

METAPHORS IN EXPLORING EMOTIONAL CONCEPTS IN THE TATAR AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

The research deals with cognition, understanding and metaphorical way of knowledge presentation. It says that a metaphor is not a mere poetic or eloquent device, as people used to refer to it, it is a general framing mechanism enabling people to explain one notion in terms of another. In most cases it contributes to better representation of commonly known facts and ideas. The following methods were employed in the research: contrastive, descriptive; method of definition analysis, contextual analysis, continuous sampling and statistic estimation. 300 idioms with body parts names were examined for the research purposes. This paper unveils the power of metaphoric use of idioms and, namely, idioms containing body parts names. As the research is carried out in two genetically unrelated languages – English and Tatar, it provides a valuable insight in cultural perception of two different ethnic groups. It bears noting that no research concerning linguacultural analysis of body part names and their emotional potential has been undertaken before.

Keywords: *metaphor, cognition, Linguistics, emotion, body parts, heart, head, face.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of human cognition that forms and expresses thoughts, feelings and emotions. Language serves all spheres of human life including the emotional one. Emotional experience as a realm of the general human experience accounts for a major aspect both for a human and a mankind. One may define emotional experience as a fragment of general experience and a crucial component of mankind existence. The issue of a comprehensive study of emotions requires methods of various branches of knowledge. This approach has predetermined its interdisciplinary aspect engaging a number of sciences – Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Physiology, Linguistics, etc.

The issue of linguistic expression of emotions occupies a significant place in modern science due to current processes, e.g. shift of humanitarian knowledge to anthropocentrism, i.e. viewpoint arguing that human beings are the central or most significant entities in the world. Moreover, the recent years have seen a rapid development of globalization in terms of information, communication and culture, the latter having a considerable advancement and providing a dialogue of cultures in cross-linguistic environment. Hence, the need for carrying out interdisciplinary research aiming at both cultural and linguistic studies of ethnic mentality constantly increases.

The given research attempts to scrutinize the methods of verbalization of concepts reflecting the emotional sphere of life. Linguists study diverse linguistic means of concepts' verbalization, however, metaphor has never been observed from this point of view in the Tatar and English languages. Thus, the research considers essential distinguishing peculiarities of cultural identity of Tatars and English within the emotional sphere. The aforesaid accounts for research novelty.

The following methods were employed in the research: contrastive, descriptive; method of definition analysis, contextual analysis, continuous sampling and statistic estimation. [Akhatov, 1982]

METAPHOR IN COGNITION

Metaphor has always been in the focus of research, although, approaches to the understanding of this concept have changed drastically. In the antiquity, scholars perceived it as a purely linguistic phenomenon that contributed to coining of new meanings and words. Later, it was given an account of a poetic device that was used for eloquent description of peoples' thoughts and feelings. The XX century saw metaphor's transfer from literary to cognitive realm. Thus, it still preserved its nature of a semantic device but gained a new cast of framing mental activity (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Metaphor introduces a general mechanism of mapping when a source domain through metaphorical expressions is used to explain the target domain. This is applied in the cases when people speak about abstract notions and need some specific units to clarify their statements. In this regard scholars consider differences in the general use of metaphor that face members of diverse ethnic groups. This fact gives a rise to a vision of the metaphor as a phenomenon embracing three aspects: cognitive, linguistic and cultural. All these aspects are closely interwoven with each other, but still there some features to be displayed. [Deignan, 1997]

The cognitive aspect concerns arrangement of physical, social and cultural experience into groups and their alignment with cognitive space. In other words, metaphors match abstract notions with material labels and help people to avoid semantic ambiguity. The linguistic aspect deals with the verbal expression of metaphors, as they may contain one word or the whole sentence. Moreover, the linguistic aspect has something to do with coining of new words and meanings. Sometimes people add a new meaning to a word that has already developed its semantic structure, thus, contributing to expansion of vocabulary. The cultural aspect is closely connected with both before mentioned aspects, because cognition and language, in general, depend upon cultural components – history and traditions. [Isanbet, 1989]

