida y repentina (aplicado a las estrellas y también a las personas).
	      rutilar resplandecer. <lit. aplicado a los astros o a las personas>.
	  relumbrar brillar con intensidad reflejando una luz que se recibe desde el exterior.
	  deslumbrar brillar con una luz tan intensa que impide momentáneamente a quien mira a esa luz.
	  destellar o **destellear** brillar con una luz muy viva, emitiendo rápidos y débiles rayos de luz, como los que emite un diamante.

beam to shine brightly and constantly (usu. in a certain direction).

sparkle to shine brightly giving off tiny, quick flashes of light (esp. jewels).

>**twinkle** to sparkle continuously, changing from bright to faint (esp. stars).

>**scintillate** to sparkle (formal) (usu. fig. wit, personality).

>**glitter** to sparkle in a flashy, (esp. artificial) way.

>**glisten** to sparkle brightly (usu. a smooth/wet/oily surface).

glow to shine with a dull, steady, warm light (esp. a low fire).

flicker to shine unsteadily with sudden changes in brightness.

shimmer to shine with a soft, fluctuating light (esp. a moving surface such as water, silk, etc.)

glimmer to shine with a faint, unsteady light.

chispear destellar débilmente, emitiendo destellos de modo intermitente.
centellear o **centellar** destellar con rayos de luz oscilantes, rápidos y de poca intensidad.
titilar destellar de modo oscilante y débil. Aplicado especialmente las estrellas.
rielar brillar trémulamente. Temblar con el movimiento el agua una luz que se refleja en ella, por ejemplo, la luna. <poét.>
coruscar brillar intensamente. <muy poco usual>
lucir brillar, emitiendo luz propia de modo intenso y constante.
confulgir brillar dos luces de modo simultáneo (encontrándose sus haces de luz).
refulgir brillar muy intensamente (usualmente una materia o superficie metálica).
relucir brillar reflejando rayos de luz intensos y constantes (esp. una supeficie lisa y pulida).
irradiar emitir rayos de luz, o despedir calor de modo intenso y constante en una dirección determinada.
fosforecer emitir luz fosforecente. (visible sólo en la oscuridad).
clarear emitir el sol los primeros rayos de luz (débiles).
>**alborear** clarear el día, sin que llegue a verse el sol.
iluminar(se) emitir algo luz propia o reflejada de modo instantáneo.

TO CAUSE STH TO GIVE OFF LIGHT	*HACER QUE ALGO EMITA LUZ*

shine to cause sth to give off light / to be bright.
    flash to cause sth to shine with a sudden, bright light (esp. quickly and regularly).
illuminate to cause sth to be bright by shining light on it.
    light (up) to illuminate sth by shining light on/in all of it
	iluminar hacer que algo emita luz al arrojar sobre él otra luz.
	alumbrar hacer que una cosa o lugar sea visible proyectándo la luz propia en una dirección determinada.
	abrillantar hacer que algo brille con intensidad, por ejemplo frotándolo.

TO BECOME WITHOUT LIGHT / WITH VERY LITTLE LIGHT **darken** to become dark (without light). **dim** to become dim (with very little light).	*QUEDARSE SIN LUZ / CON POCA LUZ* **apagarse** dejar algo de emitir luz totalmente. **oscurecer(se)** emitir algo menos luz, volviéndose menos brillante. **ensombrecer(se)** perder luz de modo gradual, volviénse opaco.
TO CAUSE STH TO GIVE OFF LESS LIGHT / CEASE GIVING LIGHT **darken** to cause sth to become darker, (without light) **dim** to cause sth to become dim. (with very little light).	*HACER QUE ALGO SE QUEDE SIN LUZ / CON POCA LUZ* **apagar** hacer cesar la luz o el fuego totalmente. **oscurecer** hacer que algo tenga menos luz. Hacer parecer menos brillante, hermoso o valioso por contraste con el brillo propio. **ensombrecer** hacer que algo pierda luz de modo gradual, volviéndose opaco.

SHINE / BRILLAR, the archilexeme, has been defined as *to give off light / to be bright / emitir luz propia o reflejada*. This definition is then the basis for the formulation of immediate oppositions in terms of which the dimensions within the semantic domain are established. These oppositions characterize both the domain in question as well as the internal semantic structure of the lexical items it contains. The dimensions are thus directly derived from the definitional structure of the semantic units.

