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**Love and morality in the Moldavian Southern Csángó dialect**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Delimitation of the topic**

Collecting abstract concepts in a language variant other than that of the researcher's own, one encounters great difficulties. Dialectal dictionaries and atlases that mainly systematize linguistic data used for describing concrete objects provide evidence for this. The collector of the dialect must pay particular attention to the problem that a concept entrenched in the conceptualization of the linguist's own variant of language might be present in a different way or be completely absent from the conceptualization of the informant. As a reason for this, different motivations can be suggested rather than a poor cast of mind (Murádin 2002).

Our abstract concepts are basically motivated by both our physical experiences (Lakoff-Johnson 1999) and the cultural background surrounding us (Kövecses 2005, Yu 2003, Sharifian et al, *ammanuscript*), through which they fit into a system. On the level of language it is manifested in the metaphorical and metonymical richness of our expressions. For example, when Csángó people say 'the man is the sole of the house' they mean that men provide security for their family. The physical motivation of this figurative expression lies in the fact that the sole is able to hold a whole person. If the husband is conceptualized by the source concept 'sole', the family and the marital relationship is condensed in the figure of a man standing on his soles. The cultural motivation of the expression appears in the fact that the

tasks of a man fundamentally differ from those of a woman. These in a modern society take shape in an entirely different way.

To what extent this double motivation contributes to the formation of emotion concepts, has opened many debates. According to the „universalist” researchers, emotion is primarily a human biological function that is equally present in the peoples of the world (e.g.: Ekman 1994, Izard 1994, Zajonc 1984). „Culturalists”, on the other hand, conceptualize emotion as socially constructed in particular cultures (e.g.: Wierzbicka 1994, Russel 1991). Thus, the two groups do not agree on the question whether emotions are determined by cognitive processes. The cognitive linguistic method applied in the dissertation, as seen above, has merged these two directions and argues for a body-based cultural model (Geeraerts–Grondelaers 1995, Kövecses 2000), according to which emotions evoking universal physical effects can in different eras and cultures be conceptualized in diverse ways, and the cultural dissimilarities can be clarified on the basis of language use.

My dissertation researches the concept of 'love' in the folksongs and recent language use of one of the most archaic Hungarian dialects spoken on the eastern slopes of the Carpathian mountains, the Moldavian Southern Csángó. Csángós preserve a variant of the Hungarian language from before the Language Reform, in a Romanian environment. Behind the archaic features of the Csángó dialects there are the medieval features of the lifestyle and mentality of the Hungarians in Moldavia. The typical features of peoples of nature, such as the agricultural and stock-breeder's way of life, religion, a strong faith in God together with the preservation of ancient magic traditions, make this group of people colorful and unique. Their survival is in danger because of the lack of intellectuals, and the crisis of identity caused by the Romanian ambition for assimilation.

## **1.2. The aims of the dissertation**

The main theoretical goal of this dissertation is of double motivation: it concerns the relationship between dialectology and cognitive linguistics. From the point of view of cognitive linguistics, it aims to find the answer to the nowadays central question of this domain whether diversities of forming concepts can be detected language-internally. Only a few researchers have written in general about this question (Geeraerts 2005, Kövecses 2005), ignoring the language variants different from the standard. Concerning the cognitive research on dialectology, only a few sporadic, isolated attempts can be encountered (e.g.: Swanenberg 2000, Benő 2006). Thus, the tradition of cognitive dialectology has not taken shape yet.

From the point of view of dialectology, the functional nature of cognitive linguistics applied in the dissertation exceeds the methodological focus of traditional dialectology that reflects on language structure instead of language use. Through this, my dissertation wishes to contribute to the elaboration of cognitive dialectology and make best use of its advantages both in the research of cognitive linguistics and of the Southern Csángó dialect. Apart from the double orientation, the dissertation aims to solve the following problems:

1. A deciphering of the language of the folksongs through cognitive linguistic methods.
2. An elucidation of the folk model of the concept of 'love' on the basis of the Southern Csángó folksongs. The revelation of the cognitive metaphors, metonymies necessary for the conceptualization of 'love', and the system naturally formulated by them in the language of the folksongs. In this I attempt to exclude the researcher's perspective from the description of the meaning of the texts.
3. An exploration of contemporary Csángó speakers' conceptualization of 'love' and comparison of these to the results of the folksongs, with the previously described method.
4. A testing of the results with quantitative methods in the frame of a synchronic comparative analysis, extending the research to forty concepts designating emotions and interior attributes.

