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Frame-based constraints on lexical choice in metaphor

Conceptual metaphors like HAPPINESS IS LIGHT and KNOWING IS SEEING can be expressed by certain lexical items but not by others. For example, a *sunny* person is ‘cheerful’ (expressing HAPPINESS IS LIGHT), whereas a *brilliant* person is ‘intelligent’ (KNOWING IS SEEING), and a *bright* person may be either.

Collocational data indicate that the metaphoric usages of lexical items are constrained by those items’ frame semantics. For instance, lexical items must evoke frames with a LOCATION role to express the metaphor HAPPINESS IS LIGHT. Adjectives which typically evoke a LOCATION, like *sunny* and *bright* (as in *sunny/bright terrace*), frequently express HAPPINESS IS LIGHT (*sunny/bright disposition*); whereas those that do not, such as *brilliant* (*?brilliant terrace*) rarely evoke HAPPINESS IS LIGHT (*?brilliant disposition*).

My results suggest that metaphoric extensions are sensitive to the frame semantics of (1) lexical items; (2) different senses of polysemous items; and (3) various stems of lexical roots.