



All that glitters is not gold

Prototypical semantic change in
shiny Literary Chinese ideophones

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Roadmap

- ▶ Goal:
describe the **semantic change** of **literary Chinese ideophones** that are situated in the semantic domain of **LIGHT** using **prototype theory** and keeping in mind **different levels of schematization**.
- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Material & Methodology
- ▶ Literature review & Research Question
- ▶ Findings: case studies
- ▶ Conclusions

Background: Ideophone research

- ▶ Dingemans's (2011; 2012) cross-linguistic definition:
"Ideophones are marked words that depict sensory imagery."

FORM

MEANING

- ▶ In (Mandarin) Chinese:

full reduplication	AA	▶ <i>wāng~wāng</i>	汪汪	'woof-woof'	
partial reduplication	AB	▶ <i>tǎn~tè</i>	忐忑	'perturbed, disturbed'	in <i>tǎntè bùān</i> 忐忑不安 'restless'
	ABB	▶ <i>liàng-jīng~jīng</i>	亮晶晶	'glittering, sparkling'	

MORPHOLOGY

(Chang 2009;
Huang & Shi 2016 etc.)

- ▶ Usually the **MEANING** component is downplayed (e.g. Huang & Shi's reference grammar 2016). This component, however, is essential, as ideophones are heavily grounded in context and often perform a scene in a complex verbal event (Slobin 2004; Lu 2006; Dingemans & Akita 2016; Nuckolls 2017; Haiman 2018; Li & Ponsford 2018 etc.)

Motivation of this study

- ▶ 星光熠熠
- ▶ xīngguāng yìyì
- ▶ 'twinkling star light'
- ▶ Some people pronounced *zhézhé* but did know the meaning.
- ▶ There can be a dissociation between phonological form, written form and meaning.

Folk model of Chinese (漢字的「形音義」)

writing

sound
|
MEANING
Σ

EVA AIR
 A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

INFINITY
 MILEAGELANDS

2017
 長榮航空貴賓之夜
 星光熠熠音樂會

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Motivation of this study

- ▶ While most studies on ideophones investigate synchronic properties,
 - ▶ experiments: (like *kiki* and *bouba*)
 - ▶ anthropological studies: elicitate narratives
 - ▶ recordings
- ▶ This study is more interested in **how they evolved through time.**
- ▶ The folk model of WRITING/SOUND // MEANING is helpful, because we can investigate VARIATION on three different levels:

this
study

1. Semasiological variation: what does a given ideophone mean?
(What does it collocate with?)

2. Onomasiological variation: what variants in the form are at play?

pre-study

3. Phonological variation: are there any groupings that engage in a systematic/iconic relationship with the meaning (sound-symbolism)?

Phonological pre-study investigating sound-symbolism provided material

yì~yì	熠熠	làn~màn	爛熳	shuò~shuò	鑠鑠	yù~yì	煜熠
yuè~yuè	燭燭	wèi~wèi	煒煒	hù~hù	扈扈	yì~yù	熠煜
yào~yào	耀耀	wèi~yè	煒燁	shǎn~shǎn	閃閃	yè~yè	燁燁
yào~yào	耀耀	zhuò~zhuò	灼灼	zhēng~zhēng	錚錚	yè~yè	曄曄
yì~yào	熠耀	zhuò~shuò	灼爍	huǎng~huǎng	晃晃	càn~làn	燦爛
yì~yào	熠耀	hào~hào	皓皓	jīng~jīng	晶晶	càn~càn	燦燦
yù~yù	煜煜	jiǎo~jiǎo	皎皎	guāng~guāng	光光	làn~làn	爛爛

Semantic domain of LIGHT

Phonological pre-study → material

- ▶ For this study, which investigates the WRITTEN pole vs. MEANING, we ended up with **17 types** from the group that had an obstruent coda in Old Chinese (reconstruction Baxter & Sagart 2014)
- ▶ Full reduplication / AA (most frequent / prototypical form, cf. Van Hoey 2015)
- ▶ Definitions in Kroll's (2015) *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* include:
 - ▶ brightly shining; flashing; flaring; gleaming; flickering; vividly bright etc.
- ▶ Definitions in the Ministry of Education's online dictionary (found on zdic.com) include:
 - ▶ 光閃動的樣子。光明盛大的樣子。光明照耀的樣子。……
- ▶ And in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, we get:
 - ▶ “it is light / shining” 「光也、照也、電光也」

Literature review

- Unifying three linguistic frameworks for Chinese ideophones: different levels of schematization

Defining ideophones (for Chinese)

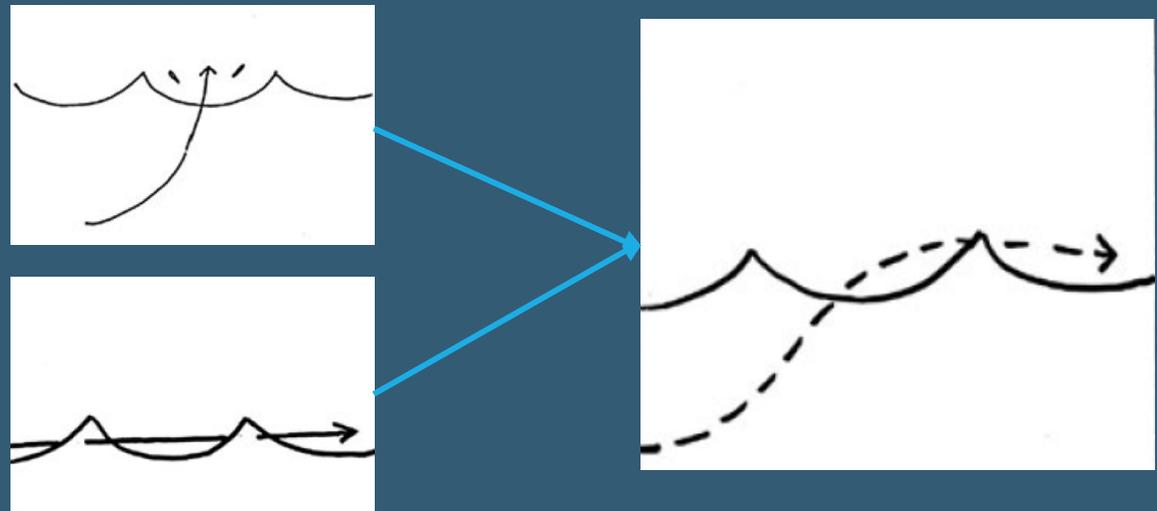
- ▶ Comparative concept (Haspelmath 2010)

Ideophones = marked words that depict sensory imagery
(Dingemanse 2011; 2012)

- ▶ Hard to define a certain lexeme (cf. Nuckolls et al. 2017):
 1. IMAGE SCHEMATIC approach (Nuckolls (1996)
 2. IDEALIZED COGNITIVE MODEL approach (Lu 2006)
 3. FRAME semantics approach (Akita 2012)

1. IMAGE SCHEMAS

- ▶ Finding the most fitting **image schema** underlying different meanings in the semantics of lexeme.
- ▶ For Quichua this was done and later revised (Nuckolls 1995; Nuckolls et al. 2017), e.g. *polang*
 - ▶ “glide across”
 - ▶ “glide up”



2. IDEALIZED COGNITIVE MODEL

- Lu (2006) uses **ICM** (Lakoff 1987) to analyze Japanese *korokoro* コロコロ and *gorogoro* ゴロゴロ vs. Chinese *gǔngǔn* 滾滾 vs. English *roll*

