Summary of PhD Thesis

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METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALISATION OF ANGER, FEAR AND SADNESS IN ENGLISH

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Budapest
2011
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ISBN: 978-91-86545-03-1
Printed by CA&CC Press® AB, Luleå, Sweden
1. Introduction

Cognitive linguists have established that abstract, intangible concepts are comprehended metaphorically in terms of more basic concepts (see, Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2002). Emotion is an extremely subtle and complex phenomenon, and as such, it is systematically conceptualised via other, more tangible things. Over the last decades, a great number of conceptual emotion metaphors have been identified and described by researchers. Their findings clearly and convincingly show that our conceptual system of emotions is organised metaphorically (see, Kövecses, 1986, 1990, 2000a, 2000b, 2002, 2005, 2008; Kövecses, Palmer, & Driven, 2003; Lakoff, 1987; Barcelona, 1986; Kendrick-Murdock, 1994; Niemeier, 2003; Emanatian, 1995; Athanasiadou, 1998; Györi, 1998; Omori, 2008; Taylor & Mbense, 1998; Apresjan, 1997; Yu, 1995).

However, despite such important achievements, much remains unknown in this area. For example, while it is an established fact that emotion concepts often arise from bodily experience, we do not yet have complete knowledge of corporeal experiences giving rise to such concepts. For instance, little is understood about the role of fundamental physiological experiences, such as child containment, voice production, smell and taste perception, in the metaphorical conceptualisation of emotions. Moreover, we have scant knowledge about the importance of the following basic experiences in emotion conceptualisation: human interaction with animal species, such as horses, snakes, and birds, etc., and the cultural views resulting from it; folk beliefs about the supernatural; agricultural experience of growing plants; and the practice of mixing different substances etc. In addition, we have restricted knowledge about the application scope of the source domains that occur with emotions. To bridge the gap, this thesis, written within the framework of cognitive
linguistics, undertakes to explore the role of the aforementioned experiences in the structuring of our everyday concepts of anger, fear, and sadness. It examines the metaphorical mappings from the source domains of CONTAINER, ANIMAL, SUPERNATURAL BEING, HIDDEN ENEMY, TORMENTOR, SMELL, TASTE, PLANT, MIXED SUBSTANCE and PURE SUBSTANCE onto the target domains of ANGER, FEAR, and SADNESS. In addition, it investigates the application scope of the source domains that occur with the emotions chosen for analysis.

2. The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction. It provides information about the aims and objectives, material and methods, theoretical basis, scientific novelty, and practical importance of the study. In addition, it explains the choice of the source domains analysed in the thesis. In Chapter 2, an overview of different metaphor theories is given, and their approaches to the subject matter are characterised. The main emphasis of the chapter is on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (see, Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999).

In Chapter 3, an overview of previous research findings on metaphorical emotion conceptualisation is given. Particularly, the following issues are discussed: the types of emotion metaphors; aspects of emotion concepts; the scope of emotion metaphors and their experiential basis; the diachronic stability and change; universality and variation in the metaphorical conceptualisation of emotions; the degree of metaphorisation of emotion concepts; and the use of emotion metaphors by ordinary and creative speakers etc. The findings from other fields relevant to the research problems discussed are also presented here.

The main outcome of the study is presented in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7. In the first three of them, the emotion metaphors identified
by this study are described. Here, the metaphorical mappings from
the source domains chosen onto the target domains of anger, fear,
and sadness are analysed. The obtained results are compared with
research findings from other related scientific disciplines. In
addition, some cognitive linguistic claims about the metaphorical
conceptualisation of anger, fear, and sadness are tested against the
data of this study. A specific emphasis is placed on the experiential
basis of the identified metaphors. Moreover, Chapter 7 scrutinises
the issue of metaphor scope and Chapter 8 summarises the major
findings of the study.

3. Research Hypotheses, Aims and Objectives

The main hypotheses of the thesis are the following.
The emotions of anger, fear, and sadness have a conceptual
structure that organises our perceptions of emotional reality. It is
partly shaped by metaphors whose source domains are grounded
in the following experiences: a) physiological experiences, such
as child containment, voice production, taste and smell sensation;
b) physical practices, such as human interaction with animal
species like horses, snakes, and birds; the agricultural experience
of growing plants; the practice of mixing different substances; and
c) cultural beliefs, such as folk concepts of the supernatural;
cultural percepts of different animal species.

