

## PLANT METAPHOR OF LOVE IN ENGLISH AND KHOWAR: A CROSS-CULTURAL LINGUISTIC STUDY

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The study aims to explore the 'plant metaphors' in English and Khowar to conceptualize the emotion concept 'love.' It is intended to examine the universally shared understanding and cultural embodiment of the emotional concept of love in terms of plant/s to show the organic nature of Khowar like English for contributing in the existing literature.

**Methodology:** Qualitative content analysis was employed as a method, and the data were collected systematically. The data was studied and examined thoroughly and coded into manageable categories as well as sorted into similar groups thematically to explore the similarities and differences of the conceptual metaphors in English and Khowar. The thematically categorized plant metaphors of love were interpreted within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT).

**Findings:** The study revealed that the Khowar speech community seemed to express their love indirectly by employing the names of various plants metaphorically to express their love: whereas the English people seemed to be more eager to express their love frankly and directly. Thus, the 'plant metaphors' to conceptualize the emotion concept 'love' seemed to be culturally embodied rather than universal.

**Applications:** This paper will open a fresh avenue in the field of cognitive linguistics by unwrapping the plant metaphors of love in English and Khowar for debate and discussion academically. Besides, this paper will contribute to the existing body of literature in the field. Moreover, it will encourage researching the marginalized languages like Khowar.

**Novelty:** This study was conducted from the orientalist perspective to show the organic or living nature of the Khowar language and culture in terms of English. Such study on the topic has yet not been conducted to fill the gap in the field of cognitive linguistics. It intended to preserve Khowar in the phase of globalization.

**Keywords:** *Plant Metaphors, Love, Universality, Cultural Embodiment, Organic, Emotion.*

### INTRODUCTION

The study of metaphors has a long history. It begins with the evolution of the interactive theory of metaphor and culminates in modern conceptual metaphor, which reflects a marked change in people's view about the link between language, mind, and society (Gibbs, 1994). Aristotle, the pioneer in metaphorical studies, states that metaphors play a deviant and anomalous rhetorical role to serve as an ornament and emotive instrument (Aristotle, 1992). It shows that metaphors are nothing more than a tool of embellishment in language. Due to the above notion, some studies in this regard were carried out focusing on language only without considering the socio-cultural and ideological dynamics. Subsequently, Lakoff and Jonson (1980) challenged this perspective of metaphors in their work titled "Metaphor We Live By." This groundbreaking systematic study draws close attention to the relationship between language and thought (Lakoff & Jonson, 1980). They persuasively argue that metaphors are not merely the tools of embellishment in language but a conceptual art and the way of defining one thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Jonson, 1980).

However, in the field of Cognitive Linguistic, the key figures are Lakoff (1980), Ronald, W. (1991) and Leonard Talmy (2000), Fauconnier and Turner (1980), Eve Sweetser, Ray Gibbs, Bill Croft, Dave Tuggy, Adele Goldberg, Sally Rice, etc. Besides, during this period, the idea of Cognitive Linguistics has been taken up simultaneously by Western and Central European linguistics like Lutz' Talmy, Peter, and Gunter, etc. (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2012). During the 1990s, the expansion of the Cognitive Linguistics study was directed mostly in Asia and southern Europe. Moreover, the most important figure in the field of Cognitive Linguistics has appeared chronologically. They are Schmid (1996), Dirven and Verspoor (1998), Lee (2001), Croft and Cruse (2006), (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2012). Hence, according to Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual metaphor refers to the fundamental cognitive agency of conceptualizing the surroundings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In this way, Conceptual metaphors are an essential and indispensable phenomenon in language as well as in thought (Gibbs, 1994). As the philosophers of the British school suggest:

"...thought is governed by two laws. The first is contiguity...ideas that are frequently experienced together get associated in mind. After that, when one is activated, the other is activated too. The other law is resemblance: when two ideas are similar, whatever has been associated with the first idea is automatically associated with the second" (Pinker, 1997, p. 113).

Hence, Conceptual Metaphors are an integral part of any human language as they help the language used to understand the world around them by shaping their perceptions and framing their thoughts in a concrete shape with the help of similarities and differences between different objects (Sharma, 2012). The metaphors have two elements, tenor and vehicle. The tenor is the underlying literal meaning, whereas the vehicle is the image conveyed by the word used (Richards, 1936). It helps articulate abstract thought processes simply for easy comprehension of difficult concepts (Sharma, 2012). It is the main component of psycholinguistics. People use conceptual metaphors in both spoken and written languages consciously or unconsciously to shape their perceptions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