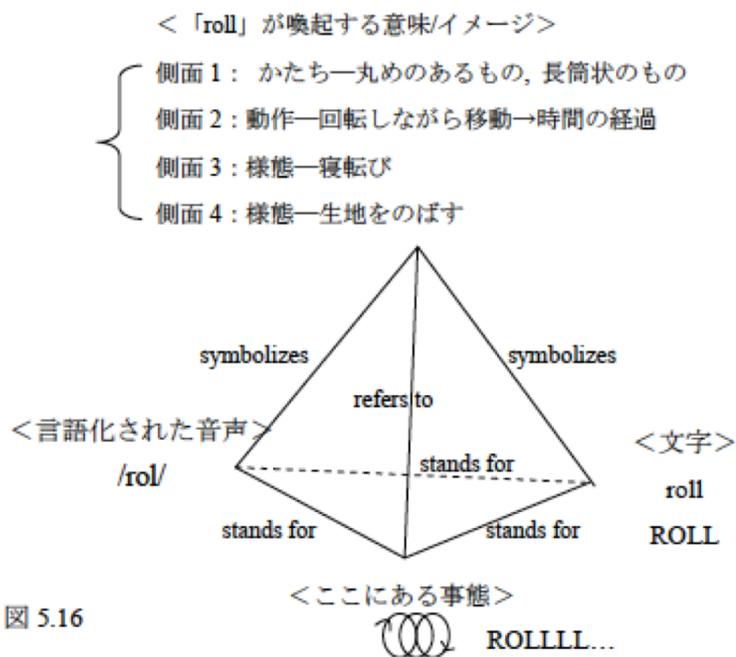


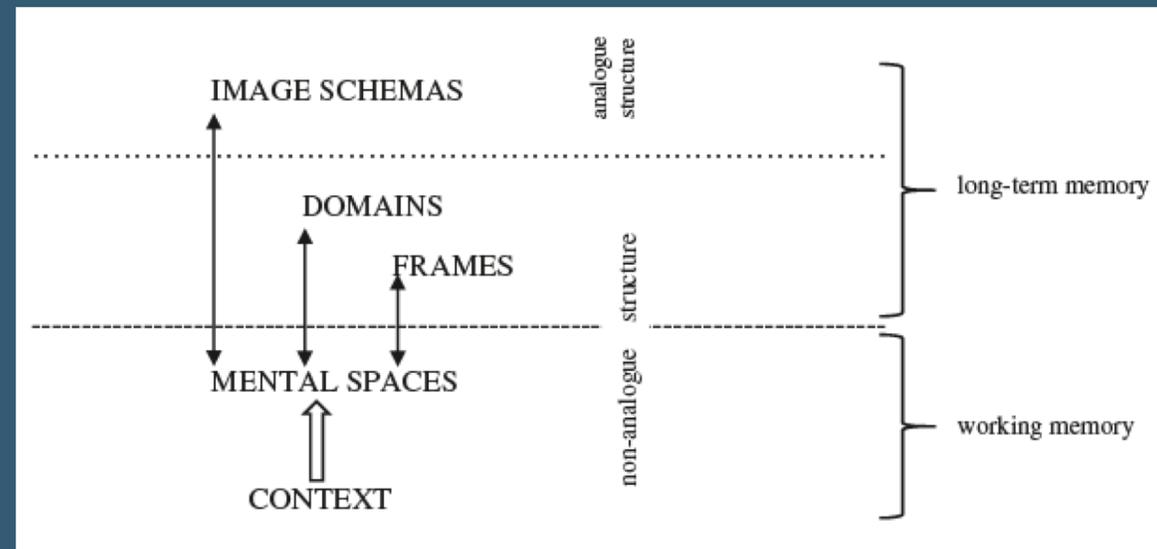
図 5.16

3. Fillmorean FRAME semantics approach

- ▶ Akita argues that SOUND ideophones in Mandarin Chinese are “generally unspecified as to sound sources and perhaps sensitive to sound qualities” (2013:29).
In other words, they are **vague**, e.g. *jī~jī-zhā~zhā* 噼噼喳喳
- ▶ This is opposed to Japanese ideophones, which are highly specific and almost always evoke a certain very specific frame (Akita 2012).
- ▶ However, as soon as we leave the imagic iconicity of SOUND ideophones to more diagrammatic end of the iconicity spectrum (Dingemanse 2012), **it will become untenable to state that Chinese ideophones are only vague, and not polysemous.**

Different levels of metaphor => different levels of ideophone?

- ▶ Kövecses (2017; 2018) proposes a **four level architecture** involved in the meaning (creation) of metaphors.



- ▶ I think this model can also be applied to ideophones, in which 'domain' is equal, or similar enough to Lu's 'ICM', i.e. a collection of frames.

Research question

Methodology

- Geeraerts's (1997) model for diachronic prototype semantics
- Corpus-based

Research question

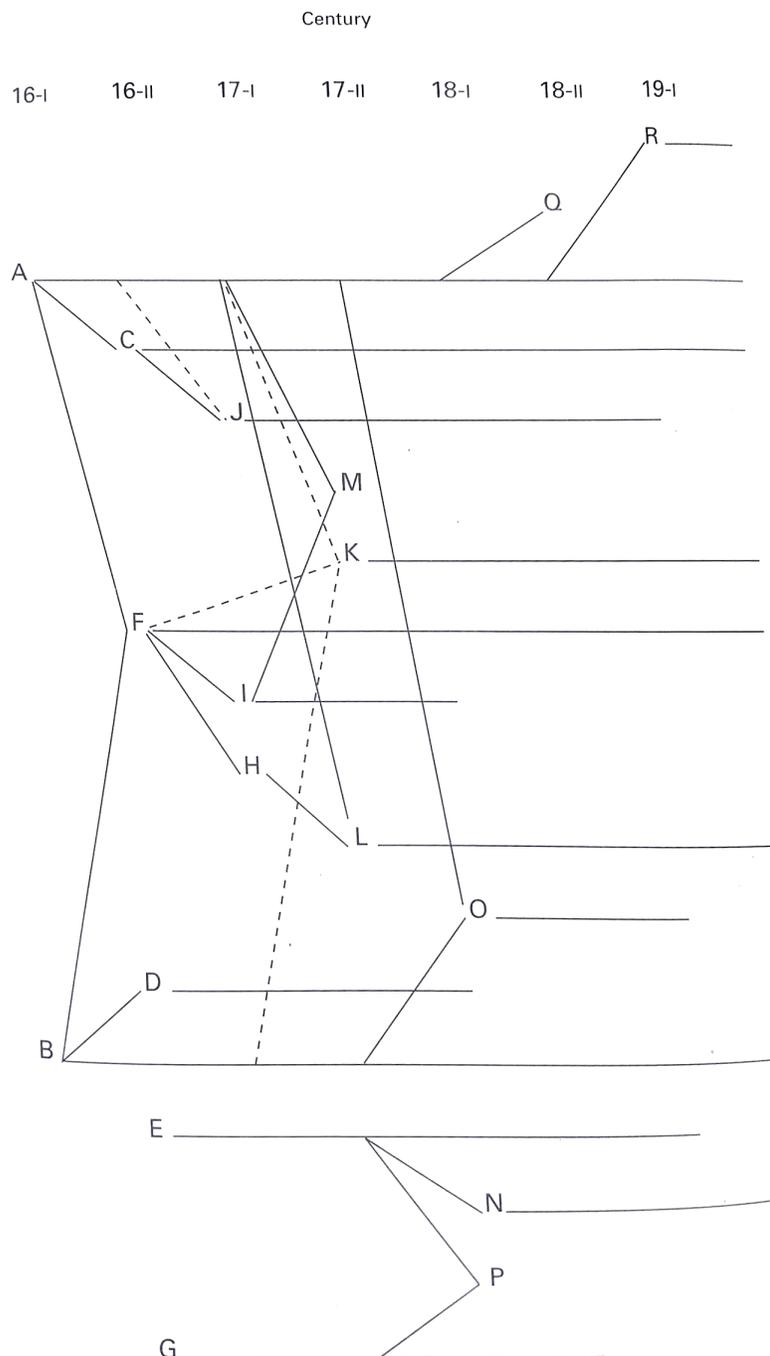
So far, we have tried to show that:

- ▶ There are many different ideophones related to the semantic domain of LIGHT.
- ▶ A study on different levels of abstraction might unify three different frameworks (just like in metaphor studies).
- ▶ The relationship between WRITTEN form and MEANING is not necessarily one-to-one; in other words: variation and prototypicality probably play a role.

So now we restate the research question that drives this study:

- ▶ What does a leveled approach with attention to polysemy and prototypicality reveal about the nature of ideophones?

