

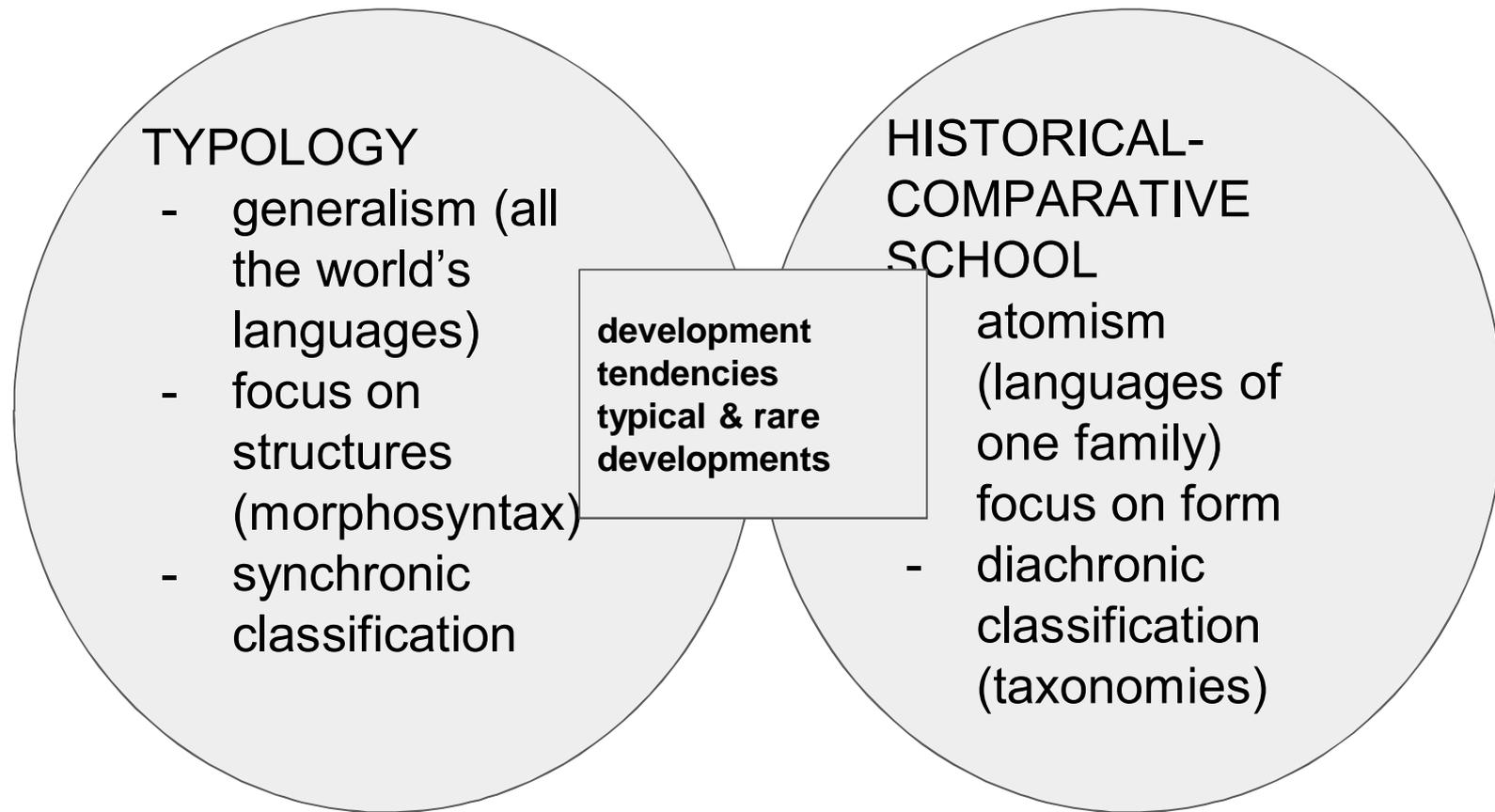
Towards the typology of etymologies

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In this presentation

- I discuss the differences and similarities of two main school of comparative linguistics, historical-comparative linguistics & typological linguistics
- I present a research project with a specific aim to combine the methodologies of these two streams of linguistics by investigating the origins of vocabulary simultaneously in many languages
- I give examples of a few comparative etymologies, and also tell you what is love
- I present some hypotheses for the future work