### **1.3. Main research questions**

- A) How can certain linguistic signs describe a figurative meaning which they have nothing to do with on the surface?
- B) Does the effectiveness of folk-poetry come into existence through the same techniques as the texts of other poems or do they have some unique features?
- C) What kind of cognitive mechanisms are there behind the conceptualization of 'love' in the Southern Csángó folksongs and the contemporary spoken Csángó dialect? What sources represent the target concepts of 'lovers' and 'love'? Are there other concepts that play important roles in the models?
- D) Do both the emotional and physical aspects of love have major roles?
- E) What is the relationship of the concepts of 'love' and 'marriage' in the songs?
- F) Do the metaphors form a system and if it is so, what models of 'love' can be found?
- G) Does the concept of romantic love appear among the Csángós?
- H) Are there any conceptual differences between the concepts of 'love' in the texts of the folksongs and modern Csángó dialect? If there are such ones, what consequences do they have?

- I) Is the data gathered by traditional dialectological questionnaires suitable for cognitive linguistic analysis?
- J) Are cultural differences and the diverse ways of creating concepts detectable between the different variants of a language, and not only across languages that most of the cognitive linguistic research focuses on?
- K) Are the results of cognitive metaphor analysis supported by quantitative methods?
- L) How do the researched concepts that are cognitively motivated in the dialect of Perenye (a village in the West of Hungary) live in the conceptualization of the Southern Csángós?
- M) What are the main guiding principles in the conceptualization of the researched abstract concepts for the Southern Csángós and the speakers from Hungary?

#### **1.4. Hypotheses**

In my dissertation I will propose the following hypotheses referring to the main research questions:

1. The concept of 'love' in the Moldavian Csángó folksongs has been created according to the same cognitive processes that lie behind any spoken language. The language of folk-poetry suggests other concealing techniques referring to taboos.
2. On the basis of the sociological status of the Moldavian Csángós, I suggest that the agricultural pictures of the folksongs have an important role in the creation of the concept of 'love', most importantly with the purpose of hiding the taboos of 'love' and putting the creation of new life into the focus (see: Martínez 2006 who proved the same in the dramas of Shakespeare with cognitive linguistic methods; and folcloric research).
3. Researchers of the American English language take the UNITY metaphor as the product of a traditional value system whereas the ECONOMIC EXCHANGE metaphor as that of a modern one (e.g.: Stearns 1994). Based on the archaic character of the of the Southern Csángó dialect and culture, supposedly it is the UNITY metaphor that has an important role in the speakers' conceptualization of 'love'. I also ground my hypothesis on such linguistic expressions as *feleség* ('the half one') that stands for both sides in a marital relationship, not only for the woman, like in Standard Hungarian.
4. Because of the deep religious worldview of the Csángós and the traditional, strong control of the society on the individual I assume that the moral dimension gains great importance in the texts. Moldavian Hungarian morality is certainly based on Roman Catholic norms according to which the concepts of 'marriage' and 'love' are closely connected.