The XXI century has seen a new development of Layoff's theory introduced by Gerard J. Steen (Steen, 2011) where he has outlined a new role of metaphor as an essential communication phenomenon. This gives a rise to the study of metaphor in terms of a complex of semiotic, linguistic and social paradigms. Consequently, the metaphor is not only a matter of cultural investigation, but of a cross-cultural as well. Respectively, the process of employing metaphor in expressing emotions has both universal and cultural features. [Knowles and Moon, 2006]

The universal features are based on universality of mental operations, while cultural – on the perception of world, national world map, etc.

Linguistics considers two approaches to the description of emotions, including semantic and metaphorical. The semantic approach identifies emotions through prototypic situations, whereas metaphorical expresses emotions indirectly, it compares emotions with some material objects, i.e. personification of inanimate objects.

This research looks at the cross-cultural aspect of expressing emotions through metaphor in the Tatar and English languages. There was selected a group of body parts idioms in both languages for the purpose of cross – cultural research.

BODY IDIOMS

Body part idioms make up a considerable group of idioms. Body parts names are used not only in Phraseology for building idioms, but also act as similes, metaphors in proverbs and sayings. People use them to be able to convey thoughts explicitly and clearly. In conversations body part names are used to express everything including emotions, because body parts names are the best option when drawing associations with human related objects. There are several body parts that are mostly used in language, they include: heart, head and face. [Spears, 2005]

HEART IDIOMS

Heart is considered to be a core of life, something that drives us, gives us energy and literally vitalizes us. As a result heart idioms are used to express our most strong, agile and substantial emotions.

In the Tatar language “heart/ йөрәк (ioryak)” plays a crucial role as a body part name employed in verbal communication. Such idioms express a wide range of emotions both positive and negative.

The following examples show us the expression of positive emotions - love and affection: *йөрәккә ум кабу* (ioryaktya ut kabu) – to light up with love; *йөрәккә ум салу* (ioryakkya ut salu) – to light a flame in a heart; *йөрәктән алу* (ioryaktyan alu) – to touch to the heart.

When describing the expression of negative emotions with heart idioms, the following examples display: fear: *йөрәк ярылу* (ioryak yarylu) – to get frightened; *йөрәк калмау* (ioryak kalmau) – to lose heart because of strong fear; *йөрәк жуу итү* (ioryak zhuu ityu) – heart cringes; fury: *йөрәк кайнау* (ioryak kainau) – to become furious; *йөрәк ташу* (ioryak tashu) – to be angry; heart ache: *йөрәк кысылу* (ioryak kysylu) – heart aches; *йөрәк сызылу* (ioryak syzylu) - heart aches; anxiety: *йөрәк чуарлану* (ioryak charlanu) – to worry; *йөрәкне кытыклау* (ioryakne kytyklau) – to distress heart.

In the English language heart idioms express kindness: *heart-warming*; *do someone’s heart good*; *from the bottom of one’s heart*. Abundant examples account for heart ache, usually caused by unrequited love or breach of relations: *to break one’s heart*, *heart-broken*, *heart-breaking*, *heart sinks*, *aching heart*, *die of a broken heart*. Some idioms are found to display shocking situations, e.g. *have one’s heart stand still*. Moreover, the person experiencing dramatic emotions can be also said as: *have one’s heart is in one’s mouth*. The idiom *to eat one’s heart out* is a perfect way for expressing sadness, misery, jealousy or even envy. [<http://www.urbandictionary.com/>]

HEAD IDIOMS

Head is a centre of our mental activity, the place where our brain and the majority of all sensors are located. This is the reason why head is associated with the source of life, it is a measure of intellectual abilities, as well as an indicator of human qualities. Incidentally, various cultures and nations have large groups of idioms with *head*.

Idioms with *head* enable to describe emotional and physical states.