Diachronic prototype semantics



VER-GRIJPEN 'MIS-TAKE'

Label	Example	Definitional gloss
A	(4)–(5)	to use physical violence against (someone)
B	(6)–(7)	to oppose someone to whom one owes respect and obedience
C	(8)–(9)	to harm (someone) in a non-physical way
D	(10)–(11)	to oppose an abstract principle
E	(12)	to mis-take
F	(13)–(15)	to do something forbidden
G	(16)–(17)	to make a mistake
H	(18)	to adulterate
I	(19)–(20)	to do something inadvisable, unwise, improper
J	(21)–(22)	to harm (something) in a non-physical way
K	(23)–(24)	to steal
L	(25)–(26)	to violate a woman's honour
M	(27)–(28)	to eat or drink excessively
N	(29)	to hurt while catching or seizing
O	(30)–(31)	to rebel violently
P	(32)	to catch the wrong person
Q	(33)	to commit suicide
R	(34)–(35)	to damage (something)

Geeraerts
(1997: 47-62)

Diachronic prototype semantics:

1. New meanings from joint influence of several meanings
F M O P
2. Meanings that crop up occasionally, but do not persist in time
P Q I
3. Concepts are not equally important in the process of semantic change
A F C B > E G

FIG. 2.6. The diachronic structure of *vergrijpen*

Methodology

- ▶ Material (the 17 types from the pre-study)
- ▶ Corpus-based study
 - ▶ Scripta Sinica corpus 漢籍電子文獻資料庫 ('Hanchi')
 - ▶ 3500+ tokens
 - ▶ Periods in the Scripta Sinica corpus: about 300 years
 - ▶ 先秦 秦漢 魏晉南北朝 隋唐五代 宋遼金 元 明 清 民國
 - ▶ **semantic preference**, rather than the direct collocate (Geeraerts 2010:170-173)

pre	keyword	post	period
插 葵花 蘓軾 〈雨中賞牡丹〉 霏霏 雨露 作 清妍	爍爍	明燈照欲然明日春陰花未老故應未忍著	xianqin
) 唐 韓愈 〈芍藥〉 浩態狂香昔未逢紅燈	紅燈 爍爍	綠盤龍覺來獨對情驚恐身在仙宮第幾重	xianqin
插 葵花 蘓軾 〈雨中賞牡丹〉 霏霏 雨露 作 清妍	爍爍	明燈照欲然明日春陰花未老故應未忍著	qinhan
) 唐 韓愈 〈芍藥〉 浩態狂香昔未逢紅燈	紅光 爍爍	綠盤龍覺來獨對情驚恐身在仙宮第幾重	qinhan
落瓦裂咫尺鳴、問之相去一里間、紅光	爍爍	侵天明、長煙涌波月魄死、其間有物	qinhan
插 葵花 蘓軾 〈雨中賞牡丹〉 霏霏 雨露 作 清妍	爍爍	明燈照欲然明日春陰花未老故應未忍著	three
) 唐 韓愈 〈芍藥〉 浩態狂香昔未逢紅燈	爍爍	綠盤龍覺來獨對情驚恐身在仙宮第幾重	three
為目干性。常從容于自然。映光藁之	爍爍	。眇輕騰之翩翩。究妙音之至樂。窮有	three
落瓦裂咫尺鳴、問之相去一里間、紅光	爍爍	侵天明、長煙涌波月魄死、其間有物	three
插 葵花 蘓軾 〈雨中賞牡丹〉 霏霏 雨露 作 清妍	爍爍	明燈照欲然明日春陰花未老故應未忍著	tang
) 唐 韓愈 〈芍藥〉 浩態狂香昔未逢紅燈	爍爍	綠盤龍覺來獨對情驚恐身在仙宮第幾重	tang
奈仙家不肯傳。同色同名合好音，亦能	爍爍	亦沉沉。乾坤顛倒驅雷雨，龍躍安能出上	tang
三十四 / 文炬 / 偈 (P.) 小月走	爍爍	，千落及萬落。處處鳳離穴，家家種	tang
曜。願言莫相忘。又贈蘇武詩曰。	爍爍	三星列。拳拳月初生。寒涼應節至。蟋蟀	tang
雪，亂紛紛柳絮因風；劍影落長虹，光	爍爍	菱花漾水。鼓振三春雷動，旗搖五色	tang



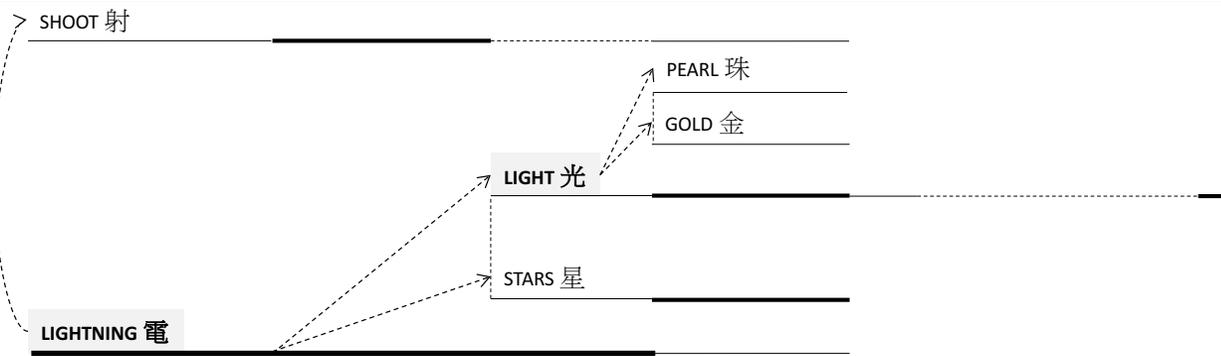
Findings

- 3 case studies showing prototype effects

Case study 1: *yuè~yuè* 燦燦 prototypical structure

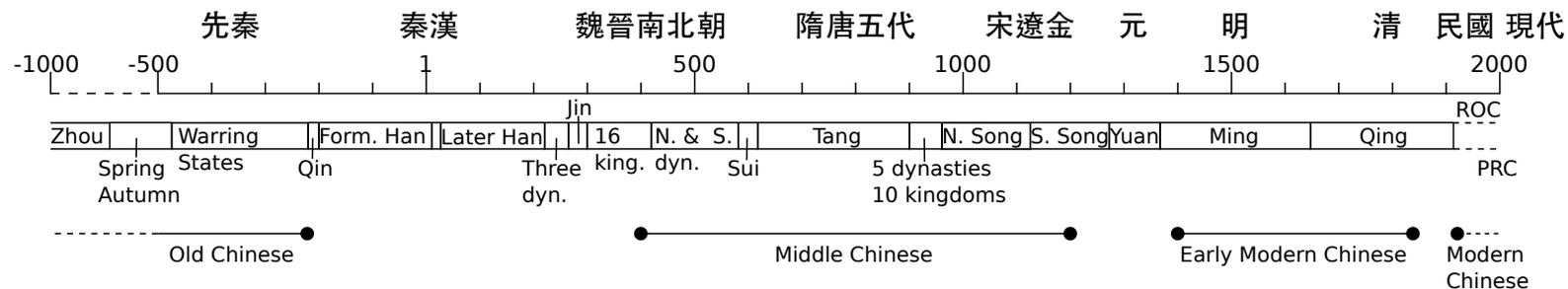
- ▶ 國語辭典「光明的樣子。」
- ▶ 說文解字 | 康熙字典「光也，電光也。」

燦燦



semantic preference/
collocations /
mental spaces

prototype effects:
LIGHTNING → LIGHT
etc.