3. Semantic and Contrastive Analysis

The verbal lexemes integrating both lexical fields can be arranged according to parameters derived from the repetition of modificants within the verbal lexemes themselves. Each classification focuses on a certain semantic aspect. Within the field of LIGHT, relevant parameters are +/-stability (of the light), degree of intensity of light, as well as its axiological evaluation or position on the good/bad scale.

3.1. *The Parameter of Stability in English and Spanish*

In the following table the verbal lexemes are arranged focussing on a semantic aspect relevant to the definitional structure of both lexical fields, namely the distinction between verbs conveying either a stable or an unstable kind of light. This would correspond to the image schema of ITERATION, and is in direct relation with the continuity of the light in our perception. It has to be taken into account that the +/- stability distinction in this field is not absolute, but a matter of degree being always bound to differences in use among native speakers.
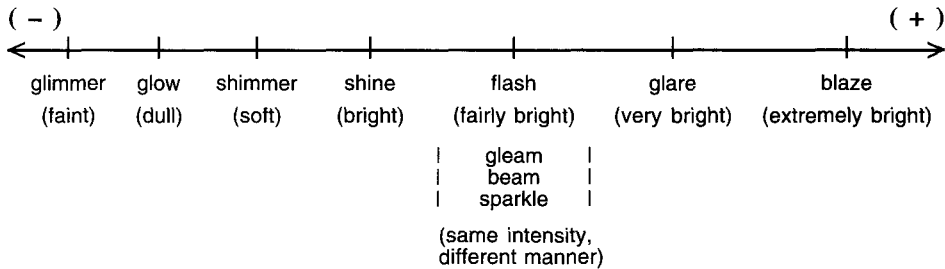
Table 4: Contrastive Structure of the Parameter of Stability

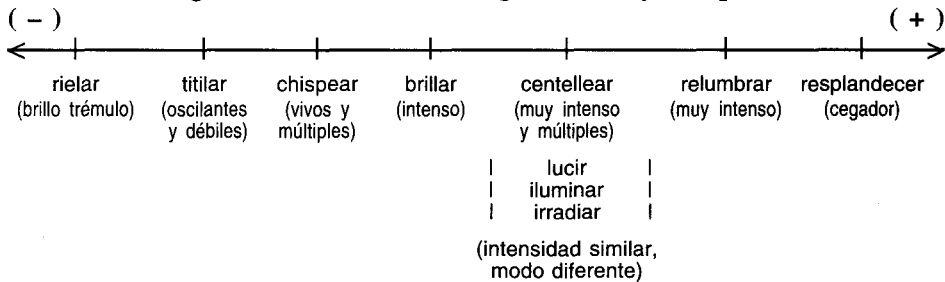| STABLE LIGHT		UNSTABLE LIGHT	
Brillar	Shine	Fulgurar	Flash
Resplandecer	Beam	Rutilar	
Irradiar		Destellar	Glint
Relumbrar	Gleam		Twinkle
Relucir		Centellar	Glitter
Deslumbrar	Glare	Chispear	Sparkle
Lucir	Blaze	Titilar	Flicker
Confulgir			
Refulgir		Rielar	Glisten
Fosforecer			Shimmer
Clarear			

3.2. *The Parameter of Intensity*

The following diagrams show the degree of intensity in English and Spanish of the principal lexemes of the field where this parameter is relevant within their definitions. This corresponds to the SCALE schema, which as we shall see has direct implications on the axiological weight of the lexemes as well as their metaphorical projections.

Diagram 1: Parameter of Light Intensity in English

(−)						(+)
glimmer (faint)	glow (dull)	shimmer (soft)	shine (bright)	flash (fairly bright)	glare (very bright)	blaze (extremely bright)

| gleam |
| beam |
| sparkle |

(same intensity,
different manner)

In the establishment of the semantic hierarchy of lexemes for the Spanish field the parameter of intensity is not as relevant as it is in English; the Spanish verbs are organized in terms of manner rather than in terms of degrees of intensity, as this parameter is more relevant within their definitions:

Diagram 2: Parameter of Light Intensity in Spanish.

(−)						(+)
rielar (brillo trémulo)	titilar (oscilantes y débiles)	chispear (vivos y múltiples)	brillar (intenso)	centellear (muy intenso y múltiples)	relumbrar (muy intenso)	resplandecer (cegador)

| lucir |
| iluminar |
| irradiar |

(intensidad similar,
modo diferente)

3.3. *Axiological Evaluation in both English and Spanish*

The problem of the connotative/emotive meaning of lexical items is well-known. In a logical desire to discover and classify what have heretofore been considered as more primary semantic features, lexicographers have often relegated this aspect of word meaning to the background in order to deal with it at some future time. It has become increasingly evident, however, that affective meaning permeated with axiological values is much more important and vital to definitional structure than has hitherto been supposed.