Linguistic typology & comparativistics: two main schools of comparative / contrastive linguistics



Lexical typology and etymology

LEXICAL TYPOLOGY

- typology of semantic shifts
(Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Bulakh et. al.)
- typology of borrowing
(Haspelmath & Tadmor)

ETYMOLOGY

- inherited vs. borrowed lexicon
- sound law (regular)
- semantic change (so far less regular)
- metaphorization

Historical lexicology & historical grammar

HISTORICAL GRAMMAR

semantic shifts of
grammatical patterns

grammaticalization

change of lexical
meaning to grammatical
meaning

HISTORICAL LEXICOLOGY

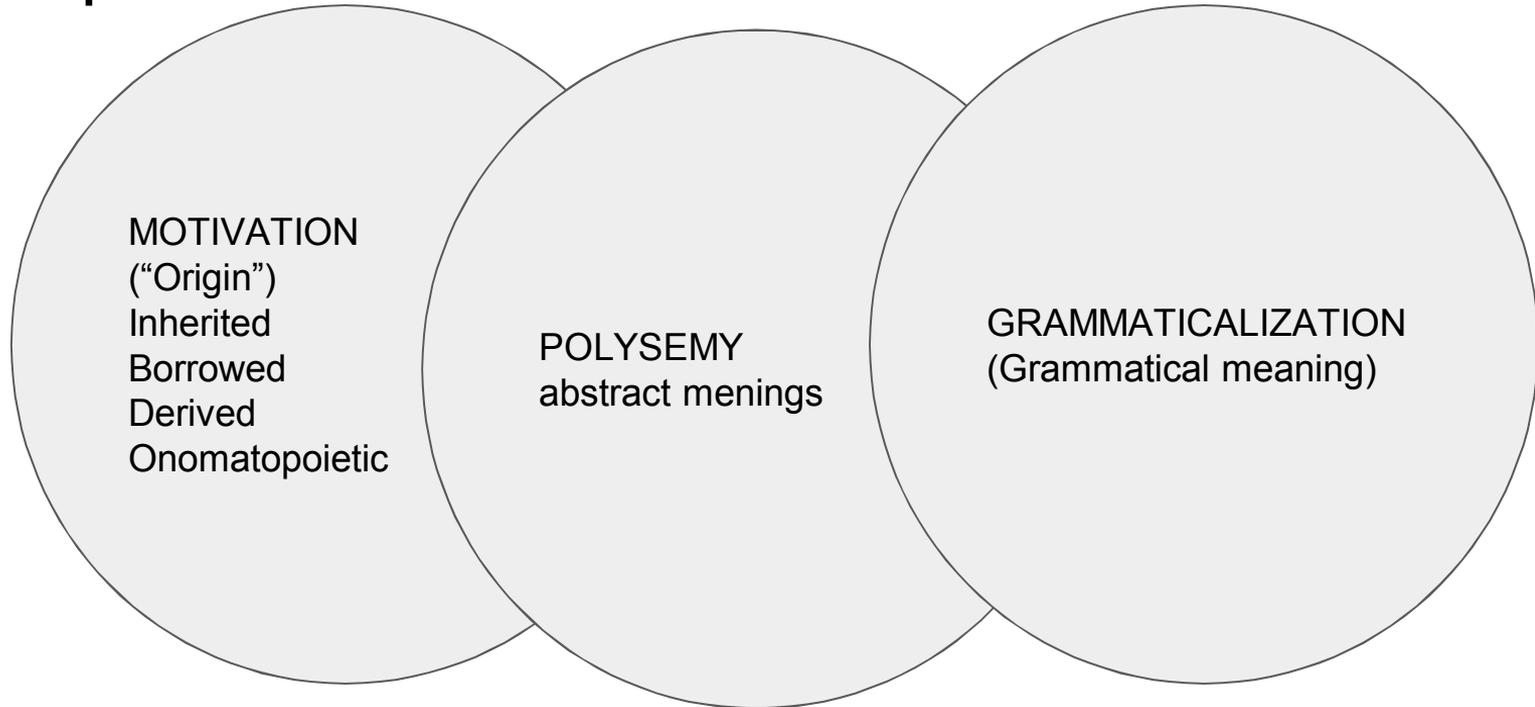
semantic shifts
involving both
grammatical and lexical
meaning