Case study 2: *huī~huī* 輝輝 煇煇 暉暉 frequency effects

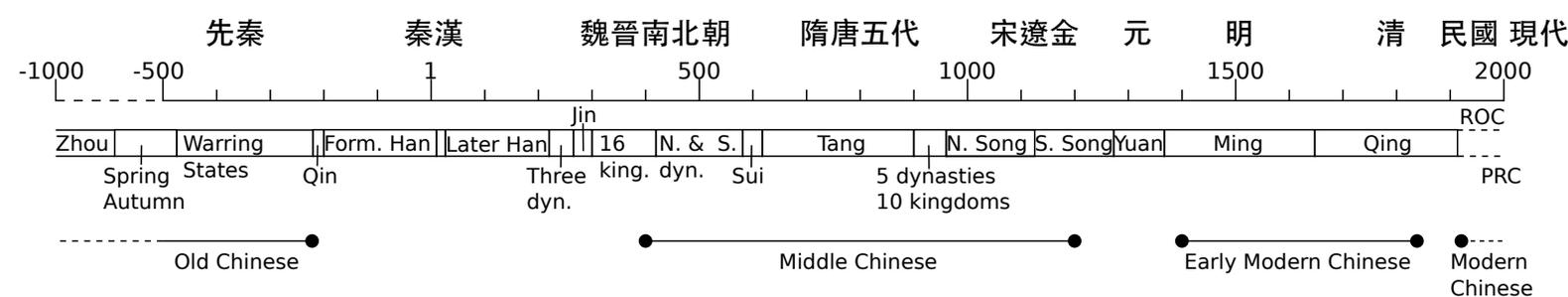
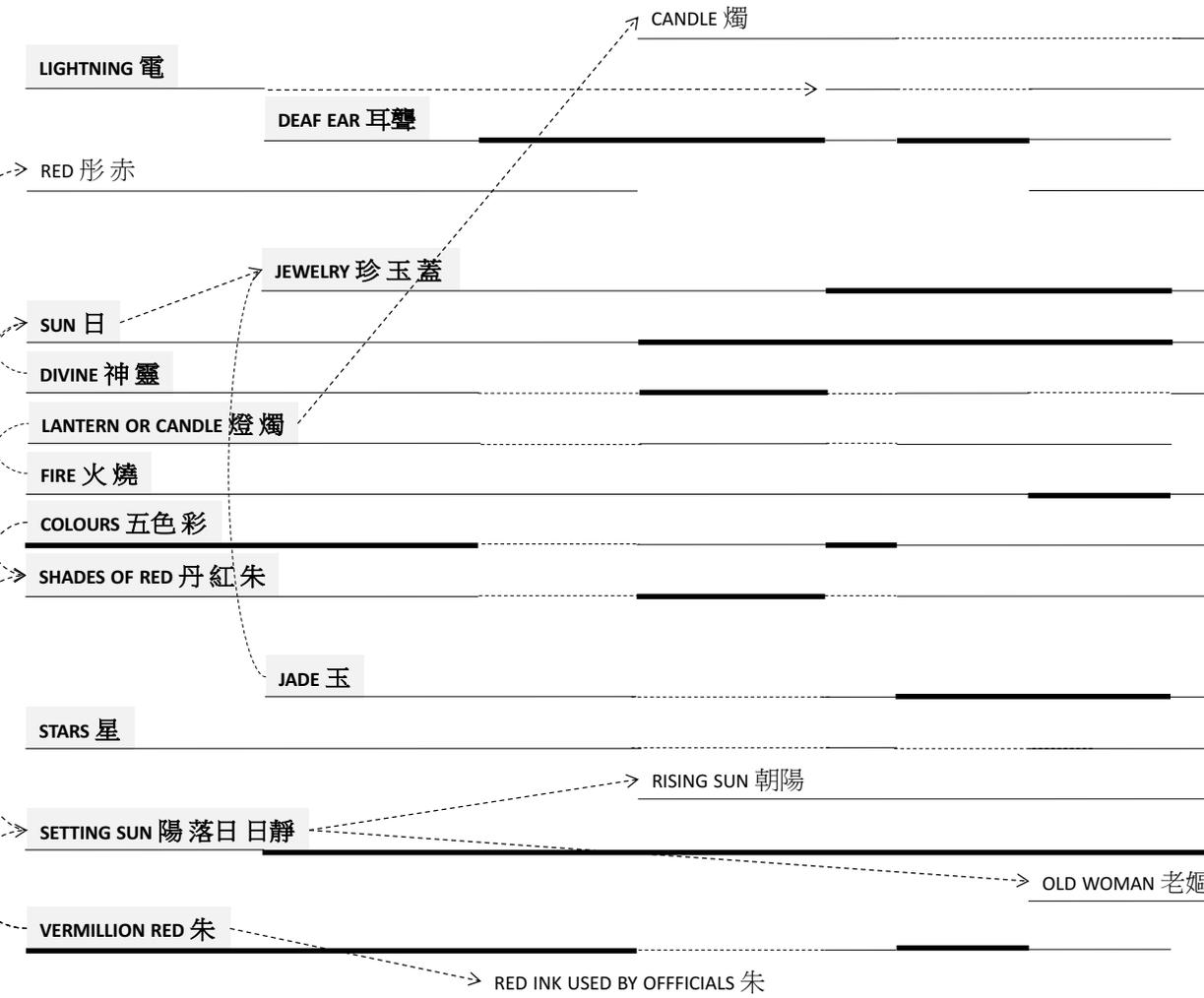
▶ 暉 <i>huī</i>	<MC <i>xjwij</i>	<OC * <i>q^{wh}ər</i>	「晴朗的樣子。」	「光也。」
▶ 輝 <i>huī</i>	<MC <i>xjwij</i>	<OC * <i>q^{wh}ər</i>		「光也。」
▶ 煇 <i>huī</i>	<MC <i>xjwij</i>	<OC * <i>q^{wh}ər</i>		「光也。」

- ▶ Based on the definitions, one could presume that their meanings are entirely the same, i.e. synonymous.
- ▶ However, based on corpus study we can see that this is not the case:

