

A Comparative Analysis of Emotion Conceptual Metaphor in English and Bangla

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Abstract

The discussion and analysis here will crosscheck the Theory of Conceptual Metaphor by finding out possible conceptual similarities between emotion metaphors found in English and Bangla. Even in Bangla we can notice the use of same source domain expression to express the intended meaning. Undoubtedly, such study will lighten up our understanding of metaphorical mapping in construction other than English and show up in this process the conceptual similarity of Bangla in parallel or contrast with English. This study thus could facilitate us to strengthen the idea of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural universality and pervasiveness of conceptual metaphors.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, orientational metaphor, emotions, happiness, sadness, Bangla, Lakoff.

Introduction

This study has taken into consideration some non-English expressions from Bangla which belongs to the Indic group of Indo-Aryan (IA) branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Before going into detail it is noteworthy to keep in mind that overall linguistic structures of these two languages are not similar so far as the typological aspects are concerned, they both are also dissimilar in cultural and environmental or ecological scenarios. Apart from these, even in the conceptual choice of domains they vary a lot. In this context, if we begin to find similarities in conceptualisation by deriving the resources from the same source concept (which is ‘body’ here) during metaphor processing, then the similarities in conceptual schema of metaphorical construction would be found as partial as such. But, we know that cross-linguistic metaphor studies have given the source domain of bodily references the first place in priority over other metaphorical domains, because these source domains reflect the “near-universal aspects of the human body” (Kövecses, 2002, p. 165).

Languages differ from one another structurally and could be acceptably classified into three basic categories, namely isolating, agglutinating and inflecting or fusional (Lyons, 1968, p. 187). Bengali or Bangla (bangla) is more or less an inflected type of language whereas English can be displayed as a 'fairly' mixed kind of language which shows features of all the three types of languages. Lyons suggested this to be "a matter of degree" in his typological classification of languages which had been usually done according to the status of morphological structure of words and their syntactic relations, the degree of variability in usages, use of inflections etc. Features of inflected type of word structure could be marked easily by exemplifying from English like variation in regular plural forms of nouns (e.g. 'men') or variation in regular tense forms of verbs (e.g. 'sang' and 'sung') etc.

Despite these visible differences, both of English and Bangla have common conceptual resources to organize their thoughts categorically. This kind of comparative or contrastive analysis will justify further the growing importance of cross-linguistic metaphor study to ascertain the authenticity of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by suggesting more corpora study of unrelated languages in future. Lakoff primarily focused upon the metaphor used in the English language; now it is the high time to verify its strength by considering the other languages. The concern here will then rest on metaphorical expressions generally found in Bangla. I will limit my investigation only on *emotion metaphor* (a kind of 'orientational metaphor'¹) as in the case of 'structural metaphors'² there are differences in terms of their origin or invention on account of 'cultural situatedness'.³ I like to show the near-universality of the emotion metaphors in these two languages by exemplifying from two sub-domains of emotion, i.e. happiness and sadness as formally categorized by Kövecses (2000) in his *Metaphor and Emotion*. Kövecses originally introduced the concept of universality of metaphor across cultural diversity. Now this little effort is to find out whether

¹ Orientational metaphors are processed by orienting the features of one domain in relation to the domain of some spatio-temporal or bodily dimensions (such as, up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral etc) based on influences of environmental and physical experiences. Generally these metaphors are so automatic that one doesn't need any conscious effort on his part to deliver it or understand its meaning. Naturally they are found uniformly in different cultural usages, e.g. MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN, HEALTH OR LIFE IS UP and SICKNESS OR DEATH IS DOWN etc (Lakoff, 1980).

² Traditionally, by the term 'metaphor' only the structural metaphor is considered. In this type, the structural properties of one domain are mapped onto the structural properties of another domain. Generally their operation needs the speaker's conscious effort. This mapping system between two domains could be exemplified by the conceptualisation of life in terms of a journey in LIFE IS JOURNEY metaphor (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 3).

³ Because, structural metaphors are sometimes resulted from influential cultural uniqueness which generally follows from same inherent homogeneous tradition isolating it from other communal specificities and creating much cultural disparity (Emanatian, 1995).

there is any striking consistency between Bangla and English in the particular expressions of emotions.

