The Abstract / Concrete Divide

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Identifying & studying linguistic metaphors produced in 2 sets of comparable texts

Computer Learner Corpora

- Corpus linguistics & Second Language Acquisition (SLA)
- Interlanguage
 - the extent of potential L1 influence
 - general learner strategies
 - phases of interlanguage development
 - possible overgeneralization of L2 features
 - genre/register influence
- "Naturalistic" data



- 2 million word corpus
- 19 subcorpora of approximately 200,000 words each
- Young adult EFL learners
- Advanced learners of English
 - B2-C2 according to the CEFR scale



Collected between 1999 and 2002

- Approximately 300 essays
 - 212,000 words
 - Roughly 500 words in length
 - Unabridged

Argumentative essays

- Crime does not pay. (12,235 words)
- Feminists have done more harm to the cause of women than good. (17,707 words)
- Most university degrees are theoretical and do not prepare students for the real world. They are, therefore, of very little value. (19,448 words)
- Marx once said that religion was the opium of the masses. If he was alive at the end of the twentieth century, he would replace religion with television. (20,484 words)
- Some people say that in our modern world, dominated by science, technology and industrialisation, there is no longer a place for dreaming and imagination. (55,978 words)

The Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS)

- A reference corpus for ICLE
- 324,304 words of argumentative essays
 - British A-level pupils
 - British university students
 - American university students
- Novice writers

Topics

- Computers and the human brain
- Problems facing the Monarchy
- In vitro fertilisation genetic engineering

 A single Europe: A loss of sovereignity for Britain'



This point of view displays the computer as a substitute for a human brain which, once skilled in its use, is a major problem in its use by many people.

Therefore, I conclude that although the invention and development of the human computer has kept the brain on, full-time, it use has offloaded it, to a certain extent, into redundancy.

Definition of metaphor

A mapping between two domains from two different semantic fields, where certain perceived features of the source domain are mapped onto the target domain

We spend/save/run out of/invest time.