Therefore, a simple way to formulate a conceptual metaphor is to use expressions or manifestations, like, LIFE IS A JOURNEY. (Khowar: ZINDAGAN YEE MUSAFARY). Here, capital letters illustrate that the specific phrasing doesn't appear in speech as such; rather, it exists in our concept. Thus, the mapping of metaphorical components of conceptual metaphor begins to take shape in the source domain, LIFE, and the target domain, JOURNEY (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Hence, the mechanism of a conceptual system relates to the human experiences drawn from physical and physiological existence in their respective cultural domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The speech communities across the world use conceptual metaphors in their respective languages. Though, the nature of some of the conceptual metaphors across the nations may be different and reflect opposite cultural meanings, connotations, and ways of thinking (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The emotional concept of LOVE is considered to be the strongest feeling of fondness and affection. In most situations, LOVE is expressed metaphorically because it is abstract and complex to describe literally. For example, the expressions: LOVE IS FIRE, LOVE IS MADNESS express the violent and devastating aspects of this feeling that cannot be expressed literally. In this way, words such as FIRE (ANGER) in the above-mentioned capitalized sentences. The scientists in cognitive science, like Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2002), explain the basic cognitive structures to reveal the creation of allegorical sayings. These structures are known as conceptual metaphors in cognitive semantics. While citing Grant and Oswick (1996) and Fu (2010) states that metaphor is a process that involves 'carrying over' or 'crossing' of one component of experiences into another.

The paper examines a general level of consensus of culture amongst the European and Khowar speaking communities. It aims to show the common psychological understanding of the world as well as the mutually shared characteristics in both English and Khowar languages. Hence, it critically analysis the queries, such as: how the defined model of the concept of love in terms of another, i.e., like "love is a journey." Here the concept of 'love' is understood in terms of 'journey.' The concept of 'LOVE' is analyzed with two different styles of activities, such as 'LOVE' involves emotions whereas JOURNEY involves traveling. Subsequently, English is an international language spoken all over the world, with millions of users who have adopted it as a first or second language (Luan & Sun, 2021). The English language is rich in metaphors, and a sizeable work has been done on conceptual metaphors by many writers, who have produced a literature of great merit (Machakanja, 2006). It is a living language used by the majority of the entire world for international means of communication, so there is hardly any comparison between English and other oriental languages (Said, 1978).

On the other hand, Khowar is a language spoken by a small community confined to a mountainous region, which is hardly accessible to the outside world due to its harsh terrain (Decker, 1992, p. 28). Until recent times Khowar even did not exist in written form. However, it is a very rich language in terms of all the conventions that are attributed to any indigenous community (Gabsi, 2020). It has been a language of a tribal society, deprived of formal education since its inception; (Anudo & Kodak, 2017). Therefore, it did not grow much academically and mostly remained static due to the scarcity of research on the various attributes and components of Khowar (Ali, 2020).

Though Khowar is one of the major languages of Northern Pakistan, it is mainly spoken in Chitral, which is strategically located right in the center of different cultures with distinctive languages (Israr, 2012). It has close cultural ties with Central Asian countries on the northern side and shares the same bond with Asian countries in the south (Warburton, 2007), making it a repository of various cultures. Therefore, Khowar has a rich linguistic diversity encompassing all the cultures and languages that it has encountered (Shah, & Anwar, 2019). Although, most of the population uses the Khowar language as a vehicle of thought and prefers to call themselves Chitralis (Magnus, 2005). Khowar-speaking people in Chitral live in different valleys, such as; Torikhow, Mulikhow, Mastuj, Kuh, Lot-Kuh, and Drosh (Liljegren & Khan, 2017). This figure does not include people who have migrated to other places, and their number reaches almost about a million (Decker, 1992, pp. 41-42). Anyhow, Khowar is spoken in a few other surrounding areas such as Nuristan (Afghanistan), Gorno Badakhshan (Tajikistan), Ghizar (Gilgit), and Kalam (Swat) (Magnus, 2005).

As compared to English, no linguistic study of Khowar has so far been made except that a few individuals initiated some sort of investigation into this language at a personal level for their interest (Decker, 1992). The reason why no such task was undertaken seems to be the lack of easy access to Chitral; in the first place, as high mountain ranges like the Hindu Kush, Karakorum, and the Himalayas broke communication links for a good part of the year (Curzon, 2012). Even those who worked on the Khowar language obtained information from outside resources instead of physically accessing the region (Curzon, 2012). However, a major contribution to language study was made by Morgenstern, who visited Chitral in 1929, which paved the way for further interest in Khowar language; thus, a few other individuals tried to probe into this subject (Decker, 1992). Correspondingly, an effort has yet to be made in Khowar on the metaphorical aspect of the language, and no study has ever been conducted in this regard, leaving a big gap to be bridged if a comparison is to be

made with the English language on the use of conceptual metaphors in expressing strong emotions. Like all other communities living in cultural pocket holes, Chitralis have also developed distinctive physical experiences and cultivated peculiar metaphorical expressions, so the purpose of this paper is to identify any similarities and variations in the use of conceptual metaphors in English and Khowar to discover the universal or cultural-based values.

## RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Several studies have been conducted in the area of conceptual metaphors in English and other local languages in the context of the world. For example, research has been conducted to study emotion metaphors between English and Chinese (Liu & Zhao, 2013), the cultural basis of conceptual metaphors in Akan and English (Ansah, 2010), conceptual metaphors in English and Shona (Machakanja 2006), a comparative study on basic emotion conceptual metaphors in English and Persian literary texts (Mashak, 2012). In addition, researches have been carried out to study the analysis of conceptual metaphors of selected emotions in the Slovak Language (Retova, 2008) and a cognitive study of happiness metaphors in English, Tunisian Arabic, and Spanish (Hamdi, 2015). Lapasau, Setiawati & Mayasari's (2020) Conceptual Metaphors in Modern Indonesian Literature and Their Implication in Language Learning. Kuczok's (2017) "Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me." Conceptual metaphors for GRACE in Christian discourse. Kuczok's (2016) Precious possession, war or journey? Conceptual metaphors for LIFE in American English, Hungarian and Polish. Bari, Ahmed, & Tabassum's (2020) Diminishing local Languages in the Era of Globalization: A Case Study of Pakistan. The above-cited studies in the area of conceptual metaphor between English and other regional and local languages reveal that studies in this field are remarkable and provide a strong justification for my study. It is from the aforementioned reviewed studies, the gap is identified clearly. No such study has been conducted on the conceptual metaphors in English and Khowar. Therefore this research is conducted to fill the gap left unabridged yet, and contribute and add to the existing body of literature on the subject.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to explore the plant metaphors of the emotion concept "love" in English and Khowar to show the universality and cultural specific use in these two different languages. It endeavored to reveal the organic and living nature of the Khowar language, like English. Besides, it also aimed to documents the plant metaphors in Khowar before shading away in the phase of globalization.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

Qualitative content analysis is employed as a method for the subjective interpretation of the contents of textual data. The textual data were coded, and the themes or patterns were identified as well as developed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This study used the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The data were collected systematically. The data was read and reread thoroughly and coded into manageable categories as well as sorted into similar groups thematically. The coding of the text was based on identifying concepts and defining relationships through mapping to explore the similarities and differences of the conceptual metaphors in English and Khowar. Moreover, the thematically categorized conceptual metaphors of emotions were interpreted based on the objective of the paper.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Human beings think and act in terms of the ordinary conceptual system, which is fundamentally metaphorical in nature and structures the everyday activities or the things which may present around us (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 3.4).

### LOVE IS PLANT:

#### English Expressions:

- 'O Rose, though art sick! The invisible worm has found out thy bed; of crimson joy: And his dark secret love: Does thy life destroy (Gibbs, 1994).
- 'She is a red-red rose, and I am burning with love' (Retová, 2008).
- 'My love is a red rose' (Kovecses, 2005).

#### Khowar Expressions:

- Ishq hardia paida boi mo korin no boi. عشق ہر دینہ پیدا ہوئے مو کورین نو بوئے [lit. the love will grow in the heart, which means it grows like a plant (Magnus, 2005).
- Ta hosta ju gambori eghe mate dos kiani boi. تہ ہوستہ گمبوری ایغو متے دوس کیانی بوئے [lit. It won't be a matter if you give me one of the two flowers in your hand (Zahur, n.d.).
- Ma gulgamburi. مہ گل گمبوری [lit. my red rose (Zahur, n.d.).
- Ma khormazhuli. مہ خورمہ ژوڑی [lit. My date apricot (Ali & Wali, 2021).
- Ta sharana sarfo kan aih biti biran. تہ شرانہ سرفو کان ایہے بیٹی بیران [lit. The beauty and charm of the beloved are described very skillfully; her tall and delicate body is compared to a charming evergreen tree of the cypress family,

while her fair complexion to milk (Magnus, 2005).

- Ma xan koyito ispro, isprowo poshin no boi. مہ زان کونیتو اسپرو، اسپرو پوشین نو بوئے [lit. my beloved is the flower of fig, and the fig's flowers are invisible (Zahur, n.d.).
- Pachaman worry herdia lan koyab. پچمان ووری ہردیہ لین کویان [lit. The nice rose odor of your hair creates pain in my heart (Magnus, 2005).
- Ta dero dart achy chomicaka prani. تہ دیرو درد اچی چہمٹیکا پرانی [lit: the pain in love you have planted pain me severely (Ali & Wali, 2021).
- Donyu goman sum hetam nsa dochar. دنیو غمان سوم ہوتام نیسے دوچار [I embraced with so many dilemmas in love, which are painful just like walking in a thick forest with barefoot. (Israr, 2012).