This study looks into the issues which suggest the sharing of some compatible domains in the creation of a particular metaphor in both of the language of English and Bangla. Keeping this objective in mind, though we can notice some incongruities in domain sharing we can conclude that by sharing some of the common grounds in construals⁴ they both shape their speakers' *reality* in understanding the world in the same way.⁵ For this, I will focus on the universal metaphorical schema shared by the body-based emotion metaphors in English and Bangla not considering the structural metaphorical differences between these two languages. As such, the 'embodiment'⁶ phenomenon is the sole cause of similarities in the case of orientational metaphors. Opposed to this is the ecological factors of influences which structure the structural or epistemological metaphors on the other hand. Although, there are certain structural metaphors in one language which could be found to be keenly equivalent to the expressions available in another language.

It is to be noted that the translations done here from source English sentences to target Bangla sentences are possibly close to the source as I have tried to avoid the oddly translated sentences, given the accepted characteristic limitation that conceptually as well as lexically a source language could not be fully translatable into target language. Naturally there may be some 'oddity' in translated expressions which are to be understood with careful consideration.

It is also to be noted in passing that this is not a discussion on emotions or emotion concepts; rather the metaphorical mapping found in the emotional expressions is only discussed. But it is sure that this study of emotional language will serve to understand the origin and comprehension of emotion in general. I have taken into discussion essentially the highly-schematic and generic-level universal structure across two languages which is supported by the experientialists. Although, considering the culture-specific variations, we can simply expect that there might be some dissimilarities in metaphor constructions regarding emotions. But, this study will highlight only the similarities between the

⁴ Langacker coined the term 'construal' to denote speaker's conceptualisation of the different dimensions of an object or event.

⁵ See Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativism for further elaboration.

⁶ Johnson's *The Body in the Mind* (1987) discusses in elaborate details the idea of conceptual metaphor theory as an extension of this ever-encompassing model of 'embodiment' on the relation of body and cognition and their successive parallel evolution.

expressions of these two languages avoiding the possible dissimilarities. In this context, I would not go into much detail of the evidences of dissimilarities caused by the specific-level cultural construal in these two languages by which we can come to know cultural specificities, their characteristics and uniqueness thoroughly propagated by social constructionists. But, the embodied cognition can also make a rapport with the socio-cultural constructions and this could be led to the extended version of the *embodied cultural prototype view* (Kövecses, 2000) in which both of the universal embodied view of the concepts as well as their cultural constructs are synthesised together in harmony. This means that different cultures define these near-universal concepts of metaphor in their own relative terms, since metaphors are found to be universal in the conceptual domains only, not in the diverse linguistic fields in which concepts are lexicalised.

Conceptualisation of Emotions: Comparing English and Bangla

In Bangla theory of literature, metaphor is formally termed as *rupak* which is mostly known for its rhetorical use. As such, Bangla usages have not been taken primarily into serious account in the light of CMT so far if compared with much-researched languages like English. For example, the recurrent pattern of metaphor ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER is already found by an extensive study (Kövecses, 2002, p. 165) in languages like English, Hungarian, Chinese, Zulu, Polish, Wolof, and Tahitian. The present study could then find out possible parallelism between these two languages so far as metaphorical expression is concerned. Knowing this similarity or dissimilarity may have an additional benefit to the field of language teaching and learning process as researches showed that second language acquisition through similar conceptual metaphors available in both of the languages can boost up or enhance a learner's ability to understand new language in faster and effective way. In this discussion, a shared mapping model⁷ could be resultantly found in both languages for expressions of emotions.

A. Emotion Is Liquid

⁷ *Mapping* efficiently selects the overlapping features of two *domains* and is thus capable of expressing that specific sense in a comprehensive manner. The approach that metaphor is not just epiphenomenon of lexical structure, rather a conceptual reality per se is justified in terms of different psycholinguistic evidences which had verified its conceptual status and its projection in language.

Firstly, I present here a limited set of sentences generally following from the source-to-target domain mapping of EMOTION IS LIQUID⁸ metaphor in English as well as in Bangla:

<u>LIQUID</u>	→ <u>EMOTION</u>
1. container of the liquid	→ body as container of the anger
2. act to take the liquid into the container	→ act to fill the happiness into the mind
3. feeling the need of the liquid	→thirsty for love
4. physical state of liquid	→burning in anger
5. amount of liquid	→amount of emotion