Cognitive linguistics in the writings of Lakoff (1987), Langacker (1983) and Johnson (1987) has convincingly demonstrated the fallacy/impossibility of separating connotative and denotative meaning. More important, it has been brought out that grasping a meaning is an *event* of understanding in which human perceptual experience plays a vital role (Johnson 1987: Chapter 7). Even more recently, Krzeszowski (1990) has pointed out the dominant function that *values* perform in the structure of concepts, and underlines that emotions are among the major factors determining information processing rather than merely modifying it (see also Osgood, 1957, 1980). In fact, he has gone so far as to affirm that *all* lexical items are assessable on an axiological scale. Although such a broad generalization may be difficult to prove, it is certainly true that many lexical items carry heavy axiological weight, and that that weight is semantically relevant.

In consonance with Krzeszowski's assertion, we have observed in our research on the lexical semantic structure of English verbs that the opposition of *good* and *bad* consistently appears as a structuring device within the semantic domains studied.

The semantic analysis of the lexemes showed that most English verbs denoting light can be used figuratively to refer to the human eye, characterizing and evaluating its expression. The same relation has been found through all the Spanish lexical field of LIGHT, as most of the Spanish verbs are also used figuratively in much the same way as the English ones.

It is important to point out that any classification in terms of positive or negative emotion conveyed by these verbs in their figurative uses will always be bound to considerations of degree (see table 5 below). Between the two extremes there is a gray area, which is clearly shown by the verbs in the middle column which can be used to convey either a positive or a negative emotion depending only on the intention of the speaker in the context of the utterance.

Table 5:
Spanish/English Verbs Figuratively Used to Express Anger/Happiness

EXPRESSING ANGER (Negative emotion)			EXPRESSING HAPPINESS (Positive emotion)	
Blaze	Destellar		Brillar	Shine
Flash	Chispear Centellear		Resplandecer Irradiar	Beam
Glare		Glint Glitter	Relumbrar Relucir	Gleam
		Glisten	Deslumbrar Destellar	Twinkle
		Flicker		Sparkle
		Glimmer	Chispear	Glow

The semantic analysis of the lexemes shows a correlation between the two previous parameters: the type of light denoted by the verb in its primary use and the kind of emotion expressed in the figurative use. In this correlation when the lexeme denotes a steady, pleasant light, the emotion will usually be of the same nature, and correspondingly, if the light is strong or oppressive, the emotion expressed by the lexeme will be a strong or negative one.

There is also an important correlation here between light intensity and the negativity of the emotion conveyed, since deviations from the norm create a strong impact on our perceptual horizon. Therefore, if we use *glare* to refer to very intense sources of light, such as the tropical sun, a metaphorical projection will correlate in intensity, thus indicating a strong emotion such as strong anger or fury expressed through the eyes. In contrast, verbs denoting a feeble light such as *glimmer* or *glow* are metaphorically used to refer to weaker emotions, but are generally evaluated as being more positive.

In Spanish as well, it is possible to find a certain correlation between degree of light intensity and degree of emotional intensity. *Resplandecer* o

relumbrar de alegría implies a much stronger emotion than when we refer, for instance, to a *sentimiento incandescente.*

4. Correspondences and Contrasts

Using the above mentioned parameters as structuring devices, we can pinpoint several correspondences between the English and the Spanish fields in relation to the primary use of the verbs to denote a certain kind of light and the figurative extension of this use to evaluate the facial expression. This contrastive analysis in terms of semantic coverage and divergence shows that the equivalence between the two fields is only approximate, though the interrelation between parameters is consistent in both fields.

Brillar can be regarded as the most appropiate archilexeme corresponding to *shine*, all their literal uses being nearly equivalent. At the figurative level, both verbs are related to positive emotions or qualities, though *brillar* in Spanish may also appear in reference to a strong or sudden emotion such as *ira* or *rabia*.

Irradiar combines both LIGHT and HEAT, covering a similar semantic area to *blaze* in English, though *irradiar* may also be an appropriate equivalent to *beam* when the semantic focus is placed on the outward emission from a focal point.

