

COGNITIVE STUDY OF “HAPPINESS” METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK IDIOMS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7193728>

Abstract. *Happiness is one of the basic human emotions. This article takes the metaphorical expressions of the concept “happiness” in English and Uzbek idioms as the objects of research. The effort is made to find the differences and similarities between English and Uzbek metaphorical systems of emotional concepts and the causes of these differences and similarities so as to help people further understand the nature of emotional metaphors.*

Keywords: *cognition, happiness, metaphor, english and uzbek idioms.*

КОГНИТИВНОЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЕ МЕТАФОРОВ «СЧАСТЬЯ» В АНГЛИЙСКИХ И УЗБЕКСКИХ ИДИОМАХ

Аннотация. *Счастье – одна из базовых человеческих эмоций. В данной статье в качестве объектов исследования берутся метафорические выражения концепта «счастье» в английских и узбекских идиомах. Предпринята попытка найти различия и сходства между английской и узбекской метафорическими системами эмоциональных понятий и причины этих различий и сходств, чтобы помочь людям лучше понять природу эмоциональных метафор.*

Ключевые слова: *познание, счастье, метафора, английские и узбекские идиомы.*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary metaphor theory in cognitive linguistics regards metaphors as playing an important role in the conceptualizing process of emotions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 15-21); and metaphors of emotions in the language are most typical examples to show how abstract concepts are structured by more concrete concepts metaphorically, for emotions are highly unstructured concepts. Idioms of “Happiness” in English and Uzbek are good examples to prove that there are same metaphorical concepts of emotions in English and Uzbek languages, and on the other hand, metaphors are greatly nation-specific and culture-loaded.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

I. Similarities of “Happiness” Metaphors in English and Chinese Idioms

Happiness is one of the basic human emotions. According to the explanation of general psychology, happiness is the pleasure and comfort felt by individuals when the objectives they long for have been achieved and the stress been released. In addition, when people’s wishes are fulfilled in unexpected time and occasions, it will also bring them the experience of happiness.

1.1 Happiness is Up

According to the researches by cognitive linguists Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Kovecses (1986), in English the metaphors expressing “happiness” are mostly related to space and orientation: the erect posture of body is used to express happiness, thus the conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP is formed (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Many such expressions can be found in English idioms: *with a light heart, (to get one’s) tail up, to leap / jump out of one’s skin, to throw up one’s cap/to throw one’s cap in the air, to walk/dance on air, in the seventh heaven.*

In the above examples the words “up”, “leap”, “jump”, “heaven” and “light” are all related to UP and used to express happiness. There are many similar examples in Uzbek idioms: *boshi ko'kka yetmoq*, *boshi osmonda*, *ko'ngli tog'dek ko'tarilmoq*, *do'ppisini osmonga otmoq* and etc.

RESULTS

When we use these words to express happiness, we don't realize there're metaphors yet. Such forms of expression are bases on the body experience of human beings: erect posture is often accompanied by positive emotions. In the development of human cognition and languages, it's easier to perceive the concept of space, which came into being earlier. So some words initially used for space concepts were later adopted to metaphorize such abstract concepts as time and emotions. Because of the similarity in human cognitive development of space concept and the same physical experience of human beings, there is the metaphorical concept HAPPY IS UP in both English and Uzbek.

1.2 Happiness is Fluid in a Container

In English and Uzbek idioms, there's another common conceptual metaphor for happiness: HAPPINESS IS FLUID IN A CONTAINER. We can find this conceptual metaphor in English idioms: *to burst/split one's sides (with laughing)*, *to burst into laughter* and etc.

In Uzbek, there are also some examples of this kind: *ichiga sig'may ketmoq*, *terisiga sig'may ketmoq*, *sevinchi ichiga sig'may ketmoq* and etc.

From the above examples, we can see both English and Uzbek view the human body as a container. Emotions, as is well known, are abstract concepts. The subject of emotional experience-human body, is a container within side and outside divided by the skin. When people are happy and excited, their blood circulation speeds up and the container-human body, becomes full. When the emotion gets stronger it will overflow; and when it overwhelms, it will burst out. So there is the conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS FLUID IN A CONTAINER in both languages.

1.3 Happiness is the Physiology Reaction of Happiness

HAPPINESS IS THE PHYSIOLOGY REACTION OF HAPPINESS. Both English and Uzbek people have some body actions to express happiness. In English there are: *kick up their heels*, *grin from ear to ear* etc.

In Chinese there are: *og'zi qulog'iga yetmoq*, *og'zining tanobi qochmoq*, etc.

In both the languages, the most typical behavior applied to convey happiness is laughing (smiling), e.g. *to have a good laugh*, *to burst into laughter*, *Homeric laughter*, *to roar with laughter*, *to be all smiles* or in Uzbek *xoxolab kulmoq*, *kulgidan ichagi uzilmoq* and etc.

Besides, both English and Chinese realize that happiness is something felt by heart so they *cheer the cockles of one's heart (do one's heart good)*, *with a light heart*, or in Uzbek *ko'ngli yorishmoq*, *dili yorishmoq* and etc.