TIME IS MONEY conceptual metaphor

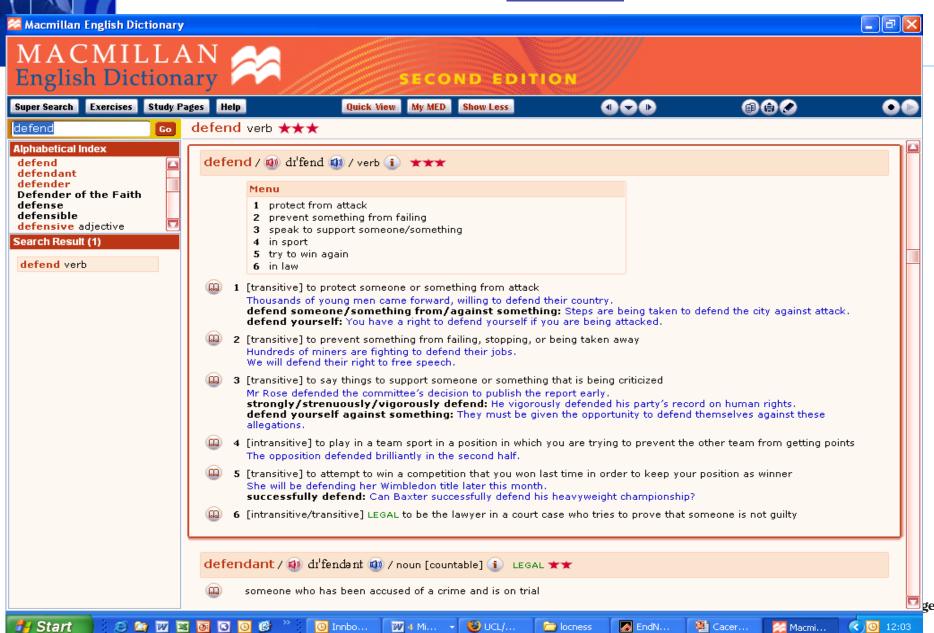


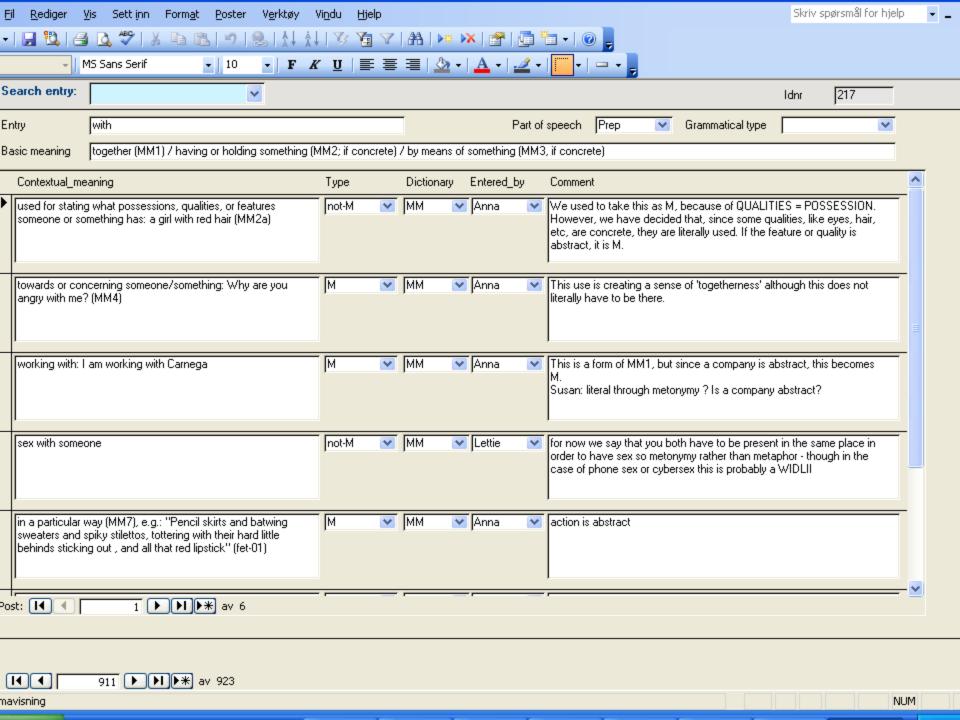
Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)

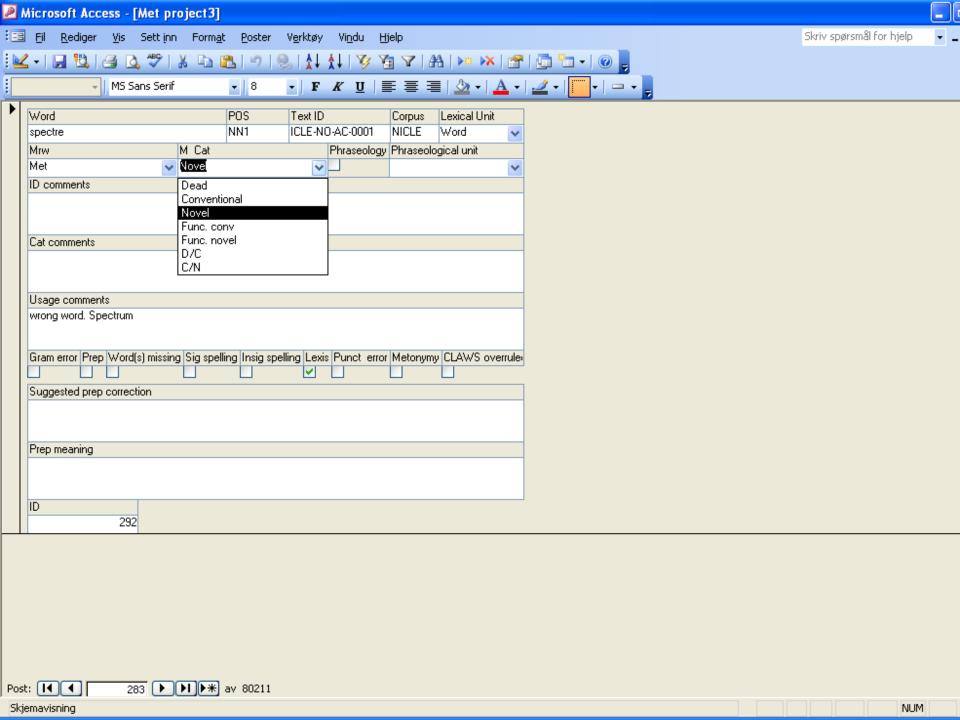
- Read the entire text
- Demarcate lexical units
- Establish the contextual meaning of each lexical unit
- Establish the basic meaning of each lexical unit
- Contextual / Basic meanings distinct?
 - Similarity?