Both *gleam* and *relumbrar* denote stable light and the connotations implied by them are equivalent in English and Spanish as both verbs are used to indicate a positive emotion.

Deslumbrar and *glare* denote the same kind of light in their literal uses, but *deslumbrar* in its figurative use possesses a positive connotation in Spanish, whereas *glare* is mainly used as an indication of anger.

Destellar and *chispear* can be used to express both anger and happiness, sharing with the English term, *glint*, an element of suddenness as well as concealment regarding the positive or negative emotion experienced by the subject.

Chispear and *sparkle* are both used with reference to very small quick points of light, and they are also used to describe someone's personality in a positive way, focussing on his/her liveliness and wit.

Twinkle and *destellar* are applied to the tiny and quick flashes of light emitted by jewels. Both are figuratively used only in reference to positive emotions.

Both *flash* in English and *fulgurar* in Spanish denote a light that appears and disappears immediately. Although the two verbs maintain the element of suddenness in their figurative uses, *flash* is associated with anger whereas *fulgurar* (mostly the deverbal adjective, *fulgurante*) appears together with positive ideas such as success (*éxito*) or coming up in the world (*ascensión*).

The following English lexemes can only be rendered in Spanish by means of periphrastic constructions:

Flicker	------>	parpadear o brillar con luz mortecina.
Glimmer	------>	brillar con luz trémula.
Glow	------>	emitir luz o fuego incandescente.

The following tables show the correlation between the type of light emitted (intensity and +/-stability) and the emotion expressed in its figurative use when it describes a look or facial expression.

Table 6:
Verbs of Stable/Unstable Light in English and Emotions They Express

STABLE LIGHT

TYPE OF LIGHT	bright, steady light	subdued and soft light, element of warmth	bright, warm and steady light	warm, intense incandescent light	oppressively strong light	LIGHT + HEAT bright, intense light
	SHINE	GLEAM	BEAM	GLOW	GLARE	BLAZE
EMOTION EXPRESSED	happiness, and positive qualities	covert positive emotion	friendliness, cheerfulness towards sb	emotional fervour	anger, fiercely angry facial expression	anger, fury

UNSTABLE LIGHT

TYPE OF LIGHT	quick, bright, element of suddenness	quick, tiny iterative flashes of light	cold, metallic flash of reflected light	bright to faint, unsteady light	moving unsteady small light	small, bright and quick points of light	fleeble glow
	FLASH	GLITTER	GLINT	TWINKLE	FLICKER	SPARKLE	GLIMMER
EMOTION EXPRESSED	anger	sudden emotion, greedy expression	sudden emotion (either + or -)	excitement, mischief	nervous reaction, recognition	qualities of lively intelligence and wit	abstractions such as hope

Table 7:
Verbs of Stable/Unstable Light in Spanish and Emotions They Express

LUZ ESTABLE

TIPO DE LUZ	luz intensa, estable y clara	luz intensa, brillante	reflejada, intensa y brillante	intensa, enfasis en el que la percibe	constante e intensa, percepción visual	encuentro de dos haces de luz	rayos intensos, superficie lisa y pulida	LUZ + CALOR constantes e intensos, direccional
	BRILLAR	RESPLANDECER	RELUMBRAR	DESLUMBRAR	LUCIR	CONFULGIR	RELUCIR	IRRADIAR
EMO- CIÓN EXPRE- SADA	rasgos positivos, alegría, tb. connotaciones negativas	alegría, felicidad	alegría, satisfacción	belleza, inteligencia	aprovechamiento del tiempo o del dinero	encuentro de dos miradas	felicidad, alegría	felicidad, alegría, paz

LUZ INESTABLE

TIPO DE LUZ	haz de luz intenso y repentino	luz intensa y variante	rayos múltiples, rápidos y vivos	rayos débiles, vivos e intermitentes	rayos vivos, cambiantes y rápidos
	FULGURAR	RUTILAR	DESTELLAR	CHISPEAR	CENTELLEAR
EMOCIÓN EXPRESADA	ascensión, éxito	metaforización tb. del sj., éxito social	emoción súbita, tanto positiva, (pasión, alegría) como negativa (rabia, ira)	rasgos de carácter positivos	emoción súbita, tanto positiva como negativa