5. As the way of life of the elderly Csángó informants has not been fundamentally modified throughout the centuries, I suggest that their picture of 'love' has not gone through great changes since the birth of the texts of the folksongs.
6. The data gathered by traditional dialectological questionnaires is in my opinion well utilizable in cognitive linguistics, as this method is highly compatible with the language-use orientation of this linguistic paradigm. The cognitive approach of the data presumably goes beyond the language-structure orientation of traditional dialectology.
7. The differences of culture and creation of abstract concepts can be demonstrated between different variants of a language, not only across languages as researched by mainstream cognitive linguistics. As I have mentioned above, we can sporadically read about the conceptualization differences in the cognitive literature (Geraerts 2005, Kövecses 2005). My dissertation aims at contributing to the creation of cognitive dialectology through this.
8. Of the concepts that are entrenched in the researched Hungarian dialect, probably fewer have become rooted in the Csángó conceptualization, and for the above-mentioned reasons, these concepts are likely to be most determinantly structured by morality. Following from the simpler way of life of the older generations of Moldavian Hungarians, my hypothesis is that these people do not have the need for the fine differentiation between abstract concepts as much as Hungarians living on Hungarian territory do.

### **1.5. The data**

There are two sources of important data used in this research. Besides the corpus of the Southern Csángó folksongs compiled mainly from printed collections and in smaller part from my own gatherings, for the synchronic analysis I have used the material from a dialectological field-work I carried out over many years. The dialectological material that was gathered by questionnaires and deep interviews was completed by the method of passive observation. As Moldavian Csángós do not know the Hungarian orthography, I completely relied on spoken language data.

### **1.6. The structure**

Following the general introduction presenting the topic and method of the dissertation (1) I give an overview of the literature on the Moldavian Csángó dialects and their research into which I incorporate my analysis (2). After this, I review the literature of cognitive linguistic

research, in which I write about the conceptual differences caused by cultural diversities (3). I cite the criticism in the course of the different topics, not in a separate subchapter.

The presentation of the cognitive linguistic initiatives is followed by the actual research. First, I set forth the techniques of efficiency present in poetic language as well as in the folksongs (4), then I analyse the subject and object of love (5), sexuality (6), emotion and marriage (7) and moral background (8). This is followed by the analysis of the material gathered from the recent speakers of the Southern Csángó dialect, firstly in the frame of cognitive metaphor studies (9), then broadening the perspective towards an analysis considering forty concepts designating emotions and interior attributes, and at the same time checking the previous results by this (10). The last chapter summarizes the results (11).

## **2. Main theses**

### **2.1. The analysis based on the cognitive metaphor theory**

#### **2.1.1. The symbolism of folksongs and ballads**

The texts of the folksongs and ballads that first seem to be obscure can easily be explained by the cognitive metaphor theory and can be organized into a systematic model. Through the techniques of poetic expressivity worked out by Lakoff and Turner (expansion, elaboration, composing and critical questioning) (Lakoff – Turner 1989), the uniqueness of folksongs and ballads originate from the fact that they can hide their messages on various levels. We can find the same content sometimes literally, other times very figuratively, under a seemingly true „cover story” that pretends to speak about something completely different. However; putting the texts of the songs next to each other, the references seem unambiguous and the seemingly isolated metaphors form part of a well outlined system. For example, the cover-story of a lazy husband says „Éjjen iszik, nem aluszik, / Nappal deglik, nem dolgozik. / Ennek vétek a *gyimécsfa*, / Lefekigyék árnyékábo, / *Körte* bie eszik szájábo, / Sz asz szem ura, hogy *errágjo*.” (‘He drinks at night, does not sleep, he relaxes during the day, does not work. It is sinful for him to lie under the shadow of a fruit tree, for if a pear fell into his mouth, he would be lazy even to chew it’). If this extract is compared to the following lines structured in parallel, it becomes clear that the fruit and the act of eating it has a metaphorical meaning: „Megérett a cseresznye, le lehet *etetni*, / megérett a barna kiszleán, meg lehet *csókolni*.” (‘The cherry has ripened, you can tear it off and eat it; the brown little girl has ripened, you can kiss her’).