Curzon (1898) describes, "One further characteristic I recall of the light-hearted, pleasure-loving Chitralis, viz., their fondness for flowers. I constantly noticed men wearing a yellow or other blossom tucked of flowers in their thick lovelocks, just like an English clerk carry his pen behind the ear".

The above-mentioned analysis of the data in hand showed that the image schemas like "love is plant" seemed to be grounded in diverse experiences of human beings (Liu & Mo, 2020). Here the experiences have been interpreted in a broad penetration of concerning everything, which constructs tangible and embryonic experiences through perceptions, motor-movements of the body function in both the natural as well as social environments. Thus, human cognition exists between the external world and the internal state of affairs, i.e., how the human being perceives and conceptualizes the world and the grounded experiences (Khristianto & Budiman, 2019). The meaning neither comes from the internal structure of the human being (the subject) nor exclusively from external inputs (the objects); rather, it comes from the persistent facsimile of human beings and their environments. The abstract concept of inner emotion "love" is indispensable to human life like the other physical substances on which they depend. Therefore, conceptualizing the emotion "love is plant" is equally conceptualized in the aforementioned three examples in English and Khowar. On the other hand, the Khowar expressions seemed specific, which have not been found in English data. It showed the organic and living nature of the Khowar language.

The conceptual metaphor often appears when an abstract concept is being conversed because it might at times be difficult to describe as it is (Shah & Samad, 2018). Therefore, conceptual metaphors help to convey the exact message precisely (Ali, 2020). A metaphor may conventionally be recognized as a linguistic trend and cognitive tool for colloquial usage by different speech communities for the conceptualizations of various domains of information. Similarly, the world around us shapes our emotions. It's, therefore, assumed that the emotions of human beings are neither predetermined nor innate but rational (Györi, 1998). Emotions are structured by concepts and judgments that people learn in a specific culture through which they give their experiences particular shapes and meanings (Györi, 1998). Thus, cultural influences shape a language considerably, and metaphors agree with the cultural environment and historical background (Lada, 2020). Consequently, cultural models play an important role in comprehending the world around us and induce us to use metaphorical language (Yu, 1998). Indeed, Conceptual metaphor embodies the manner of thoughts and influences every individual in taking cognizance of the world around them (Lada, 2020).

Moreover, the data revealed that the Khowar speech community frequently conceptualized the emotion concept "love" in terms of plant metaphors. It seemed that in Khowar culture, the abstract emotion of love is presented indirectly (Shah et al., 2019). Hence, in the Khowar language, the names of various plants are used to express their love metaphorically (Curzon, 1898). On the other hand, the English people seemed to be more eager to express their love frankly and directly (Magnus, 2005). Thus, according to the hypothetical benchmark, two expressions under the same Conceptual Metaphor with distinctive literal meanings were considered partially the same. In the above-mentioned instances, the source domains are different from expressing love in English and Khowar; thus, "love plants" were considered partially the same (Mashak et al., 2012). Besides, in both languages, the source domain "PLANT" is used to illustrate the target domain LOVE (Kuczok, 2020). Therefore, the ontological correspondence, for example, the source domain's perceptually beneficial property of PLANT, is mapped onto the target domain's perceptually satisfying property of LOVE. As,  $X = Y$ ,  $Y = Z$ , therefore,  $X = Z$ . It might be advantageous worldwide as a part of human nature and therefore part of the holistic culture in the world (Kovecses, 2005 and Richards, 1936).

## CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of the data revealed that the LOVE IS PLANT METAPHOR found both universal and culture-specific. The conceptual metaphor provides a base for approving, knowing, judging, and logical reasoning. It shapes the way people think and act along with their communications. In this way, the abstract concept "LOVE" is a worldwide emotion and common among human beings residing in different states/countries. The understandings of the emotional concept of love in the understudy languages through conceptual metaphors are both universal as well as culturally specific. The variation is because of cultural differences, as the human beings living in various physical environments construe their understanding of the emotion concept "love" with the help of those physical environments.



Moreover, the aforementioned data analysis proved that some conceptual metaphors related to “LOVE” used today and exist across the two cultures are similar in conceptualizing, i.e., “love is plant.” Thus, the analysis established that English and Khowar speakers share common sources, apply some metaphors as love is plant, and reveal its universality. On the other hand, the data also explored that the conceptual metaphors 'love is plant' seemed to be culturally embodied.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This research study is limited to cover only PLANT METAPHORS to reveal the emotional concept of “LOVE” in English and Khowar languages. It would give an insight to the prospective scholars to research further in the field of cognitive linguistics. The study would further open an avenue to investigate further perspectives in the Khowar language. The limitation was the vast and scattered mountainous area of district Chitral.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Co-authors Dr. Irfan Ali Shah contributed to providing an in-depth analysis of the paper and its methodology, and Dr. Gulzar Ahmad examined the data collected and its analysis.

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