The source domains that occur with anger, fear, and sadness
may have application beyond the emotion domains under
consideration.

The overarching aim of the thesis is to investigate the
existence of conceptual mappings between the source domains
chosen for analysis and the target domains of ANGER, FEAR,
and SADNESS and, if they exist, to find out how the resulting
metaphors help us conceptualise anger, fear, and sadness. An
additional aim is to explore the scope of the identified emotion
metaphors. The theoretical basis of the research is the Conceptual
Metaphor Theory.
4. Method and Material

The study uses two metaphor identification methods: a) the source-domain-oriented approach; b) the Internet/corpus search method. In the former approach, the researcher first selects individual lexical items associated with the source domains that he/she wants to investigate. Then he/she searches for the selected lexical items in a chosen data source (dictionaries and/or corpora). In the following step, the researcher retrieves the metaphorical expressions from that data source and classifies them under their conceptual metaphors. Let us illustrate the method by example.

One source domain word selected for analysis is unbridled and it is related to the domain of HORSE. The following linguistic expression was found in The American Heritage© Dictionary of the English Language by searching for the word unbridled (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/unbridled. Accessed: 01.04.10):

(1) Unbridled anger.

This expression describes anger in terms of a horse. Therefore, in the thesis, it is placed under its conceptual metaphor ANGER IS A HORSE.

It should be admitted that along with its advantages, the method under consideration has its disadvantages. It is not easily applicable to the Internet texts. This is due to the large number of irrelevant hits that the search engines provide. So as to circumvent this problem, the Internet/corpus search method was used to retrieve metaphorical expressions from the Internet and partly from the British National Corpus. It consists in the following. You type into the keyword entry box of the search engine the words and expressions that you think may appear in the metaphorical expressions that you are looking for. Then you retrieve the resulting linguistic metaphors and place them under
their conceptual metaphors. This is the most widespread method applied to the Internet texts when searching for information. It is also applicable to other corpus texts. Let us illustrate the method by example. Placed below is a search phrase that has been used in this study.

(2) *Grief flourished.*

The linguistic metaphor that contains this phrase can be found under the conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS A PLANT analysed in the thesis. One obvious advantage of this method is that it allows for quick retrieval of the metaphorical expressions that you are looking for. Its disadvantage is that it is not always possible to predict which words and expressions are likely to appear in the searched metaphorical expressions.

Moreover, the primary material of the study consists of metaphorical expressions of anger, fear, and sadness, with the source domains chosen for analysis. In addition, it is comprised of linguistic horse metaphors whose target domains are represented by a) emotions other than anger, fear, and sadness, and b) non-emotional phenomena.

The majority of the metaphorical expressions analysed in this research were retrieved from the following data sources: *The Internet, The British National Corpus, The Online Dictionary, Encyclopedia and Thesaurus,* and *The Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary.* Most examples are taken from the first two sources.

Finally, the thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach: the outcome of the study is assessed in relation to the findings from other related fields.

**5. Main Findings**

The study clearly shows that there are systematic metaphorical mappings from the source domains chosen for
analysis onto the target domains of ANGER, FEAR, and SADNESS. This provides evidence in support of the cognitive linguistic hypothesis that emotions are not amorphous feelings but have a complex conceptual structure organised by the system of metaphors. Furthermore, this also provides partial proof for G. Lakoff’s idea that the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured (see, Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 6).

Furthermore, the two metaphor identification methods used in this study have shown to be effective. As a result, a large number of metaphorical expressions have been retrieved from various data sources and analysed under their conceptual metaphors. Placed below is a brief characterisation of the conceptual emotion metaphors identified by this study. They are classified according to their source domains.

5.1. Metaphors with the CONTAINER source domain. Contrary to the widespread belief that in Western culture, thinking and emotions are associated with different parts of the body – the head and the heart, respectively – some container metaphors analysed locate anger, fear, and sadness in the head. This is explained by the fact that in previous research, scientists relied too much on the influence of particular worldviews, such as the Cartesian heart/head dichotomy, on our perception of emotion and thought. The result is that some important patterns of emotion conceptualisation were left out of account.