輝輝
FIRE

輝輝
LIGHT

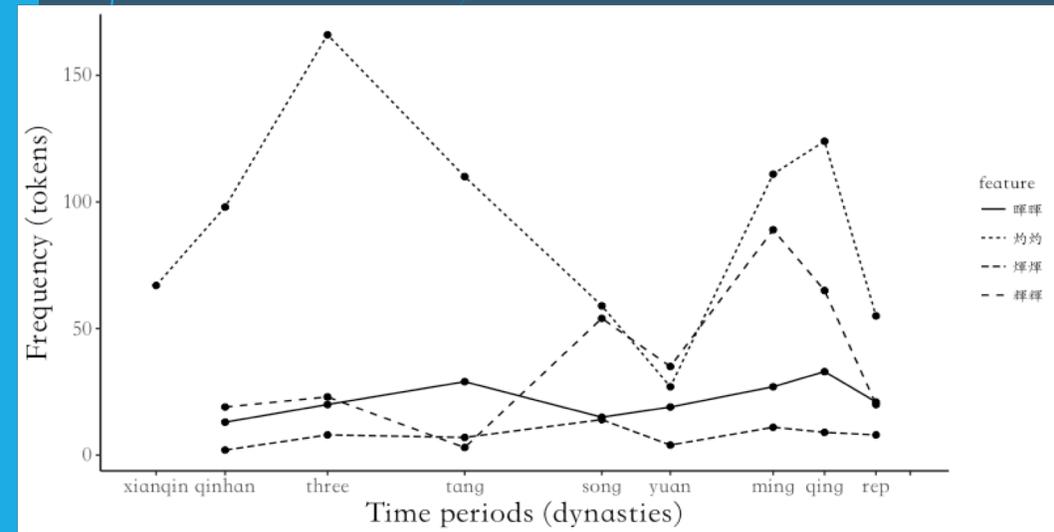
暉暉
SUN



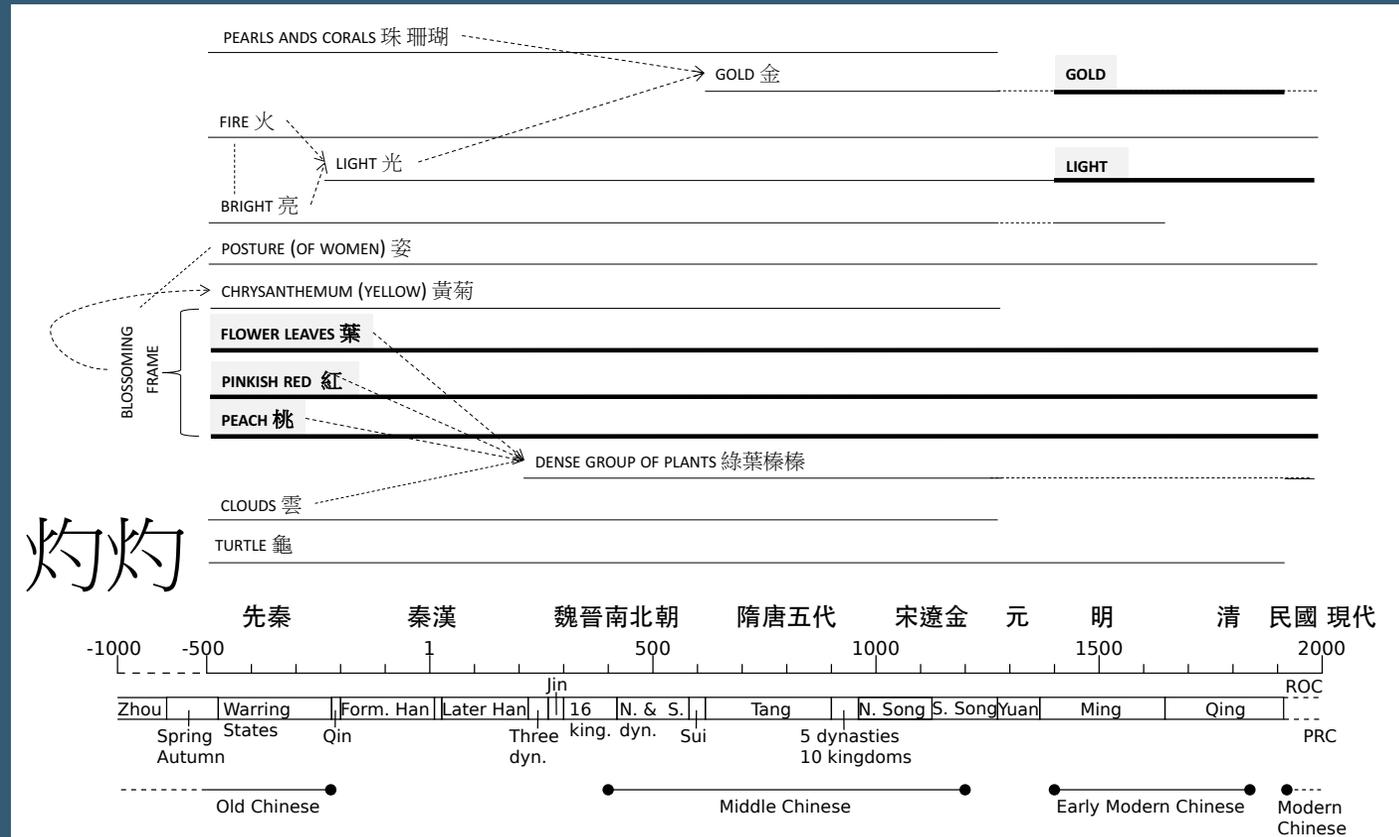
differences
in semantics

but also in
productivity
per
ideophone

Case study 2: *huī~huī* 輝輝 煇煇 暉暉 vs. *zhuò~zhuò* 灼灼



zhuò~zhuò
has a much higher token
frequency than any of the
huī~huī



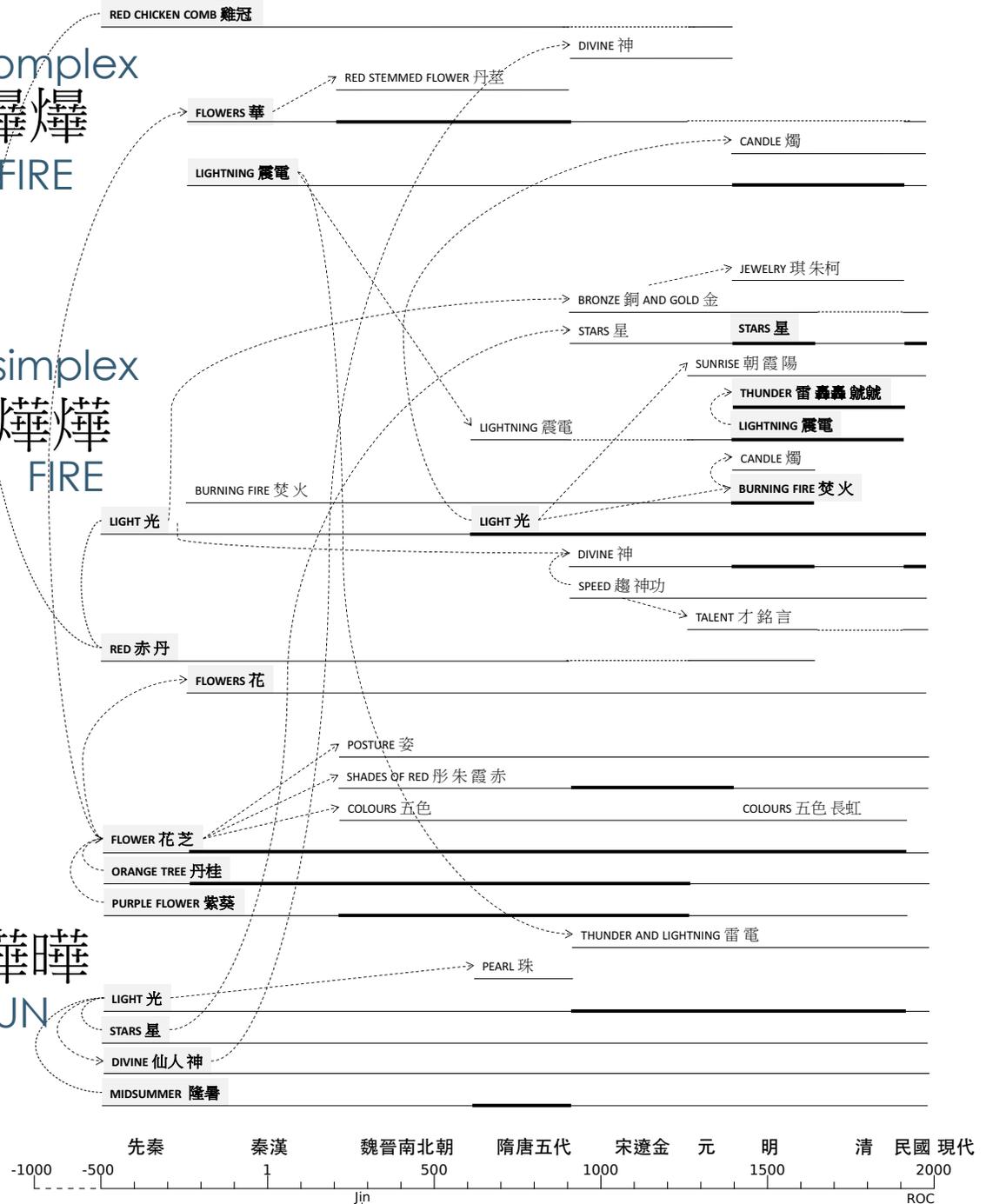
Case study 3: yè~yè 燁燁 曄曄 燁燁 transient prototypicality

- Sometimes it is also the case that one ideophone is the most productive for a while, but that this gradually is taken over by another.
- For instance, 曄曄_{SUN} was very productive in terms of 'shiny flowers', but also light sources
But by the Song dynasty simplex 燁燁_{FIRE} is taking over this role.
- The complex 燁燁_{FIRE} was marginal and only semi productive