The subject and object of love can frequently be found in the shape of plants, small animals and objects in the texts, based on the mappings of the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING generic metaphor. The mappings THE QUALITIES OF A PERSON ARE THE QUALITIES OF A PLANT/ANIMAL/OBJECT play an important role. Each source concept emphasizes a different aspect of a person: plants with their colors, tastes, figures can stand for beauty, health, working capacity, desirability, age, maturity, purity, morality, etc. (e.g.: „*piros alma*” (‘red apple’), „*feteke szemű cseresznye*” (‘black cherry’), „*piros rózsza*” (‘red rose’), „*fehér fuszulykavirág*” (‘white flower of beans’)). Among the animal metaphors, we can most often find birds and other small animals that serve as the embodiments of kindness and fragility (e.g.: „*fehér galamb*” (‘white dove’), „*madárka az ágon*” (‘bird sitting on the branch’), *gerlice* (‘turtle-dove’)), while the bigger animals represent clumsiness, sometimes instinctive life that can become sinful (e.g.: „*ősz pulyka*” (‘autumn turkey’), „*sárga csitkó*” (‘yellow colt’), *kutya* (‘dog’), *macska* (‘cat’)). Objects usually express the subject and object of love by their structure and the fact that they can be possessed (e.g.: *ház* (‘house’), *kinsz* (‘treasure’)).

The physical aspect of love is very strongly discernable in the lines of the songs. This was previously shown by folclorists, but their results were often taken to be exaggerations (e.g.: Bernáth 1986, Hoppál-Szepes eds. 1987). The metaphor theory puts these into a natural frame. It is very frequent that metaphors appear piled up in the lines of the texts, strengthening each other, sometimes in a more obvious, other times in a more hidden way, pointing out different aspects of the target concept. One of the most frequent ones is the AGRICULTURE metaphor, the mappings of which are not only present in the Moldavian Csángó folksongs but according to the observations of folclorists and some cognitive linguists, also in the products of other traditional cultures where agriculture plays an important role (Martínez 2006). In the agricultural scenes of the Csángó folksongs the meaning of each little detail has to do with sexuality: the earth, the field, the garden, the plants, the agricultural work, etc. The motive of WATER is closely related to this, being a basic element for life. The HOUSE metaphor with the scene of taking ripe fruits inside also emphasizes the creation of life. While most of the metaphors connected to agriculture, water and entering a house emphasize the procreation of offspring, among the sources of the target domain of SEX there are a lot of other activities that are mainly rhythmical, and also sometimes rough ones (e.g.: RUNNING, RIDING, DANCING, HITTING, HAMMERING, SHOE-SOLING, HORSESHOEING, HOUSEWORK). Instead of the creation of a child, these refer to the intensity of physical love. Besides these, the sources of EATING, DRINKING and HEAT also play a role in the conceptualization of the target domain.



Analysing the emotions, Zoltán Kövecses observed that their main source domain is some kind of force that can overcome the passive rational self. However this is realized in the Csángó songs in a different way. The fight of the emotional self overcoming the rational self is strongly manifested in the physical aspect of love, in sexual desire, not in the expression of emotion, unlike in the Western model of romantic love. Physical desire that aims to be triumphant is rejected on the basis of the metaphor MORALITY IS STRENGTH, through the model of the STRICT FATHER morality (Lakoff 1996). In the ideal model of love it is not the physical desire that wins the fight but the purity preserved until the wedding, the lovers uniting only after they swear eternal fidelity to each other in front of God and the world. This external control plays an important role in the STRICT FATHER model and its aim is to make it an internal strength through the mapping CONSCIENCE IS STRENGTH. Contrary to this, in the romantic model of love of the Western world, emotion fights against the rational self that loses control. The fight in the ideal model is won by the emotion that leads to physical unity. The consequence of this is a cooling of passion. In a typical marriage the man and the woman live side by side disillusioned. In this romantic worldview, marriage appears as the necessary evil.

Although love as an emotion is not emphasized in the Csángó folksongs, as a relationship it is much more elaborated. This happens on the basis of the different types of the metaphor LOVE AS A UNITY and LOVE AS A POSSESSION. The concept of 'marriage' is built on this too, as Kövecses has proved it in his linguistic debate with Naomi Quinn (Kövecses 2000). In the songs, happiness appears only in the ideal model; typically unrequited or forbidden love is emphasized. This pessimism is in harmony with the results of the folkloric (Voigt 1970) and psychological (Hatfield 2005) research.