regular (lexical?) vs.
irregular
(grammaticalized?)
development of
linguistic form

Typology of etymology: goals

- to investigate lexical origins of different types of concepts simultaneously in several languages
- to compare & describe lexical fields salient for borrowing, metaphorization, lexical change vs. lexical fields resistant for change
- thus raise the quality of historical comparativistics and provide linguists with tools for assessing etymologies of particular languages
- create methodologies that can be helpful in the search for origins of a particular word
- **LARGELY SYSTEMATIZING AND GENERALIZING OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE!**

Various aspects of etymology and word development



Project: towards the typology of etymologies

Approx. 150 lexical items (the core of Haspelmath & Tadmor's WOLD [2008] ← Buck's comparative IE lexicon [1949])

Compared the etymologies in 20 etymologically well-investigated languages of IE and Uralic families, including languages of agricultural vs. hunter-gatherer groups, ancient and modern, big & small languages (primary material)

Comparison with other language families, from where there is data available (secondary material)

NORMAL TYPOLOGICAL SAMPLE NOT POSSIBLE DUE TO INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION ON ETYMOLOGIES OF MOST LANGUAGE FAMILIES

Languages investigated

IE: Latin / Romance, English / Germanic, Russian / Slavic, Lithuanian / Baltic, Greek

Uralic: Finnish / Finnic (incl. Estonian), (Northern) Saami, Komi / Permian, Khanty, Hungarian

In addition reference to Turkic, Hebrew / Arabic, Chinese characters (incl. Japanese)

Other language families to be added in future

Some hypotheses developed so far

- concepts related to colors (adjectives in general?), human emotions, and discourse are unstable
- concepts related to metals, materials, religions & deities, technologies, etc. are easily borrowable but stable in large cultural area
- concepts related to body parts, basic motions, pronouns and some spatial are often inherited and stable in history
- concepts related to flora & fauna, geographical features are stable in area and often local substrate borrowings
- words that grammaticalize are typically used as metaphors also in abstract vocabulary

Example: color terminology, green

GREEN (eng, germ, sw, etc.) < PIE **ghre-* ‘grow’

VERT (it sp, etc) < lat. *viridis* ?? **w(e)is-* ‘fruit, sprout’

ЗЕЛЕНЫЙ (whole Slavic & Baltic, cf. Lith *žals*) ‘green, color of grass’ (--> ‘yellow’, ‘gold’, in Slavic, Sanskrit)

ΠΡΑΣΙΝΟΣ (Greek) ‘color of leek’ (πρασινον)

VIHREÄ (Fin.) < *viha* ‘green, sprout (< ? P-Indo-Iranian **viša-*) (--> *viha* ‘hatred’)

ROHELINE (Est.) < *rohi* ‘grass’

RUONÁ (Saami) < Germ.