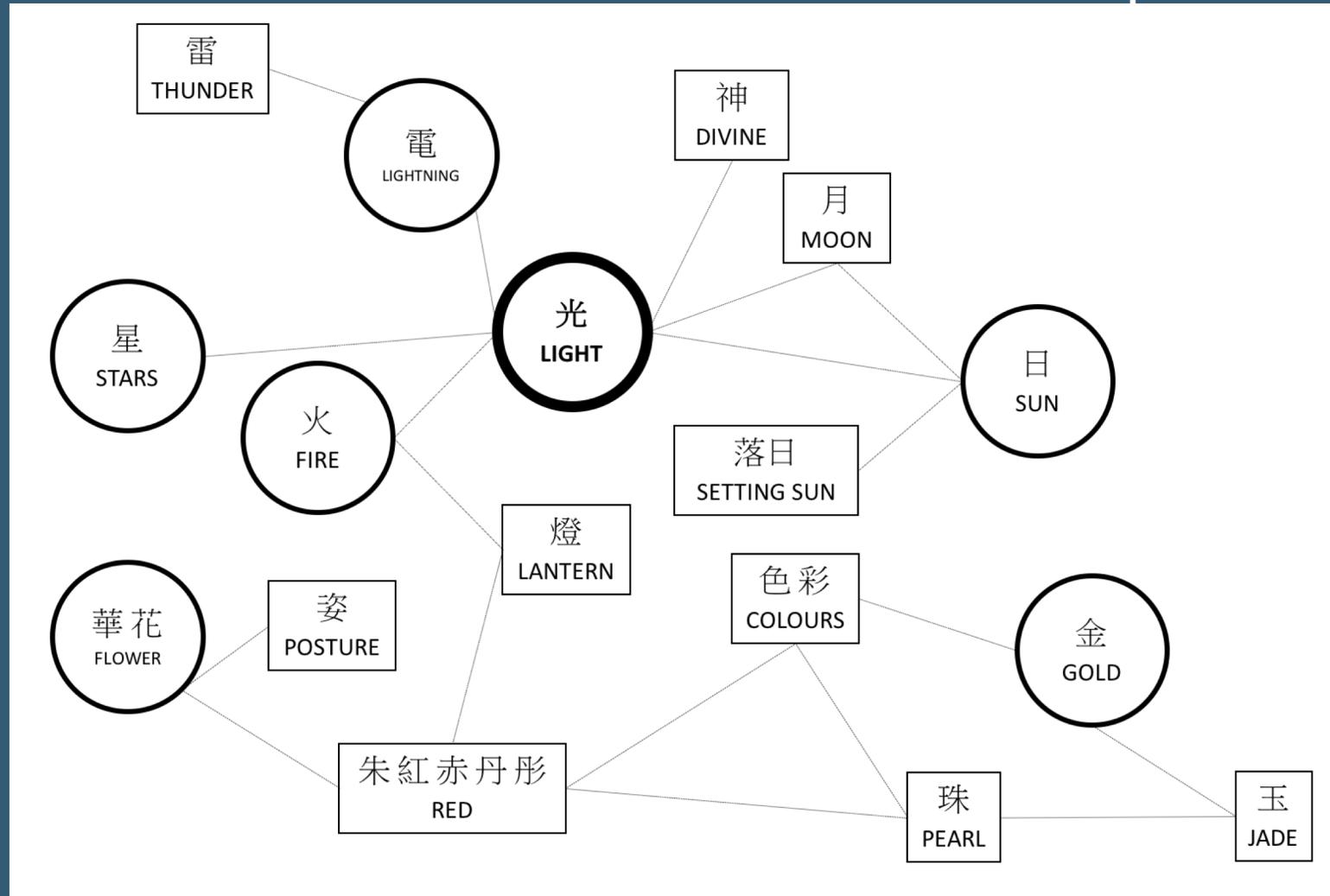
complex
燁燁
FIRE

simplex
燁燁
FIRE

曄曄
SUN



One level of schematization higher: the main frames of LIGHT ideophones



Domains / ICMs: collections of frames

(Kövecses 2017)

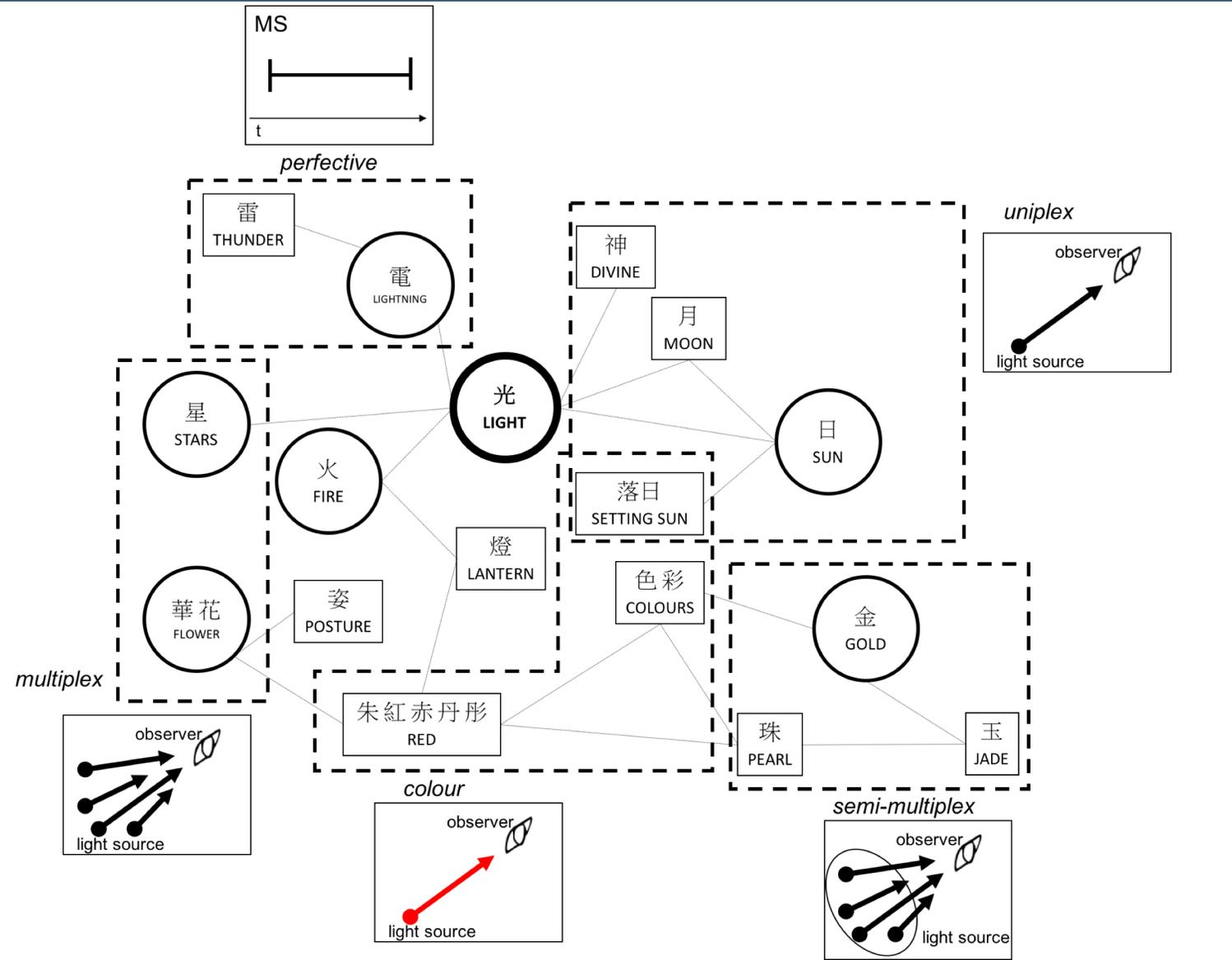


Image schemas

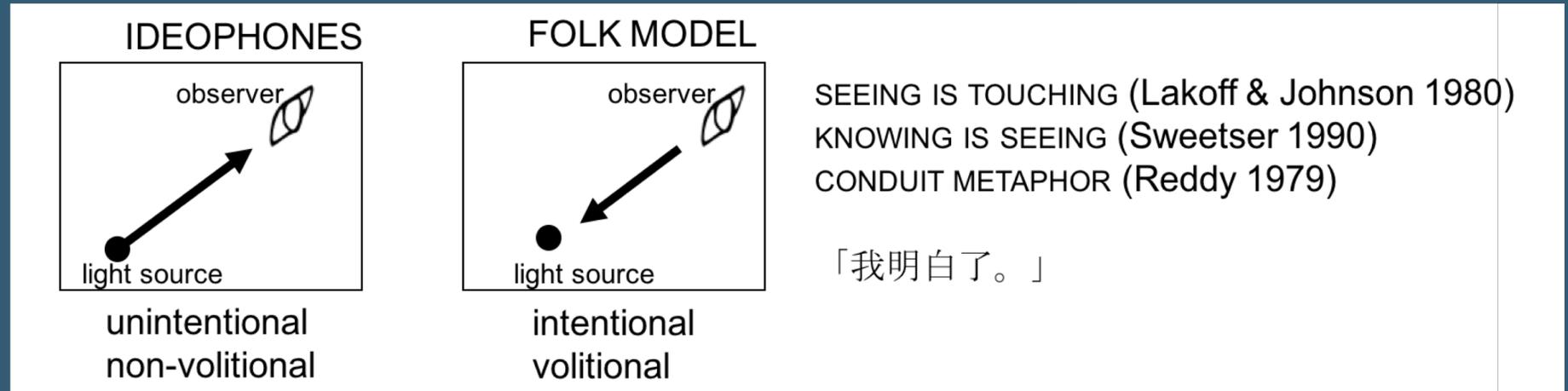


Image schema
for
LIGHT IDEOPHONES

Conclusions

The prototypical nature of Literary Chinese LIGHT ideophones

- ▶ Due to the **prototypical** bundles that give rise to different sets of meanings, we end up with **fuzzy extensions** of core meanings.
 - ▶ There is noticeable **polysemy** in the semantics of the investigated lexemes, e.g. *yè~yè* 曄曄 has a bundle that depicts LIGHT, but also FLOWERS
 - ▶ However, there is also some **vagueness**, e.g. *yè~yè's* 曄曄 FLOWER bundle was presumably abstracted from certain trees (丹桂) and flowers (紫葵)
- ▶ At the same time, **frequency effects** are noticeable: once a collocation has been made, repeated usage crystallizes it
- ▶ Furthermore: **metaphorical** extensions