5. The Light of our Lives: Metaphorical Projections

According to Taylor, meanings do not exist in themselves, but are "cognitive structures, embedded in patterns of knowledge and belief" (1990, 83). Consequently any comprehensive semantic analysis must necessarily take into account how human beings organize their patterns of knowledge and belief in order to give coherence to our world. For Johnson (1987), there must be a pattern and order to our actions, perceptions and conceptions in order for us to have meaningful connected experiences which we can comprehend. He defines such patterns or *image schemata* in the following way:

> a recurrent pattern, shape, regularity in, or of these ongoing or-
> dering activities. These patterns emerge as meaningful structures
> for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space,
> our manipulation of objects and our *perceptual interactions*. (29)

Image schemata are thus structures for organizing our experience and comprehension, and can be conceptualized as dynamic patterns rather than fixed and static images, since they can take on any number of specific instantiations in varying contexts. In this sense, they can be modified to fit many similar but different situations that manifest a recurring, underlying structure, and at the same time gain a certain relative stability by becoming conventionally located in our network of meaning.

The prototypical image schemata relating to light emerges from our daily physical interactions with the natural light sources around us. All such particular experiences can be abstracted to form an image schema which could be tentatively drawn in this way:
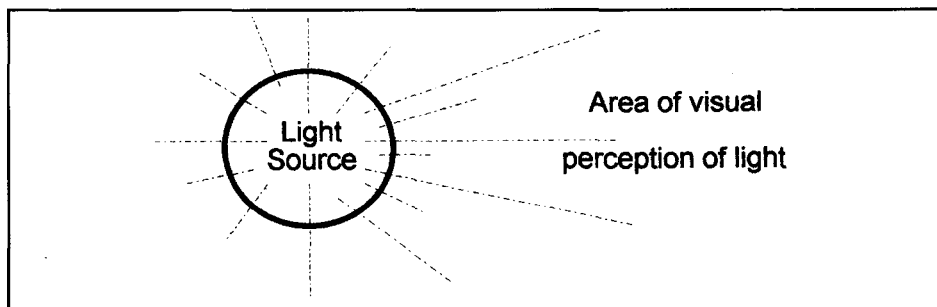

Figure 1. Image Schema: Visual Image of Light Sources

According to our experiential bases, this image schema would involve prototypically, a natural source of light such as the sun, a fire or the stars, which constitutes the focal point for the outward emission of light. This preconceptual schema is used to conceptualize in the same fashion less prototypical examples of emission of light, such as a lamp, a candle and other artificial sources of light.

Similar image schemata could be drawn for instances where we encounter light mediums (or elements which are not light sources but vehicles able to reflect light, such as metallic surfaces or jewels). In most cases this schema presupposes a viewpoint from which the light source is perceived.

According to Johnson's terminology, this viewpoint can be assumed to be either inside or outside the *landmark*. As a result, many of the constructions relating to verbs of light assume, on the one hand, what we may term *inner perception* of the light or, on the other, an *outer perception*, which may account in part for the domain overlap of light with the domains of both visual perception and movement.

This explains why so many verbal lexemes belong to both lexical fields (emission of light and visual perception) and, furthermore, why in some instances the two meanings appear to be merged and it is difficult to decide which meaning is the most relevant. All this may be considered as the first projection beyond the prototypical case of our image schema relating to emission of light.

Apart from this first projection we may identify a further projection which, as Johnson has demonstrated, is the "pervasive act of metaphorically extending a schema from the physical to the non-physical" (1987, 65). In such cases a basic schema is figuratively elaborated and extended so as to allow its shape to be filled by entities that are not strictly physical or spatial in the prototypical senses. Different senses of a lexical item are connected by means of these metaphorical projections, which thus can be said to play a constitutive role in the structuring of our experiences.

We have found the metaphorical projection of the basic image schemata (the one relating to natural light sources) to be consistent across all the verbal lexemes in both English and Spanish. Furthermore, it is also possible to identify a core of this metaphorical meaning, from which extensions of the prototype emerge. The metaphorical projection of the basic image schema would be as follows: Based on the CONTAINER SCHEMA (Lakoff 1987, 271; Johnson 1987, 23), human beings are conceptualized as containers for their

feelings. Strong feelings (either positive or negative) are light sources. The eyes, the smile, and facial expression in general are light vehicles.