Dynamics of the polysemy of green

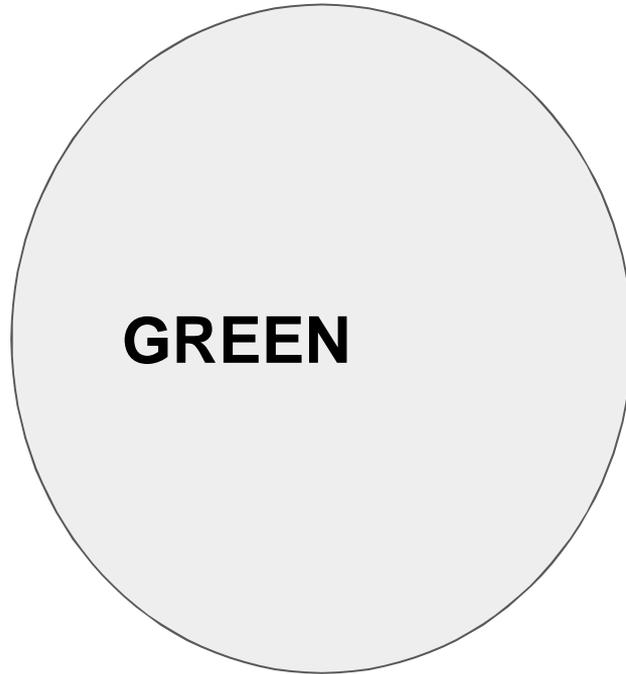
ORIGIN

grass

sprout

leek

growth



DEVELOPMENTS

yellow

gold

envy

hatred

Example: color terminology, white

WHITE (Eng Ger Sw) < **hwitaz* 'white; shiny' (~ Sansk. 'white', Sl. Balt 'shining')

BLANC (Fr Sp It) < Germ. *blank* 'without colour', originally 'burnt'

ALBUS (~ Gr. αλφους λευκός 'white') 'white' (< ??)

БЕЛЫЙ (all Sl) < ?IE **bheh2-l* 'shine; fire' (> ?? Sanskrit *bhāti* "shine')

ΛΕΥΚΟΣ < IE **leuk* 'white' < 'bright; open' ~ Sanskrit *raoç* 'shine'

VALKOINEN (< **valke* all Finnic, Mordva, Mari) < PU **walke-* 'fire'; → 'open place'

ЕДЖЫД (ko ud) 'white'

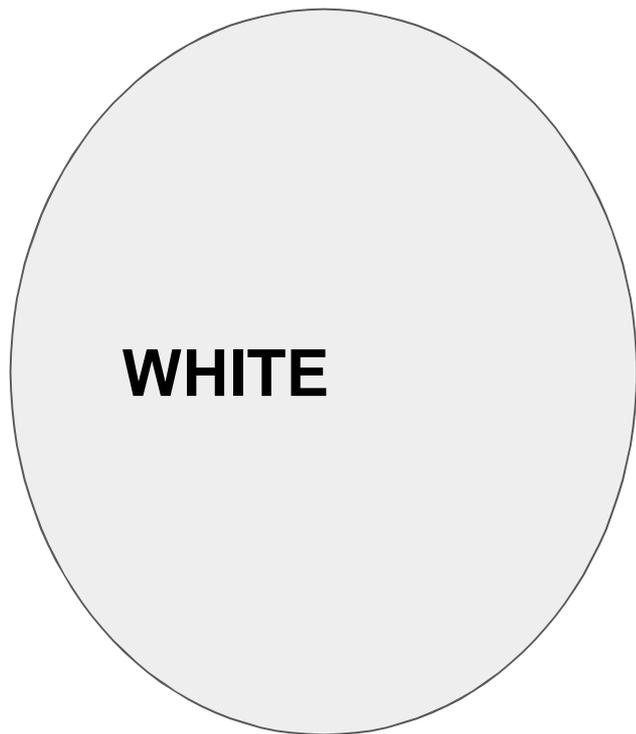
Dynamics of the polysemy of white

ORIGINS

fire

burn

shine



DEVELOPMENTS

open

empty

Example: color terminology, black

BLACK < **blakaz* ‘burned’ (--> Fr. *blanc* ‘white’); < PIE **bhleg-* ‘burn, gleam’

SCHWARZ (Sw Da) < **swartaz* ‘dirty’

NOIR (Sp. It.) < Lat. *niger* < ??