The student <u>defended</u> her thesis.





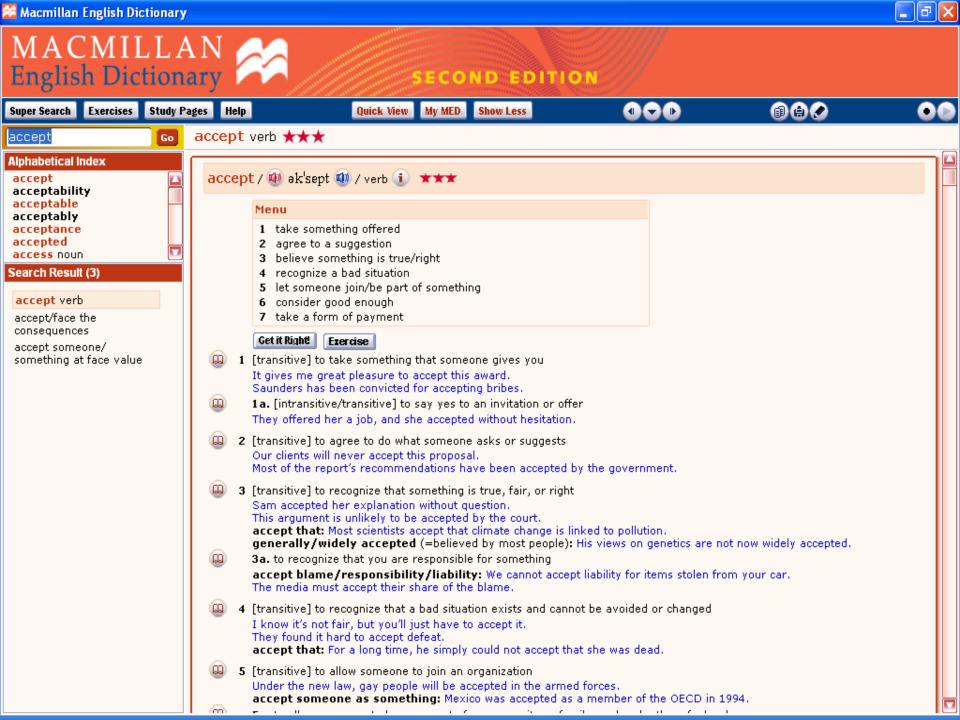


Basic meaning

Basic meaning = most concrete, humanoriented, and precise. Often the historically oldest.

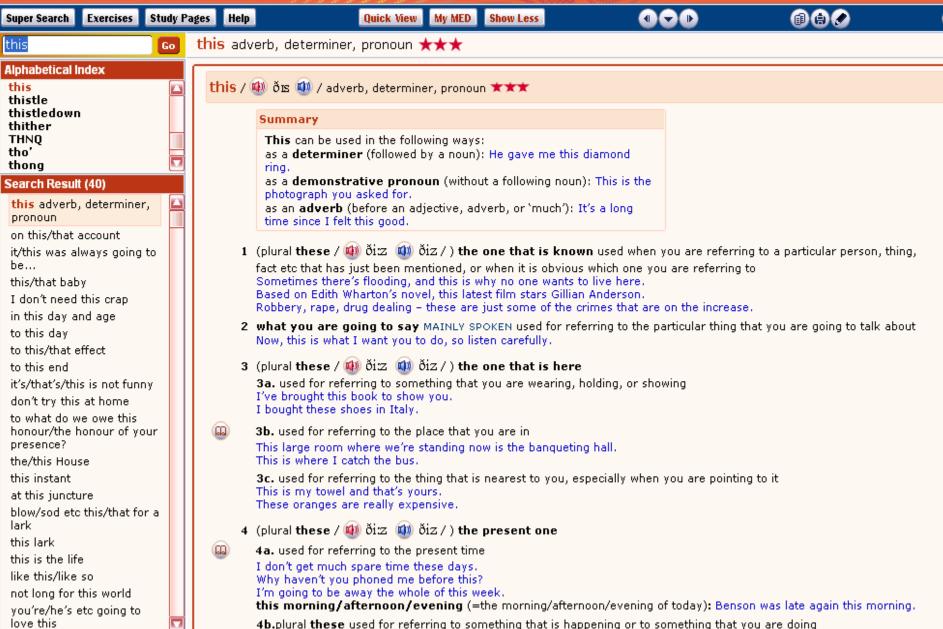
Mapping from the concrete to the abstract sometimes serves to sufficiently differentiate the contextual meaning from the basic meaning of the lexical unit.