Horizontal and vertical results

➤ Horizontal

- Historical change with prototypes and frequency effects
- Mutual influence of the written form (even with a constant phonological form)

➤ Vertical

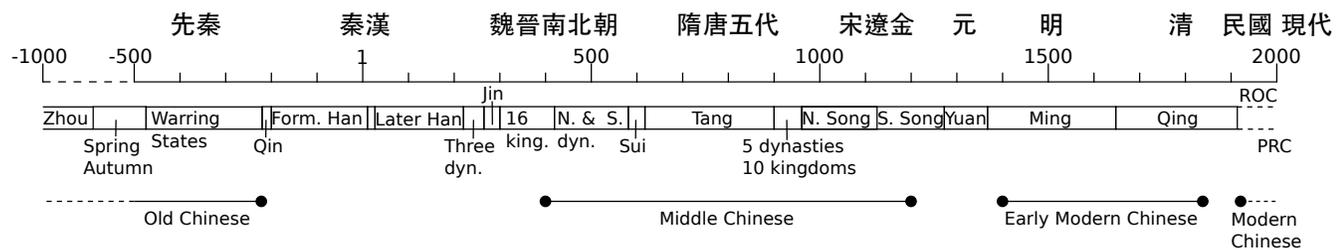
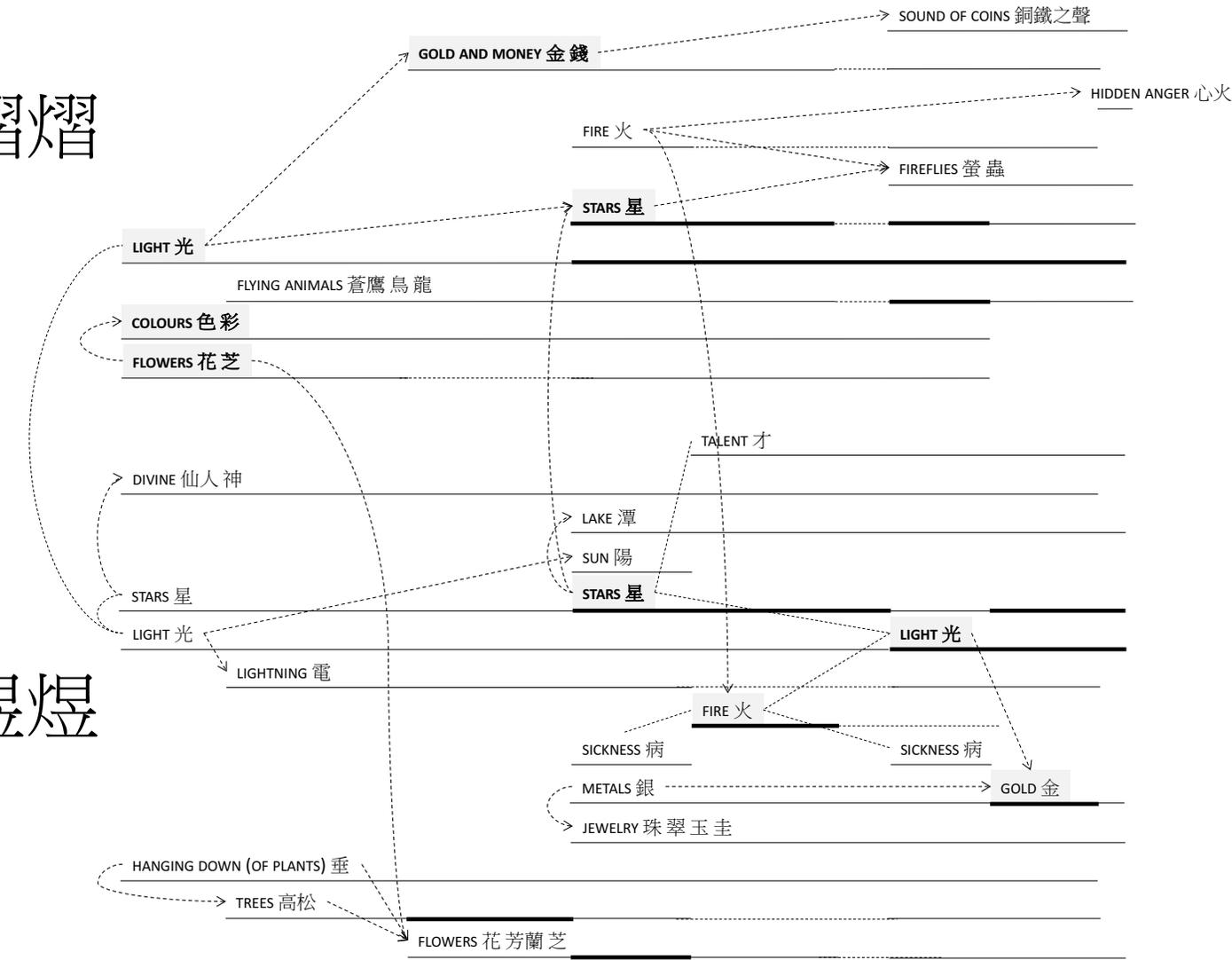
- **Mental spaces** the lower level patterns, 'real data' as we go
- **Frames** entrenched constructions, slightly bigger
- **Domains | ICMs** more entrenched collocations
- **Image schemas** licensed by embodiment:
our bodies know about physics (optics)

Future directions

- ▶ While this study has reached important conclusions (see above), there is room for improvement:
 - ▶ **subject 'hybrid' AB ideophones** and their relation to 'pure' AA ideophones,
e.g. *yi yi* 熠熠 and *yuyu* 煜煜 vs. *yuyi* 煜熠 and *yiyu* 熠煜
 - ▶ investigate the **token frequency** of this family and the lexemes without family
- ▶ **Other semantic domains**, e.g.
 - ▶ COLOUR
 - ▶ TEXTURE
 - ▶ Scale this approach by using **computational** methods

熠熠

煜煜



Yi~yì 熠熠 only gained its connection to STARS around the Tang (589-618)

Very likely influenced by yù~yù 煜煜

so now we end up with

xīngguāng yìyì
星光熠熠

So what is now 'fossilized' and often presented as a lexical item that just has to be memorized was actually more flexible and motivated than most approaches give credit for.