Previous research has established that humans conceptualise the body as a container for emotion. This thesis shows that apart from the body, voice is commonly conceived of as an emotion container by English speakers. All the three emotions analysed are imagined to be occurrences held in the voice. Hence, the conceptual metaphor THE VOICE IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS. Similar to the corresponding body-container metaphors, the voice-container metaphors focus mainly on the intensity and control
aspects of emotion. In some metaphors, anger is understood in terms of a heated fluid kept in the voice container. Generally speaking, English conceptualises anger as a heated fluid contained in the head, the heart, and the voice. In prior research, it was assumed that English locates anger in the whole body.

Correlation in experience is the main reason why people conceptualise voice as a container for emotions. For example, research in psychology and other related disciplines provides evidence that the emotions we experience affect the quality of our voice, and that we have the capacity to detect people’s emotions from their voice. This provides support for the cognitive linguistic view that correlation in experience is one of the major reasons why particular source domains occur with particular target domains.

Now, different from the body, the voice is an unusual container in the sense that it doesn’t have visible dimensions such as an inside, an outside and a boundary. We cannot place physical entities inside the voice, and things do not emerge out of it. Nevertheless, we conceive of our voices as three-dimensional containers into which we can put things and out of which things can emerge. The human instinct for territoriality, the tendency to impose an imaginary boundary on different phenomena of reality are the reasons why the voice is conceptualised as a container. Moreover, the voice production is a bodily experience. The fact that people use voice as a source for the metaphorical conceptualisation of emotions provides evidence for the cognitive linguistic hypothesis about the embodied nature of metaphors.

Furthermore, in some emotion metaphors, anger, fear, and sadness are conceptualised as dangerous, corrosive substances held in a container. Such metaphors capture the negative evaluation aspect of emotion. Moreover, there is a specific dangerous substance in terms of which anger is comprehended. That is, sulphur. Such a conceptualisation is culturally motivated; in Western culture, sulphur is associated with hell and the devil.
Some emotion metaphors characterise anger, fear, and sadness as a colour held in a container. The container corresponds to the eyes and the voice. There are two major reasons why people think of emotions in terms of a colour. Firstly, there is a perceived resemblance between colour and emotion. The two phenomena have some shared dimensions: vividness and intensity. And secondly, there is a physiological link between colour and emotion: the colours we perceive evoke both positive and negative emotions in us. Such a correlation between colour and emotion makes it possible for us to map the COLOUR source domain onto the target domain of EMOTION.

Finally, all the three emotions scrutinised are conceptualised metaphorically in terms of a child held in the womb-container. Like any other container metaphors, the CHILD metaphors of anger, fear, and sadness capture the intensity, cause, and control aspects of emotion. The metaphor is motivated by the bodily experience of child containment.

5.2. Metaphors with the PURE vs. MIXED SUBSTANCE source domains. The metaphors with the PURE SUBSTANCE source domain portray anger, fear, and sadness as discrete, uniform emotions without other emotional components being involved. Apart from uniformity, they also highlight the intensity and cause aspects of the emotions that they conceptualise. The metaphors with the MIXED SUBSTANCE source domain are not specific to particular emotions. They characterise complex affective experiences where several emotional elements occur simultaneously. The metaphor COMPLEX EMOTIONS ARE MIXED SUBSTANCES highlights the complexity, cause, and intensity aspects of the emotions occurring together. It has been established that the metaphor has at least two different submetaphors: COMPLEX EMOTIONS ARE MIXED COLOURS and COMPLEX EMOTIONS ARE MIXED FOOD
SUBSTANCES. The MIXED SUBSTANCE metaphors are motivated by the human experience of mixing disparate substances. The PURE SUBSTANCE vs. MIXED SUBSTANCE metaphors clearly show that emotions may be experienced in two different ways: a) as discrete states; b) as part of a complex emotional experience. There are some psychological studies that provide proof for the existence of compound and elementary emotions. In previous research, emotions were mainly characterised as discrete, isolated mental states. Complex emotional experiences were largely left out of account.

5.3. Metaphors with the SUPERNATURAL BEING source domain. There is a conceptual link between the source domain of SUPERNATURAL BEING, on the one hand, and the target domains of ANGER and SADNESS, on the other. This contradicts the results of prior research, according to which the source domain under scrutiny is specific to fear (see, Kövecses, 2000a: 38-40). The SUPERNATURAL BEING domain has a much larger scope of application within the EMOTION domain than was previously assumed.