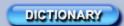
SECOND EDITION





LONGMAN Dictionary of Contemporary English



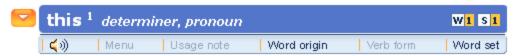




EXERCISES



this OK Search



plural these

- 1 used to refer to a person, thing, idea etc that has just been mentioned or to something that has just happened
 - We must make sure this doesn't happen again.
 - Is there any way of solving these problems?
 - If young Daly continues to improve at this rate, he'll soon be in the A Team.
 - This will be discussed in the next chapter.
 - This boyfriend of yours how old is he?
- 2 used to talk about the present time or a time that is close to the present
 - There will be another meeting later this week.
 - This has been the worst year of my life.
 - I thought he would have been back before this.
 - We'll be seeing Malcolm this Friday (=on Friday of the present week).
 - I'm sorry I was late this morning (=today in the morning).
 - Everyone seems to be in a hurry these days (=at the present period).
 - I want to see you in my office this minute (=immediately).
- 3 used to talk about the present situation
 - I hate this cold damp weather.
 - Things have never been as bad as this before.
- 4 spoken used to talk about a thing or person that is near you, the thing you are holding, or the place where you are
 - These are your gloves, aren't they?
 - You have to park on this side of the road.
 - I can't bear the atmosphere in this house much longer.
- 5 spoken used to refer to something that you are going to say or that is just about to hannen



Examples bank

what's (all) this?



- Add this mixture to the cranberry sauce.
- In this chapter of the book, we look at a number of new economic theories.
- Steve's going to Miami this

Activate your language



when you meet someone for the first time

this is

Lakoff & Johnson

Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.), we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in better terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc.)





- Love
- Time
- Ideas
- Understanding
- Arguments
- Happiness
- Health
- Morality

- Physical orientations
- Objects
- Substances
- Seeing
- Journeys
- War
- Madness
- Food



Kövecses

An important generalization that emerges from these conceptual metaphors is that conceptual metaphors typically employ a more abstract concept as target and a more concrete or physical concept as their source. Argument, love, idea, social organization are all more abstract concepts than war, journey, food, and plant.



Grady

- "the slippery nature of the term"
- Image content: related to bodily sensory and sense input in any modality.
- Abstract concept: Lacks image content.
 "less strongly associated with specific sensory experiences"

Danesi

- A concrete concept is one that is demonstrable in a direct way
- An abstract concept is one that cannot be demonstrated or observed directly
- "...many layers of concreteness and abstraction..."
- "..the debate on concrete concepts is an ancient one and it is still largely unresolved"



Danesi

- Concrete referents
 - blue, red
- Concrete conceptual domain
 - color
- Associative concrete concepts
 - light + sight = vision

Abstract or concrete?

- with an enormous cost
- it is the job of scientists
- a demand for this work
- the <u>death</u> of his colleagues
- the <u>lives</u> of individual human beings
- the gender of the child
- this <u>term</u> (expression)
- with this <u>information</u>
- either together with other children or with <u>fantasy friends</u>
- new types of plants
- higher harvest <u>yields</u>...and this is important for...
- in a high majority of <u>cases</u>





dead= MED1 no longer alive

alive= MED1 living and not dead

living= MED1 alive at the present time

Longman Contemporary English

death= LM1 the end of the life of a person or animal

life= LM1 the period of time when someone is alive, LM2 the state of being alive

alive= LM1 still living and not dead

dead= LM1 no longer alive

living= LM1 alive now



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Corpus-based metaphor typology

- Vehicles= protypically concrete
- Topics= prototypically abstract
- A coreness-dependency relationship
 - Resulting in conventional or innovative metaphors
- Concrete-concrete and abstractabstract mappings exist, but are less central.
 - Concrete-concrete mappings result in dead metaphors

Hedmark University C