

Metaphorical Conceptualization of Bravery in Contemporary Persian and English Prose

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Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate the conceptualization of conceptual metaphors of Bravery in the contemporary Persian and English Prose. The main question of this study is: "How the concept of bravery which is one of the target domain of Morality from Kovecses's point of view (2010: 23) is constructed and understood in the minds of Persian and English speakers. To achieve this goal, the authors prepared a corpus of 400 Persian sentences containing the word of شجاعت and its synonyms and also 400 English sentences containing the word of Bravery and its synonyms from the two Bases of Persian Language database (PLDB)¹ and contemporary British national (BNC)² prose, and examined them through cognitive analysis of the extracted conceptual metaphors. A statistical study of the two figures showed that as a prototype, Persian speakers consider Bravery as an "object" and English speakers as a "property". There are also many common source domains shared by the two bodies: "property", "object", "physical force", "upward direction", "action", "matter" and "human behavior". Although the Persian and English languages have many common conceptual metaphors for conceptualization of Bravery, there are some differences between them including the different source domains between the two languages which are as follows: the source domain of "path" which is belonged to Persian and the source domain of "show" which is belonged to English. The theoretical Framework of the present research is based on the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kovecses's (2015).

Keywords: Conceptual system, Metaphor, Source domain, Corpus based approach, Bravery

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1. Introduction

Universality and variation in metaphors of languages have become the main concern of many researchers to uncover the conceptual system of language speakers and consequently to discover the similarities and differences between the languages. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p.3) mention that the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. The present study also attempts to investigate the conceptual metaphors of Bravery in Persian and English prose to find the similarities and the differences of the two languages.

2. Research question

The main question of this study is: "How the concept of bravery which is one of the target domain of Morality from Kövecses's point of view (2010: 23) is constructed and understood in the minds of Persian and English speakers?"

3. Hypothesis

The comparison of metaphorical expressions of Bravery in Persian and English prose show some similarities in the expansion of using the specific source domains.

4. Literature Review

Kövecses (2005, P. 35) explains that "it should come as no surprise that at least some conceptual metaphors can be and are found in many languages. If some kinds of conceptual metaphors are based on embodied experience that is universal, these metaphors should occur – at least potentially – in many languages and cultures around the world".

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) discussed about the conceptual metaphor of

HAPPINESS IS UP in English. Ning Yu (1995, 1998) noticed that Chinese shares with English all the basic metaphor source domains for happiness: UP, LIGHT and FLUID IN A CONTAINER, except the metaphor HAPPINESS IS FLOWERS IN THE HEART which English does not have. According to Ning Yu (1998), the application of this metaphor reflects "the more introverted character of Chinese".

5. Methodology

The theoretical Framework of the present research is based on the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 6) argue that human thought processes are largely metaphorical and the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined. Kovecses (2015, p.17) discusses the construal operations that bear directly on abstract concepts including: abstraction, schematization, attention, perspective, metonymy, metaphor, conceptual integration and Differential cognitive styles. Kovecses (2005, p. 9) also believes that metaphor is a many-sided phenomenon that involves not only language, but also the conceptual system, as well as social-cultural structure and neural and bodily activity. This paper also attempts to investigate the conceptualization of the conceptual metaphors of Bravery in the minds of Persian and English speakers verifying contemporary prose in Persian and English. To achieve the goal, the writers prepared a corpus of 800 Persian and English sentences containing the words of Bravery and their synonyms from the two Bases: Persian Language Data Base (PLDB) and Contemporary British National (BNC). Then the writers managed to identify and extract the relevant conceptual metaphors of Bravery from the corpus. The analysis of the two sets of metaphors reveals some important information: The high frequency source domains of conceptualizing Bravery in Persian and English languages show that Persian speakers consider Bravery as an "OBJECT" and English speakers consider it as "PROPERTY".

The common source domains of Bravery shared by the two groups are as

follows: "PROPERTY", " OBJECT ", "PHYSICAL FORCE", "UPWARD DIRECTION", "ACTION", "MATTER" and "HUMAN BEHAVIOR". The findings also show some differences between conceptual metaphors which reveal the specific mapping of Bravery significantly: the source domain of "PATH" which is specific to Persian and the source domain of "SHOW" which is specific to English.

The findings of the present study support the Embodiment theory of Lakoff (1999) and Kövecses's claim (2005) that the same bodily experiences lead to the same bodily perceptions and conceptions. Thus the universal conceptual metaphors, which arise from bodily experiences, perceptions and conceptions, will be the same all around the world. Nevertheless sometimes the different surrounding environment (culture) affects and changes these similar universal conceptual metaphors. Kövecses (2005, p. 13) proposes the two large groups of causes of metaphor variations as: differential experience and the differential application of universal cognitive processes which both can create interculturally and intraculturally different metaphors.