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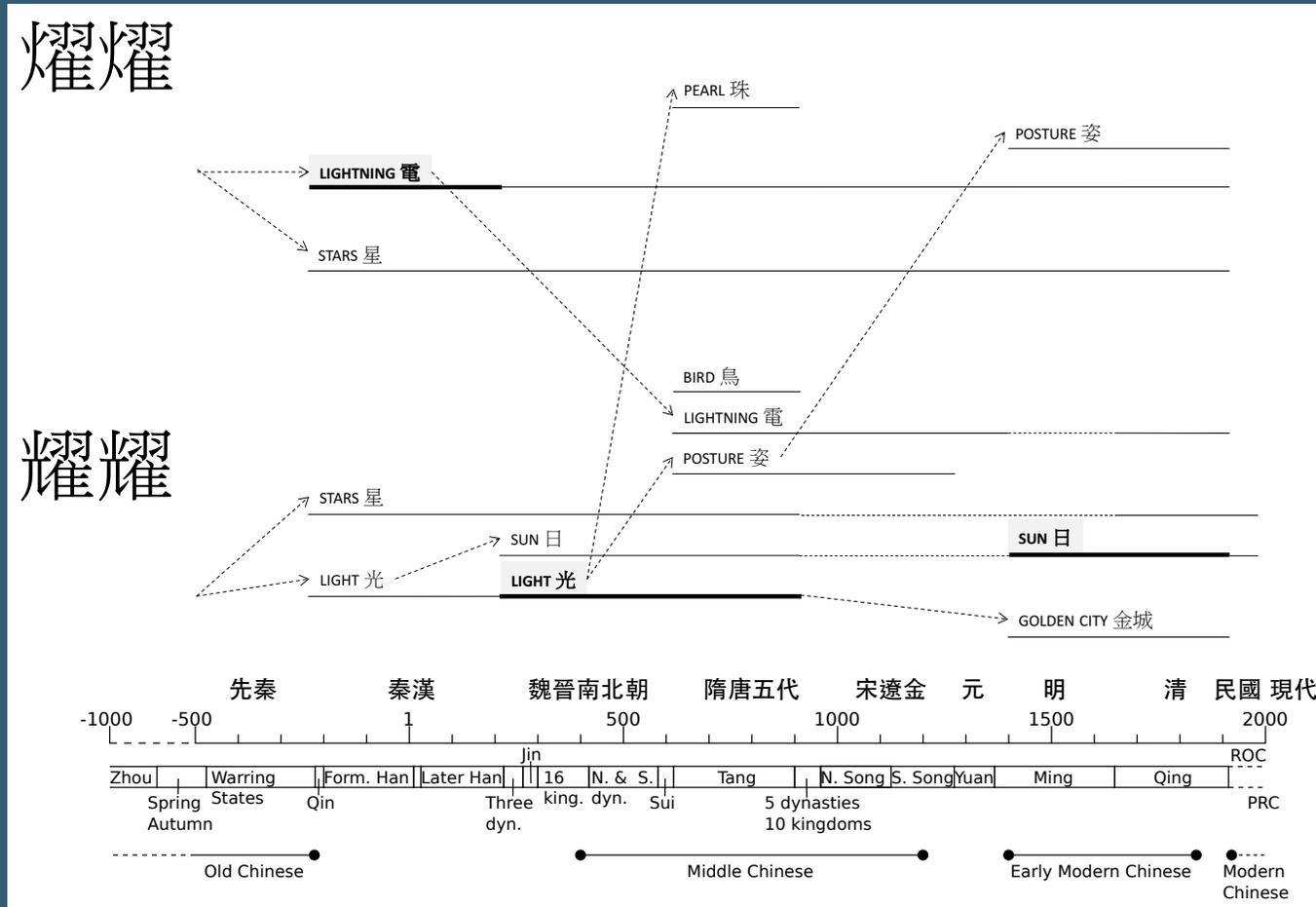
36

Thank you

Case study 2: yào~yào 耀耀 耀耀 mutual influence

- 國語辭典：【耀耀】「光明的樣子。」 【耀耀】「NA」
- 說文解字：「照也。」

耀 yào_{LIGHT} 光
耀 yào_{FIRE} 火



lightning →
lightning

posture →
posture

Phonological pre-study → material

OC: obstruent coda	OC: nasal coda	Not analyzed
燭 yuè <MC yak <OC *lewkw 燿 yào <MC yewH <OC *lewkw-s 耀 yào <MC yewH <OC *lewkw-s 灼 zhuò <MC tsyak <OC *tewkw 羸 luò <MC lak <OC *r ^h ewkw 爍 shuò <MC syak <OC *r ^h ewkw 鑠 shuò <MC syak <OC *r ^h ewkw	瑩 yíng <MC hweng <OC *N-q ^w ɿeŋ 熒 yíng <MC hweng <OC *N-q ^w ɿeŋ	軒 xuān <MC xjon <OC *q ^h ar 剡 yǎn <MC yemX <OC *N-ram? 熊 xióng <MC hjuwng <OC *C.ɣ ^w əm 扈 hù <MC huX <OC *m-q ^h a? 閃 shǎn <MC syemX <OC *s.tem? 皓 hào <MC hawX <OC *g ^h u? 皎 jiǎo <MC kaewX <OC *k ^h raw?
熠 yì <MC yik <OC *ɣ ^w əp 煜 yù <MC yuwk <OC *ɣ ^w rəp (*əp>up>uk) 燁 yè <MC hip <OC *ɣ ^w rəp 燂 yè <MC hip <OC *ɣ ^w rəp 晔 yè <MC hip <OC *ɣ ^w rəp	錚 zhēng <MC tsreang <OC *ts ^h ɿeŋ 晶 jīng <MC tsjeng <OC *tsɿeŋ	<p style="text-align: center; color: #00AEEF; font-weight: bold;"> There is no real evidence of sound- symbolism but there might be some phonesthemic networks </p>
焯 wěi <MC hjwijX <OC *ɣ ^w əj? 韓 wěi <MC hjwijX <OC *ɣ ^w əj?	燦 càn <MC tsanH <OC *ts ^h ɿan-s 爛 làn <MC lanH <OC *r ^h ɿan-s 熲 màn <MC manH <OC *m ^h ɿan-s 漫 màn <MC manH <OC *m ^h ɿan-s 縵 màn <MC manH <OC *m ^h ɿan-s	
暉 huī <MC xjwij <OC *q ^h əhər 輝 huī <MC xjwij <OC *q ^h əhər 煇 huī <MC xjwij <OC *q ^h əhər	晃 huǎng <MC hwangX <OC *ɣ ^w ɿaŋ? 光 guāng <MC kwang <OC *k ^w ɿaŋ 煌 huáng <MC hwang <OC *ɣ ^w ɿaŋ 亮 liàng <MC ljangH <OC *raŋ-s	

Phonological pre-study → material

OC: obstruent coda

燭 yuè <MC yak <OC *lewkw

燿 yào <MC yewH <OC *lewkw-s

耀 yào <MC yewH <OC *lewkw-s

灼 zhuò <MC tsyak <OC *tewkw

羸 luò <MC lak <OC *r^hewkw爍 shuò <MC syak <OC *r^hewkw鑠 shuò <MC syak <OC *r^hewkw熠 yì <MC yik <OC *G^wəp煜 yù <MC yuwk <OC *G^wrəp (*əp>up>uk)燁 yè <MC hip <OC *G^wrəp燁 yè <MC hip <OC *G^wrəp曄 yè <MC hip <OC *G^wrəp煒 wěi <MC hjwɨjX <OC *G^wəjʔ韡 wěi <MC hjwɨjX <OC *G^wəjʔ暉 huī <MC xjwɨj <OC *q^{wh}ər輝 huī <MC xjwɨj <OC *q^{wh}ər輝 huī <MC xjwɨj <OC *q^{wh}ər

- ▶ For this study, which investigates the WRITTEN pole vs. MEANING, we ended up with **17 types** from the group that had an obstruent coda in Old Chinese (reconstruction Baxter & Sagart 2014)
- ▶ Full reduplication / AA (most frequent / prototypical form, cf. Van Hoey 2015)
- ▶ Definitions in Kroll's (2015) *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* include:
 - ▶ brightly shining; flashing; flaring; gleaming; flickering; vividly bright etc.
- ▶ Definitions in the Ministry of Education's online dictionary (found on zdic.com) include:
 - ▶ 光閃動的樣子。光明盛大的樣子。光明照耀的樣子。……
- ▶ And in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, we get:
 - ▶ “it is light / shining” 「光也、照也、電光也」

Research question: operationalization

- ▶ Four levels of schematization:
 - ▶ mental spaces: what is being referred to → semantic preference
 - ▶ different frames
 - ▶ different domains
 - ▶ different image schemas
- ▶ Prototype effects throughout history
 - ▶ Model: Geeraerts's diachronic prototype semantics description of *vergrijpen*

Polysemy vs vagueness

(Geeraerts 1997: 18-19; 2006 [1993])

- ▶ Distinctions among senses illustrate polysemy: **fruit is polysemous** because it has at least the meanings

果

水果

因果

- ▶ 'something that people can eat and that grows on a tree or a bush' and

- ▶ 'the result or effect of something'.

- ▶ Distinctions among the members of a single sense are cases of vagueness:
 - ▶ **fruit is semantically vague** with regard to the differences between oranges and watermelons, because those differences do not lie at the basis of a distinction between senses. Geeraerts (1997: 18-19).

- ▶ It's not easy to differentiate, however **statistics** help (token frequency)
- ▶ Also Tyler & Evans' (2003) criteria played a role

Metaphorical extensions

- ▶ It is not surprising to find **metaphorical extensions** within the polysemous semantic network of the investigated items.
- ▶ using LIGHT ideophones to talk about
 - ▶ women's posture 姿
 - ▶ talented men 才
 - ▶ words 詞言……

Variability in the poles of symbolic assemblies

- ▶ The current presentation once again shows that there is considerable variation and change in the poles of symbolic assemblies (Langacker 1987; 1991)

onomasiological variation
slight diachronic change

日 金 火 光

writing
|
sound

onomasiological variation
diachronic change
reanalysis

semasiological
prototypicality and fuzziness
diachronic change

MEANING] Σ

漢字的「形音義」