Moreover, there is a metaphorical mapping between the source domain of SUPERNATURAL BEING and the target domain of THE OBJECT/SOURCE OF FEAR. The perceived similarity between the source and target domains gives rise to the metaphor THE OBJECT/SOURCE OF FEAR IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING. In the supernatural belief system, such creatures as ogres, bugbears, bogeymen, bugaboos, goblins, and demons etc. are viewed as the objects of fear. Hence, they are mapped onto the objects and sources of fear in the natural world in the metaphor under discussion. The SADNESS IS A BLACK DOG metaphor can be classified as a subcategory of the SADNESS IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING metaphor. This is because the concept of BLACK DOG is based on people’s supernatural beliefs. The
BLACK DOG metaphor is specific to sadness. Finally, the concept of SUPERNATURAL BEING is an imaginary concept. There is no scientific evidence for the existence of the supernatural. This clearly shows that even non-tangible, conjured-up concepts may be mapped onto emotion concepts.

5.4. Metaphors with the HIDDEN ENEMY and TORMENTOR source domains. The linguistic data analysed provides evidence that the HIDDEN ENEMY source domain occurs with the target domains of ANGER and SADNESS. Such an outcome runs contrary to what previous research has concluded regarding the subject matter: that the HIDDEN ENEMY domain is specific to fear (see, ibid). Furthermore, the source domain of TORMENTOR also applies to the target domains of ANGER and SADNESS. Prior studies give us proof that the same source domain occurs with the target domain of FEAR.

5.5. Metaphors with the ANIMAL source domain. Two subcategories of the general DANGEROUS ANIMAL source domain occur with all the three emotions analysed in this study. They are the HORSE and SNAKE domains. The resulting metaphors capture the cause and control aspects of the emotions they conceptualise.

The fact that the above-mentioned source domains apply to the emotions analysed does not come as a surprise. In human society, both animals and emotions are viewed to be dangerous and therefore subject to control. The perceived similarity between the source domains of HORSE and SNAKE, on the one hand, and the target domains of ANGER, FEAR, and SADNESS, on the other, seems to be the major reason why the former gets mapped onto the latter.

The emotion metaphors with the source domain of AN OLD SNAKE SKIN are not the subcategories of the DANGEROUS ANIMAL metaphor. This is because they focus on a different
aspect of emotion. That is, undesirability. Even in this case, there is a perceived resemblance between the source domain of AN OLD SNAKE SKIN, on the one hand, and the target domains of ANGER, FEAR, and SADNESS, on the other. An old, necrotic snake skin is something that is useless and therefore undesirable. In a parallel fashion – according to the folk theory of emotions – anger, fear, and sadness are also something undesirable and therefore should be gotten rid of.

Moreover, the metaphor ANGRY BEHAVIOUR IS AGGRESSIVE HORSE BEHAVIOUR analysed in this study is a subcategory of the general metaphor ANGRY BEHAVIOUR IS AGGRESSIVE ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR identified in earlier research. The AGGRESSIVE HORSE BEHAVIOUR source domain does not occur with fear and sadness. That is, it seems to be specific to anger. What is more, another metaphor, ANGRY SPEECH BEHAVIOUR IS AGGRESSIVE SNAKE BEHAVIOUR, also instantiates the same general metaphor. This metaphor also applies to anger, but not to fear and sadness.

Furthermore, it has been found that the metaphor A FEARFUL PERSON IS A WHITE-FEATHERED GAME BIRD is specific to fear. The metaphor focuses on the undesirability aspect of fear. The metaphor is grounded in the English cultural tradition of cockfighting. What is more, many animal metaphors that have been analysed are deeply entrenched in the Western culture. There is linguistic evidence to support the view that their counterparts have existed historically.