MUSTA (Finnic) < *musea* ‘murky, muddy’ < Germ.

SAAMI *čáhpes* < ??

MORDVINIAN *ravužo* < (some new compound word)

S’ÖD ko ud < ‘excrement’

Dynamics of the polysemy of black

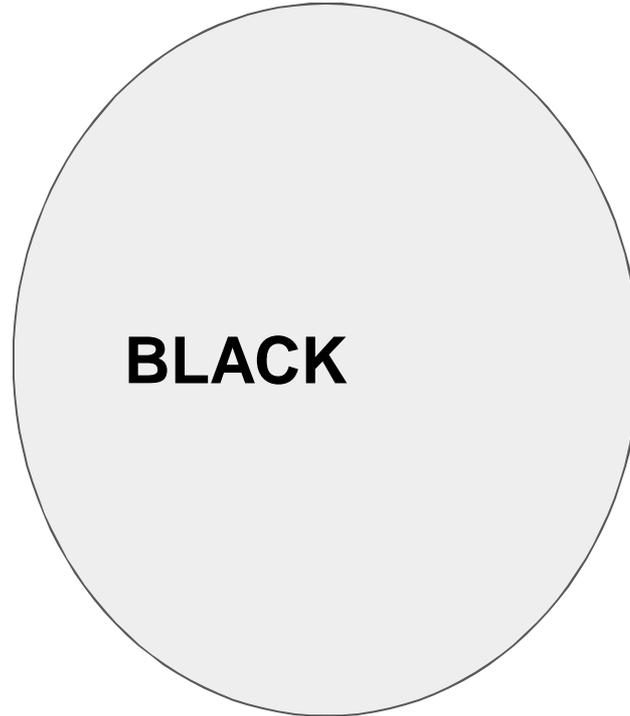
ORIGIN

burnt

dirt

murk

excrement



DEVELOPMENTS

jealous

Spatial 'down'

DOWN (Eng Sw Da/No) < OE of dune 'from the hill'

NER (Sw Da/No, Ge) < *nīper < PIE

UNTER (Ge) < *under < PIE

BAS (Fr) < Lat. *bassus* < ?Greek βάσις < βαίνω 'descend; go' < PIE

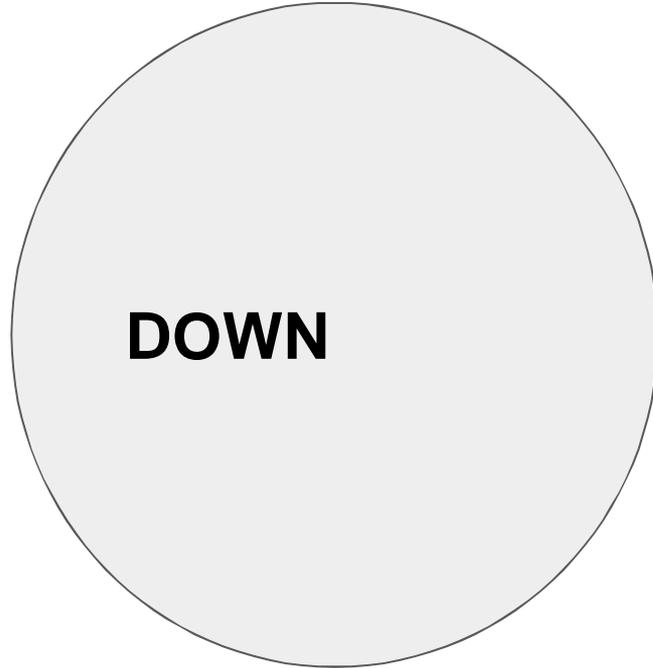
НИЗ (Ru.) < *НИЗЪ* < PIE (~ Ger. *nīper)