On the basis of Kövecses's research, love as a relationship and as an emotion are connected through the RELATIONSHIP IS A BUILDING metaphor and its mapping EMOTION IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE BUILDING (Kövecses 2000: 112-113). The process of the analysis related to this topic raises a question: if the emotion aspect of 'love' is absent from the songs, what can secure the foundation of the building? As a solution to this, I have found the above-mentioned MORALITY IS STRENGTH metaphor on which the relationship of two people is based instead of emotional force. Through the STRICT FATHER morality model elaborated by Lakoff, moral strength and the intention to defeat the forces of evil can be described by many mappings. The STRICT FATHER source is not only the biological father, but can also be substituted by the MOTHER, the CONSCIENCE, SOCIETY and GOD. The worldview of the songs is related to the morality of the Old Testament. The „an eye for an eye” approach also appears

here (e.g.: curse) to which we get an explanation with the help of the MORAL ACCOUNTING metaphor of Lakoff. Religion and magic, similarly to folk religious traditions that preserve many features of primitive religions, live together in the Csángó culture (Voigt 2004).

### **2.1.2. Present-day Southern Csángó dialect**

The research method of cognitive metaphor theory I used for the folksongs was also utilized to analyse the data of the present-day Southern Csángó dialect. Summarizing the results of the questionnaires, the conceptualization of 'love' and 'marriage' is fundamentally not different from the view of the authors of the folksongs and ballads. This can be explained by the fact that their life conditions have not much changed since the birth of the folksongs. The community is still composed of poorly educated people living in villages and employed in agriculture who, alongside their deep religious piety, still preserve magic traditions.

The metaphors of the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING (A PERSON IS A PLANT/ANIMAL/OBJECT) also appear in connection with the object of love, but they have a much less important role than in the songs. The explanation for this could be that the subjects of the interview wish to hide their messages more than the authors of the songs. Thus, this can be typical for the genre itself.

Among the metaphors of sexuality in spoken language, sexual desire was most commonly elaborated, which, similarly to the songs, appears as a sin in the interviews. The source concepts for this are MADNESS and BLINDNESS from which the latter can also be a metonymy (THE LACK OF PERCEPTUAL ABILITY FOR THE EMOTION). The agricultural metaphor is not significant in spoken language.

Moral 'love' also here appears intertwined with the concept of 'marriage'. The unique characteristic feature of the texts of the interviews is a well-elaborated model framed by the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor and its numerous mappings that were not similarly observable in the songs. During the journey the companion and the destination gain major importance. The passengers are the spouses who have a common goal and carry the same load on the way. The destination is, according to their Roman Catholic faith, the kingdom of the Lord. Behind this also the STRICT FATHER morality can be discerned. The love relationship that is incorporated in the metaphor LOVE/MARRIAGE IS A UNITY is shaped by the JOURNEY metaphor. The spouses here do not look towards each other, but complement each other looking into the same direction, towards a common goal that is God and the happiness of the afterlife. The love model of the present-day dialect is not shaped by the „an eye for an eye” morality of the

Old Testament, but announces the forgiveness of Christ, and thus is rooted in the New Testament: „A rosszat felejtéd, s mész a jóval elé” (‘You forget the bad things and go ahead with the good ones’). From this respect, Csángó society has „modernized”. This can also be seen in the softening of the traditions of social punishment.

The linear conceptualization of a marital relationship as a journey towards the same destination is in contrast with the scenes of the folksongs that also rest on strong moral foundations, but in which the dynamics of the relationship can rather be described by the circulation of nature through the agricultural metaphors.

