

## Mapping Metaphors in Modern Greek: Life is a Journey

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When M. Johnson and G. Lakoff published "Metaphors We Live By" they were at the forefront of a radical change in thinking about metaphors. Metaphors, they suggested, are not simply poetic parts of speech, or obscure idiomatic expressions, but rather part of our larger cognitive reasoning. Metaphors in the language form part of larger, conceptual metaphors that help us understand and talk about the world we live in.

Using this theory of metaphors as a theoretical framework, my presentation will focus on the Modern Greek language and examine the presence of the "universal" conceptual metaphor "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" and its culture-specific dimensions. This conceptual metaphor envisages life as a journey, with birth as the point of embarkation and death as the final destination. So in English for example, humans encounter "twists and turns," "get lost" but later "find their way" and often "come to a crossroads." In Modern Greek, this metaphor is present in the discourse of love, religion and daily life. There is evidence from ancient Greece that the "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" metaphor has been conceptualized since antiquity.

Linguistic data has been collected using a Greek corpus, as well as examples from media and literature. The analysis of "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" and conceptual metaphors in Modern Greek more generally, will not only help us gain insight into the language, thought processes and culture of the Greek people, but will also serve as a comparative tool which will contribute to the understanding and extent of "universal" metaphors.

### **Examples:**

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| 1 Το καλο το παλικαρι ξερει και αλλο μονοπατι<br>A good fellow knows another route | 2 Ο δρομος ειχε την δικη του ιστορια<br>The road had its own story |
| 2 Δεν περπατησαμε ποτε στον ιδιο δρομο<br>We were never on the same path           | 3 Τα πηγαινε καλα, αλλα καπου χαθηκε<br>He was OK, but got lost    |

### **References**

- Johnson, M.; Lakoff, G. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press.  
Kovecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphors*. Oxford University Press.