Mapping 1: “Ram *burst out* in anger”- ram rage *p^heṭe porlo*

Mapping 2: “His mind was *filled with* happiness”- ṭar mən anonḍe *b^hore gelo*

Mapping 3: “He is *thirsty* for love”- je b^halobafar *kaṅk^{hi}*

Mapping 4: “He was *burning* in anger”- je rage *jolc^hilo*

Mapping 5: “He hasn’t *a drop* of compassion in his mind”- ṭar mənē *ek binḍu mōmoṭa nei*

In the above examples, verbs like *p^heṭe porlo* (‘burst out’), *b^hore gelo* (‘filled with’), *jolc^hilo* (‘burning’) specially denote the formation of emotional states of the person. Noticeably here Bangla makes use of postpositions -e (‘in’), -ar or -er (‘of’) etc as in *rage*-e (‘in anger’), *anonḍ-e* (‘in happiness’), *b^halobafar*-r (‘of love’), *mən-e* (‘in mind’) to imply the containment of the emotions. Thus, emotion metaphors are sometimes thought to be oriented in the form of container-content relationship, i.e. it is motivated by the three-dimensional space of an open or closed container which is nothing but the orientation of the body with the outer space itself. The container contains the content liquid or substance like emotion and the top of the container is the top of the body or its outlet part. This concept of containment can evoke other types of orientational structures too like activities or events. It is notable that Bangla postpositions in association with the emotion words serve to the orientational makeup of the metaphors. In the following examples, these metaphors get expressed:

- a. ṭar mən *janṭiṭe b^hore gelo* (“His mind was *filled up* with peace.”)

⁸ Following the Lakoff-Johnsonian tradition (1980) here the letters are written in uppercase to denote the metaphorical use.

- b. $\text{\text{t}\text{ar}} \text{cok}^h\text{gulo} \text{j}\text{ole} \text{b}^h\text{ore} \text{gelo}$ (“His eyes were *welled up* with tears.”)
- c. $\text{ma-ke} \text{dek}^h\text{e} \text{\text{t}\text{ar}} \text{b}^h\text{alobafa} \text{ut}^h\text{le} \text{ut}^h\text{lo}$ (“He was *brimmed with* love at the sight of mother.”)
- d. $\text{\text{je}} \text{\text{t}\text{ar}} \text{anon}\text{\text{d}\text{oke}} \text{r} \text{d}^h\text{ore} \text{rak}^h\text{te} \text{parlo} \text{na}$ (“He couldn’t *hold* his joy anymore.”)

In the first sentence, the word $\text{\text{jan}\text{ti}}$ (‘peace’) denotes the content and $\text{\text{t}\text{ar}} \text{m}\text{on}$ (‘her mind’) indicates the container as if his mind is fairly compared to a three-dimensional container filled with peace.

In this way, emotions follow the features of liquid-like flowing, overflowing or rising in volume, welling up, bursting out etc which can be mapped to the same reference points of the emotion in the speaker’s mind. But there is descriptive difference also in the way of expressing emotions as we can see that Bangla native expressions usually tend to use the eyes, heart, bosom, chest or other body parts as the container of the good emotions like happiness or joy. These body parts seem to have metonymical connection with the body, thus representing the whole body itself. In the following examples, $\text{hri}\text{d}\text{oy}$ (‘heart’) and buk (‘chest’) are considered to be the seat of all good emotions. We can find partial similarities in English translations:

- a. $\text{prar}^h\text{ona} \text{\text{son}\text{gitti}} \text{\text{t}\text{ar}} \text{hri}\text{d}\text{oyke} \text{anon}\text{\text{de}} \text{ud}^h\text{beli}\text{to} \text{korlo}$ (“The prayer song makes his heart *overwhelmed* with joy.”)
- b. $\text{\text{je}} \text{\text{t}\text{ake}} \text{buk-b}^h\text{ora} \text{b}^h\text{alobafa} \text{janalo}$, Lit. “He conveyed *love filled in the chest* to her.” (i.e. “He conveyed his intense love to her.”)

To clarify this with one of Tagore’s poems $\text{\text{d}\text{ui} \text{big}^h\text{a} \text{jomi}}$ (‘Two Bighas of Land’), we can also see that buk (bosom of the lady) is imagined as the container which is full of content mod^hu (‘honey’ denoting the lady’s affection):

buk-b^hora mod^hu b^onger bod^hu j^ol loye jay g^hore

In literal rendering, this means “The belle of Bengal whose *bosom* is *full of honey* used to carry water to home”. So, it is obviously understood that comparatively Bangla tends to use more body parts in expressing emotions unlike its English counterpart.