As a result, if our viewpoint is placed outside the *landmark*, emotions (light sources) inside the container (person being perceived) can be seen through the light projected by the light vehicle (eyes or smile of that person).
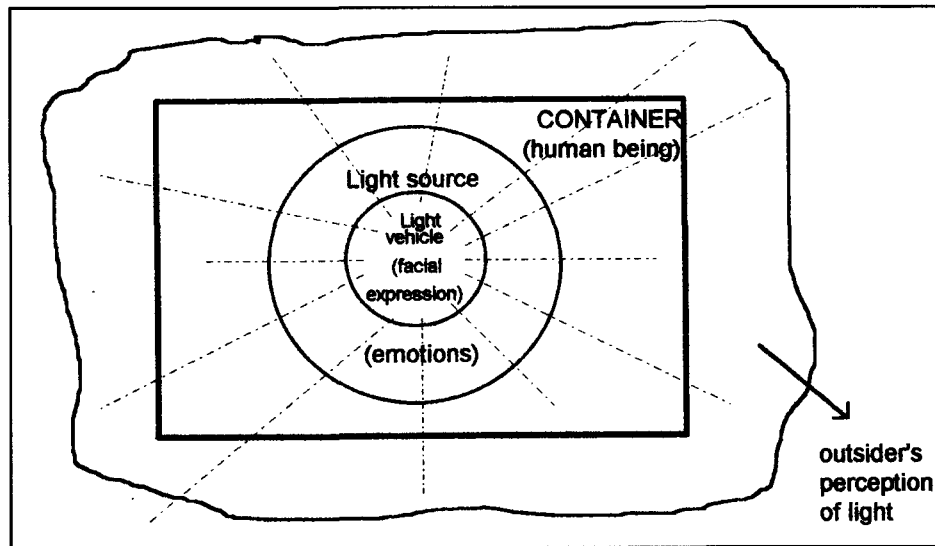

Figure 2. Image Schema: Human Being as Light Source

For example, when we say that "someone's face is beaming", or that "her eyes twinkled with laughter" or when we say in Spanish "sus sonrisas irradiaban felicidad" or "sus ojos destellaban de alegría", we identify the subject of those sentences as a light source in the same way as we conceptualize our experiential interaction with, for instance, the sun. If someone experiences a strong emotion, those emotions become light sources contained within the person's body, and the person's eyes, the vehicle which expresses that particular emotion, thus observed outside the *landmark*.

However, this is much more than just the way we talk about emotions, or emotional experiences, or notice someone else's. These metaphorical projections also impose a certain structure on our experience of emotions. This coincides with the "interactional view" which emphasizes that in many cases metaphors are conceptual devices used for understanding or creating

reality, rather than merely describing it (Black 1962; Kövecses 1986). For example, sentences such as "her eyes were literally gleaming with happiness" or "su existencia se fué literalmente apagando poco a poco", are not only understood as extensions of a prototypical meaning, but also to a certain degree can be said to determine how we actually experience the emotions in question.

Furthermore, LIGHT is also used to structure our most basic experience in another way. Our actual life cycle itself is conceptualized as a light source. When we are born, we come into the light of our existence from the darkness of our mother's womb. In ancient times, light (the sun) was even worshipped as as a source of life. The change from light (day) to darkness (night) is regarded as a cycle, the structure of which is also present in the way we conceptualize the cycle of our existence, which begins with the moment of our birth (dawn) and ends with our death (twilight /nightfall).

In our opinion, there are few experiences that are so basic and universal as the awareness of being alive. The centrality of this metaphorical projection may account for the many metaphors in both English and Spanish which seem to overlap in some of their entailments: if someone is alive, he is able to feel emotions. Therefore when we talk of a *bright person / una persona brillante*, he becomes a light source. If light is fundamental to physical life, it is also vital for our intellect. Hence, the well known parallelism between intellection and vision. Life, knowledge, strong or positive emotions are therefore conceptualized in terms of LIGHT while death, ignorance, and negative emotions are generally conceptualized in terms of DARKNESS. To a great extent the structure of our physical interactions with natural light sources forms an image schema which is metaphorically extended to the non-physical domain of existence, emotions and mental perception, thus determining the basic character of the metaphorical projection.

All these different metaphors form a network, and this cross-metaphorical coherence is a strong evidence for the reality of image schemata and their metaphorical extensions. But stronger evidence appears to be the fact that all these concepts, experiences and ways of understanding are shared by both English and Spanish speakers. It is true that both cultures share not only a large amount of encyclopedic knowledge but also common patterns of cultural beliefs and practices. However in our opinion, the reason for so much shared knowledge is much more fundamental than a common cultural tradition, but is directly connected with our basic physical-experiential interaction with our environment.

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