5.6. Metaphors with the BAD SMELL and BAD TASTE source domains. The study has established that there is a conceptual link between the source domains of BAD SMELL and BAD TASTE and the three emotions that have been analysed. The resulting metaphors portray anger, fear, and sadness in terms of an unpleasant, objectionable smell and taste. They
capture the negative evaluation aspect of the emotions that they conceptualise. Even in this case, the metaphorical mapping is grounded in the perceived similarity. Bad smell and bad taste, on the one hand, and anger, fear, and sadness, on the other, are understood to be unpleasant phenomena in the folk view. Studies in other fields of knowledge provide empirical evidence that there is a strong biological link between smell and emotion. This factor may also contribute to the fact that we understand emotions in terms of smell. When it comes to fear, research in other scientific fields gives proof that humans have the physical ability to detect the smell of fear with the help of their olfactory organs. The aforementioned facts clearly show that the data acquired through olfactory and taste organs function as the bases for our metaphorical understanding of emotions. The study does not provide support for E. Sweetser’s claim that the sense of smell has few abstract connotations in English (see, Sweetser, 1991).

Furthermore, another result of the study is that speakers of English may conceptualise the emotion of sadness in terms of a good taste. This gives rise to the metaphor SADNESS IS A GOOD TASTE. The metaphor characterises sadness as a positive emotion. It is evident from this example that sadness is not always experienced as a negative emotion. There is also a case in which sadness is conceived of as a taste without the quality of that taste being specified.

What is more, there is linguistic evidence to support the view that sadness may be conceptualised metaphorically in terms of a good smell. Such a conceptualisation also characterises the emotion under discussion as something enjoyable. Sadness evoked by the works of art, such as environmental pictures, is an example of pleasant sadness. Studies in other fields of knowledge provide evidence that our encounters with the works of art, as well as with the natural environment, may evoke a specific form of sadness, which is melancholy.
Finally, since the SMELL and TASTE metaphors for emotion are based on the human experience of taste and smell perception, they can be classified as a) the taste perception metaphors; b) the smell perception metaphors. The two groups of metaphors can be placed under what A. Barcelona refers to as perceptual metaphors (see, Barcelona, 1986).

5.7. Metaphors with the PLANT source domain. All the emotion concepts analysed are commonly comprehended in terms of plants. The PLANT metaphors map different stages of plant growth onto the stages of emotion development. They also highlight the intensity and cause aspects of the emotions they characterise. There is a perceived similarity between the source and target domains of such emotion metaphors. Both plants and emotions come into existence, develop and fade away. This makes it possible for us to map the PLANT source domain onto various emotions.

There are many different reasons why the source domains scrutinised in this study get mapped onto the target domains of ANGER, FEAR, and SADNESS. The most important of them is the perceived similarity between the sources and the targets. In addition, correlation in experience is another crucial factor that gives rise to the emotion metaphors that have been presented. All in all, the emotion metaphors analysed highlight the following aspects of anger, fear and sadness: intensity, control, cause, desirability/undesirability, positive/negative evaluation, uniformity, and complexity. The great majority of the source domains that have been considered are general source domains. They apply to all emotions analysed in this study. Only few of them are specific to particular emotions. This result is in line with the findings of previous research.

Furthermore, the fear metaphors that have been scrutinised demonstrate that fear may be caused by a great variety of physical, mental and social etc. dangers. Each cause gives rise
to a specific type of fear. The existence of those fears is supported by the findings of the studies in other scientific fields.

Finally, the results of the study support the hypothesis that most conceptual metaphors for emotions are stable over time. The historical linguistic metaphors presented in the thesis reflect the same conceptual metaphors that we use today.

5.8. The issue of metaphor scope. Due to the limited character of the study, the application scope of one source domain was investigated, that is, the HORSE domain. The application scope of the HORSE source domain is not restricted to the concepts of anger, fear, and sadness. Apart from these target concepts, the HORSE source domain occurs with happiness, love, jealousy, lust, courage, disgust, surprise, guilt, and shame, as well as pride and its specific form: arrogance. There is also a conceptual link between the HORSE source domain and the general target domain of EMOTION. In addition, the HORSE source domain applies to such non-emotional concepts that are used to portray humans and human traits, economy and finance, crime, violence and aggression, ideas, power, etc. Thus, the HORSE source domain has a very broad scope of application both inside and outside the domain of EMOTION. This outcome supports Z. Kövecses’s hypothesis that most source domains that occur with emotions are not specific to emotions but have a wider scope of application (Kövecses, 2000a: 49-50).

References:

Primary Sources


The Internet through The Google, http://www.google.se/.


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Cultural Beliefs and Emotion Metaphors

The Issue of Metaphor Scope