## **2.2. Quantitative cognitive linguistic analysis**

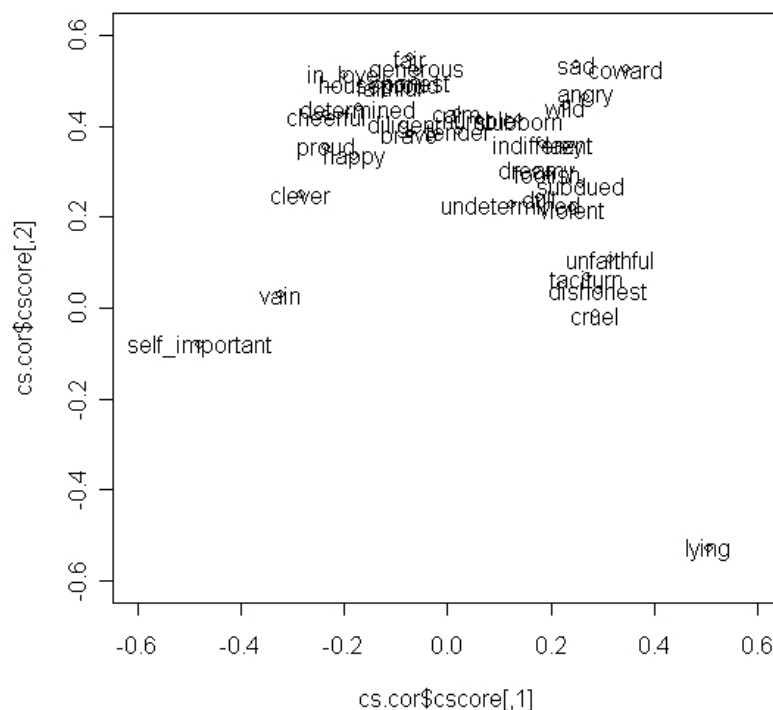
In the last part of the dissertation the question is raised as to whether the results of the previously used method are not too subjective. In other words, to what extent are those who criticize the above used method of traditional cognitive analysis right? To answer this, I use a quantitative, usage-based method, based on my own field-work (Szelid 2005, Szelid–Geeraerts, to be published). This research analyses the conceptualization of 40 emotions and interior attributes. The main results converge with the most important findings of the above-mentioned analysis.

Apart from the justification of the metaphor analysis, the last chapter has different, more general aims concerning the relationship of dialectology and cognitive linguistics: on the one hand, as this chapter contains besides the Csángó data gathered in the Hungarian village of Perenye, it aims to answer today’s central theoretical question of cognitive linguistics as to whether cultural differences and those of the creation of concepts can be detected language-internally. Furthermore, it describes how the usage-based orientation of cognitive linguistics surpasses the methodological focus of traditional dialectology directed at language structure.

In the research, together with Geeraerts I first examined the entrenchment of concepts according to three criteria: the token/type frequency of source concepts, the rate of paraphrases and thematic uniqueness. In the Southern Csángó dialect the negative concepts generally proved to be more entrenched than the positive ones. Then, with the help of a correspondence analysis, on the basis of the semantic topics of source concepts, we observed the target concepts by comparing them to the data gathered in Perenye. The comparative analysis emphasized the characteristics of the Southern Csángó dialect.

In the correspondence analysis, the Csángó concepts are usually more structured having more sub-clusters than the data of Perenye. The entrenchment of the central concepts in the Csángó corpus is bigger than that of the peripheric ones and the negative concepts are more entrenched than the positive ones. Its subgroups are: „lack of humility”, „passivity”, „dishonesty or lack of outspokenness”, „materialism”. In Perenye the group of positive concepts has a more elaborated structure. The main values of this are of economic and volitional nature, its subgroups being: „economic virtues”, „moral and social values” and „individual concepts”.

The main organizing factor of the Csángó concepts in the entrenchment analysis as well as in the thematic analysis is morality. The worldview in general is pessimistic, in which humility, honesty and hard work stand in sharp contrast to materialism and dishonesty.



**Figure 1. The organization of Csángó concepts**



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#### **4. The candidate's publications related to the topic**

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