ALA (Su) < PU *ala

ORIGIN

downhill

descend



DOWN

DEVELOPMENTS

depression, cheap

bad, not good for use

related to sex

Spatial 'up'

UP (Eng Ger Sw) < PIE **upa*

DESSUS (Fr) < Lat *de sursum* < [sub versum < **verto*]

SUPER (Lat) < PIE

BEPX (Ru) < PIE

YLÄ (Fi) < PU

FEL (Hu) < PU ??*pidkä 'long'

Example: sick

SICK (Eng Sw Da/No) < Proto-Germanic **seukaz* < ? **sokka* ‘drag, go slowly’

KRANCK (Ge) < ‘bent, yielded; hurt’

MALADE (Fr) < male habitus ‘having bad’

AEGER (Lat) < *aegrum* ‘distress, grief’

БОЛЬНЫЙ < ‘pain; ache’

SAIRAS (Fi) < Germanic **sairaz* ‘wound, pain, ache’

HAIGE (Est.) < ‘sad; unpleasant’

Dynamics of the polysemy of sick

ORIGIN

slow

bending

grief / ache

wound

sad



DEVELOPMENTS

(human relations)

(emotions)

(economy)

Grammar and etymology: hand

HAND (Eng Ge Sw) < **handu* < *hinthan* 'reach over'

MANUS (Lat Fr It Sp) < PIE **mon-u* 'hand' (> reach)

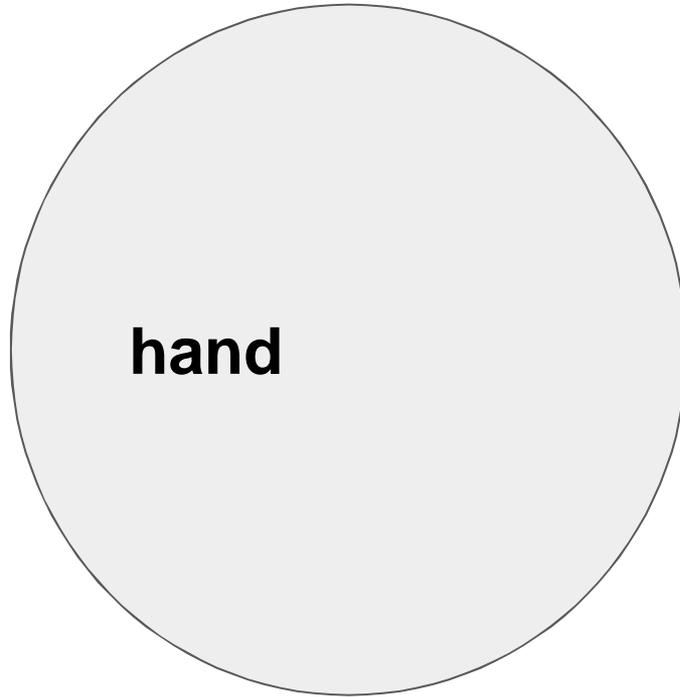
KÄSI (Fi. Saa. Md. Ko. Udm. etc.) < **käte* 'hand'

Dynamics of polysemy of 'hand'

ORIGINS

hand

reach



DEVELOPMENTS

reach, understand

give

close (postpositions)

in use

Basic concepts of society

HOLY (Eng Ge Sw) < **haila-* 'healthy, entire' (PIE)

SACER (Lat Fr Sp) < **consecrated, cut off*' (PIE)

СВЯТОЙ (Sl Balt) < 'light, illuminated, big, growing' (PIE)

ΙΕΡΟΣ (Gr) 'quick, big'

PYHÄ (Fi Saa) < 'taboo'?

SZENT (Hung) < German, Christian context

Human emotions and etymology: love

LOVE (Eng), originally: praise, desire ~ ЛЮБОВЬ (Sl.)