The existence of these common metaphors is because of the same body structures and physical characteristics of human beings. So English and Uzbek people have the same body experience and both use body actions to express the most basic emotion “happiness”.

II. Differences between “Happiness” Metaphors in English and Uzbek Idioms

Due to the different cultures of English and Uzbek people, the metaphorical concepts of happiness in these two languages have respective characteristics.

2.1 Being Happy is Being Off the Ground

In English, there is the conceptual metaphor BEING HAPPY IS BEING OFF THE GROUND. The following are some examples: *be six feet off the ground, in the clouds, walk on air*.

While, in Uzbek culture and language, where modesty and sedation are considered to be virtue, “being off the ground” “*oyog‘i yerdan uzilmoq*” is the symbol of being proud and complacent. So in Uzbek there are such expressions: *boshing ko‘kka yetsa ham, oyog‘ing yerdan uzilmasin*.

The above differences in metaphorical expressions come from different value concepts of English and Uzbek people. Because the language itself is a kind of cultural force and cultural mode, people acquire this language from childhood, and the cultural symbols including all the cultural concepts, values, norms and customs are molded into their own thought and behavior, the values of different nations are inevitably reflected in their languages. The Uzbek people are relatively reserved and tend to suppress their feelings. So in Uzbek “being off the ground” is considered to be the symbol of proud and self-satisfaction, with negative colors. On the contrary, English people are rather frank and direct in manner, so there’s the conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS BEING OFF THE GROUND in English.

2.2 Happiness is Reactions in Eyes

Apart from the identical ones discussed above, Chinese idioms apply much more concrete and trivial actions to convey happiness like *nigohlari manmun* (relaxing eyes), *ko‘zlari kulib turmoq* (smiling in eyes), *ko‘zlari yonmoq* or *ko‘zlari porlamoq* (sparkling eyes) and so on.

In English idioms conveying happiness, the image of eyes rarely appears. But there are some idiomatic expressions which reflect the conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS REACTIONS IN EYES:

His eyes were shining.

Her eyes were sparkling like diamonds.

Amusement gleamed in his eyes.

2.3 Happiness is the Flower in one’s Heart

Lastly, in Uzbek there’s a minor conceptual metaphor HAPPINESS IS THE FLOWER IN ONE’S HEART.

Heart is compared to a flower blooming in profusion, which is a fairly vivid picture familiar to everyone. This metaphor comes from Uzbek traditional culture in which blooming flowers are the symbol of happiness, for example: *qalbida gullar ochila boshlamoq, qalbida bahor* and etc.

While, in English there are neither such cultural symbols nor such metaphorical expressions.

III. A Brief Summary

3.1 The Universality of “Happiness” Metaphors in Idioms

Oriental metaphor maps the orientational concepts in the source domain onto the abstract target domain with spatial schemas and inner-logic preserved. Similar experiential and physical grounding of humans leads to the resemblance of orientational metaphors. Erect posture stands for a positive emotional state. Because of this common physical basis of human beings, the orientational metaphors HAPPINESS IS UP are present in both English and Uzbek idioms.

People have strong kinesthetic experiences of bodily containment. We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we

experience the rest of the world as outside us. So both English and Uzbek people view the human body as a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. When people are emotional, the container-human body becomes full. When the emotion gets stronger it will overflow; and when it overwhelms, it will burst out. So there are the container metaphors HAPPINESS IS FLUID IN A CONTAINER in English and Chinese idioms.

3.2 The Cultural Specificity of “Happiness” Metaphors in Idioms

Because of the difference in cultures, happiness metaphors in English and Uzbek have respective characteristics. The difference lies in the two peoples’ geographic environments, personalities, value, concepts, thinking modes and views of the world, which are reflected in their idioms conveying happiness.

English people are rather frank and direct in manner. To express their emotions, they often apply obvious movements of the whole body or of the four limbs that can be seen from a long distance away. From the different parts of human body or movements applied we may reach a conclusion that English idioms have a tendency towards outwardness. English speakers do not think the liver, the gall and the intestines have anything to do with human’s psychology.

DISCUSSION

In any possible cases in which the Uzbek might think of other internal parts, they just turn to the heart. In Uzbek traditional culture, modesty, sedation, gentleness and obedience have been regarded as great virtues for thousands of years. So compared with English people, the Uzbek people are relatively reserved and tend to suppress their feelings. Much more attention is paid to concrete and inwardness by Uzbek people, who tend to express their happiness with movements of rather smaller parts of the body such as eyebrows, inner organs, and even the invisible soul and vital energy. Of course, we also have the actions of beating breast and stamping, but they are not of dominant tendency to be discussed.

CONCLUSIONS

Because the generalities lying in the structure of thought and physiology that English and Uzbek both share, English and Uzbek people have similar knowledge about idioms, and therefore there are many similarities in English and Uzbek idioms. But due to the different cultures and types of languages of the two countries, it results in many differences in the form and semantics of the two languages’ idioms. The analysis can help people further understand the nature of emotional metaphors.

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