The majority of idioms in the Tatar language are associated with negative emotions, e.g.: *башка сугу* (bashka sugu) – to be shocked (negative); *башны ташка бәрү* (bashny tashka byaryu) expresses despare; *башны түбән салу* (bashny tyubyan salu) – to lower head because of despair.

Positive emotions are clearly seen in the followign emotions: *баш әйләнү* (bash ailyanyu) – feel giddy about something happy, joyful, etc.; *баш түбәгә тию* (bash tyubyagya tiyu) – jump of joy, to be extremely happy.

The English idioms abound in the examples of negative emotions with various degree of intensity. *To bother one's (pretty little) head about someone or something* is used when we talk about some troublesome situations, when we must work something out. *To bury one's head in the sand and hide one's head in the sand*; *have one's head in the sand* displays the emotion of fear. *Bite someone's head off, snap someone's head off, take someone's head off, yell one's head off and yell one's guts out* mean to act rudely, severely reprimand someone. When people face a deadline, but that are not able to submit their project in time, people feel nervous about something coming soon, maybe described with *to have something hanging over one's head*.

Head idioms identifying positive emotions in the English language are as follows: *to head over heels* when a person is in love with someone, *to keep one's head* when a person keeps calm and nothing makes him anxious. [Safiullina, 2001]

FACE IDIOMS

Face is our most visible, most noticeable part of body. All our emotions and feelings find their reflection on our face, only few people are capable of hiding them and acting indifferently.

In the Tatar language this body part name is associated with embarrassment and anger: *бум ерту/ кызу* (bit ertu/ kyzu) – to be embarrassed, to flush up; *бум неуы* (bit peshu) — flush with shame; *биткә мәкепы* (bitkya tyokeryu) – to spit in face (expression of hatred and contempt).

In the English language face idioms play the same role in verbal communication as in the Tatar: embarrassment: *(to have) egg on your face, to give someone a red face, to hide one's face in shame, red in the face, fall (flat) on one's face*; overt emotion: *it's written all over one's face*; fake emotion: *to put a smile on someone's face*.

SUMMARY

Study of body part idioms in the Tatar and English languages has uncovered the most striking differences in the emotional expression in two unrelated languages.

The paramount fact states that more frequently negative emotions find their expression in language, e.g. anger, hatred, embarrassment, etc. For negative emotions are more likely for person to be experienced overtly, a person always tends to get rid of negative energy. [Orthony, 1988].

Heart idioms are associated with the most vital emotions in both languages. In the Tatar language they express positive emotions - love, affection; negative emotions – fear, fury, heart ache and anxiety. Almost the same set of emotions is expressed in the English language: kindness stands for positive, whereas heart ache, shock and sadness - for negative. It is obvious that both cultures use *heart* to express love, yet, in different aspects: Tatars in positive and refer to the birth of love, English mostly identify the negative aspect – the end of love, broken heart, etc. Interestingly are exposed the emotions of fear and shock in both languages, distressing situations are also vividly depicted with heart. However, Tatar idioms image more negative emotions and this contributes to major difference between emotional potential of heart idioms in both languages.

Head idioms again refer to both positive and negative emotions in both languages. Tatar idioms expose negative emotions - shock, despair and positive – happiness and joy. English idioms are used to convey fear, worry and rude relation, among positive emotions love and patience can be found. As it is seen from the analysis, the set of emotions is quite different.

Face is usually associated with the emotions that are imaged with facial expressions. This group of emotions in both languages is mostly of negative origin. Tatar idioms express shame and hatred, while English – embarrassment, fake emotions, e.g. fake smile. Another interesting idiom says that overt emotions can be both positive and negative. This accounts for the most substantial difference between the two languages in the field under analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The above mentioned results provide another basis for in-depth study of cross-cultural communication and linguacultural analysis, as they assist in establishing efficient, successful and direct communication between representatives of diverse ethnic groups.

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