ÄLSKA (Sw) < Proto-Nordic **aliskaR* < **ailiska* < *aila* 'fire'

AMARE < *amatus* 'friend' (Fr It) ~ skr. *amātya-h* 'roommate'

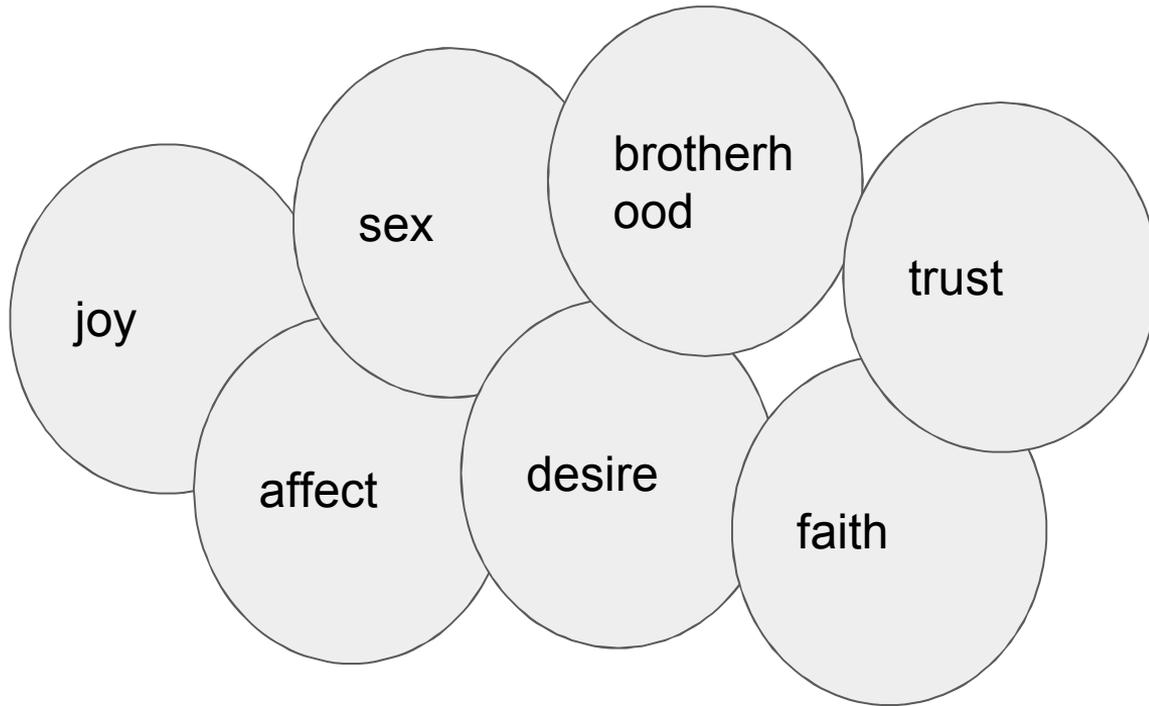
RAKAS- (Fi) < 'willing, creedy' < Germ. *fraka-z* (> Sw. *frack*)

LEMPI (Finnic) ~ *lämpö* 'warm', 'fire'

ARMAS- (Est.) originally 'good, cute, beloved' < Germ. *arma-z* 'poor'

SUVAIJ- (Karelian) < 'desire' < 'tolerate'

So what is love?



Towards conclusions

By comparing the origins of similar concepts in many languages simultaneously, it is possible to

- identify concepts inclined to change quickly
- identify concepts inclined to be stable
- identify words and concepts that are typically borrowed
- identify words and concepts typically inherited
- identify words and concepts turning elements of grammar

Meaning of the typological study of etymologies

Integration of different philological traditions

Integration of historical lexicology into mainstream typological linguistics

creating tools for assessing etymological investigation

investigating universal and regional conceptual realms and metaphors and thus contributing to the understanding of general and local in the human culture

KIITOS

THANK YOU