Metaphors Across Languages
A Questionnaire
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PREFACE

The goal of this questionnaire is to provide an overview of metaphorical expressions in a wide variety of the world's languages.

We are trying to obtain responses to the questionnaire from as many languages as possible, with particular emphasis on languages that are very different from Standard Average European with respect to their grammatical structures, their genealogical affiliations, and the cultures of their speakers.

This questionnaire may be filled out by native speakers of the language, or by scholars with either an extensive familiarity with the language, or with access to native speakers.

The questionnaire may be filled out in varying degrees of detail. Depending on how much detail is provided, realistic response times might vary from half an hour to a few hours. (Of course, since the questions are open ended, you could spend much more time than that, but then you would be working on your own research project, rather than helping us with ours.) We would appreciate as little or as much detail as you would be willing to provide.

Please send your responses to David Gil, by either email or snailmail.

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All information provided will of course be duly acknowledged in any publications based on this questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

Name of language: _____

Further information about language (optional): _____

Name of respondent: _____

Names of informants/consultants (if different from respondent): _____

PART 1:

List the words in your language whose meanings correspond to the following English words. Then, for each of the words that you listed, describe any additional, non-literal or metaphorical usages that it may also have, in domains other than the standard or basic domain of the word. [For example, in English 'see' may also be used metaphorically to mean 'understand'.]

PERCEPTION TERMS
see, look, watch, observe
hear, listen
smell
taste
touch

SENSORY TERMS
light, pale
dark
loud, noisy
quiet, silent
good-smelling
bad-smelling, stinking
good-tasting
bad-tasting
sweet
bitter
sour
salty
hot/spicy

BODY PART TERMS
head
eye
ear
mouth
back
belly
heart
liver
hand
foot

TEXTURE TERMS
hard
soft
smooth
rough
slippery
prickly

FOOD TERMS
eat
drink
digest
swallow
vomit
urinate
defacate

TRAVEL TERMS
beginning of journey
end of journey
source point
destination
upward movement
downward movement
crossroads
obstacle
bypass
shortcut
dead-end


PART 2:

For each of the following three domains, list as many metaphorical expressions as you can think of in your language.

EMOTIONS
This domain encompasses anger, fear, love, hatred, sorrow, sadness, happiness and so forth. [Some examples of metaphorical expressions in this domain in English are "be full of anger", "explode with anger", "be consumed with fear", "fall in love", and so on.]

MENTAL STATES AND ACTIVITIES
This domain includes remembering, forgetting, knowing, understanding and so forth. [Some examples of metaphorical expressions in this domain in English are "grasp an idea", "get something in one's head", "see the light", and so on].

TIME
[Some examples of metaphorical expressions in this domain in English are "the event is ahead of us / behind us", "the event is close / far away ", "we invested a lot of time in this project", "we ran out of time", and so on].


PART 3 (optional and open ended):

Having reached this point in the questionnaire, you have presumably acquired a feel for the range of phenomena that we are interested in. However, the questions that we asked may have missed out on many other interesting kinds of metaphorical usage which are perhaps play a more central role in your language. Please provide whatever information you think may be of interest concerning other kinds of metaphorical usages in your language.

Finally, we would appreciate any comments you may have on the questionnaire itself, and how to make it more user friendy.

Thank you for your help.