It is an interesting fact to point out that speakers of both languages tend to use BLOOD essentially as the major flowing liquid in the body to denote the negative emotion

ANGER unlike the other cases of emotions like HAPPINESS or SADNESS for which no specific liquid is generally mentioned.

B. Emotion Is Vertical Entity

In grammatical structure, English and Bangla are different to a large extent. But at the basic conceptual level of forming emotion metaphor, Bangla can be seen as identical to English. We know from the previous discussion that metaphorical entailment of the master mapping EMOTION IS VERTICAL ENTITY can generate specific contrastive metaphors like HAPPINESS IS UP or SADNESS IS DOWN. These metaphors explain the orientation of vertical domain with the domain of being in a happy or sad state of mind. Actually in real life we don't take care of these metaphors as they have been so conventionalised to be termed as 'metaphor' in the traditional sense of the term. These are 'universal' because human beings have an upright body posture and this bodily uprightness has favorably an effect on both of the physical and mental or emotional state. Now, the following discussion will focus mainly on the comparative study of expressions of two basic emotion concepts in the concerned languages, namely HAPPINESS and SADNESS for a systematic investigation.

a. Happiness

We can derive following expressions from the HAPPINESS IS UP metaphor:

- a. *je k^huʃiṭe ujǰəl hoe uṭ^hlo* ("He is brightened up with *joy*.")
- b. *je k^hub b^halo mejaje ac^he* ("He is in a *good mood*.")
- c. *ganṭi ʃune je caṅga holo* ("He became *fresh* hearing the song.")

In the above examples, the emotion words or phrases like *k^huʃiṭe* ('in joy'), *b^halo mejaj-e* ('in good mood'), *caṅga* ('fresh') are orientationally meant for indicating some upward movement and therefore they have positive connotation in their meanings. These emotional states have to be synchronised with some of the spatial dimensions to be successfully communicated.

Apart from these, HAPPINESS could also be expressed by the more specific metaphorical structure HAPPINESS IS OFF THE GROUND:

- a. *je k^huʃiṭe nece uṭ^hlo* ("He *danced up* with joy.")
- b. *je anonḍe akaf c^hulo* ("He *touched the sky* with joyfulness.")

- c. *je tɔk^hon haoay b^haf^che* (“He is then *floating in the air.*”)

But unlike English, in Bangla the concept of being OFF THE GROUND may also convey the superior or snobbish behaviour of the person concerned. This concept carrying this sense is rarely used or not so much elaborately available in English expressions. Instances of such kind can be:

ɔar pa maɕiɕe por^he na, Lit. “His feet are *not touching the ground.*” (i.e. “He has become snobbish.”)

Other than this, feeling HAPPINESS may be expressed in terms of blooming FLOWERS in Bangla:

k^hɔborɕi ɕune ɔar mone ekɕi aɕar p^hul p^huɕlo, Lit. “Hearing the news a *flower of hope blossoms* in his mind.” (i.e. “Hearing the news he has found a new hope.”)

b. Sadness

In the case of negative emotion, sadness comes first. Now we know that most of the time, sadness appears to be the opposite of happiness. Then we may surmise that it is also processed in the same vertical relationship in contrast with happiness. Often, we make use of it to indicate someone’s sad mood. Naturally, a wide range of conventional expressions could be derived from the metaphor SADNESS IS DOWN:

- a. *je hoɕafay nimojjito holo* (“He had *sunk into* depression.”)
b. *je ɕukk^he b^heɕge porlo* (“He was *broken down* with sorrow.”)
c. *k^harap k^hɔborɕi ɕune je aɕahɔto bod^h korlo*. (“Hearing the bad news he felt *disappointed.*”)

Words or phrases like *hoɕafa-y* (‘in depression’), *ɕukk^h-e* (‘in sorrow’), *aɕahɔto* (‘disappointed’) are orientationally expressed to evoke a sense of downward movement of the speaker’s body or mind and thereby denote negative connotations. By looking closely into the words used here like *nimojjito* (‘sunk’), *b^heɕge* (‘broken down’) we can crucially point out the related negative situation or state of affairs aroused by sadness. This is borne out of our physical positioning. The straight erected posture of the body is linked with the positive emotions like happiness or health and the drooping posture is simply targeted to produce our negative attitudes, emotions and perspectives.

But, sometimes metaphor like INTENSE SADNESS IS TOP may be projected to happen in both of the languages when the direction of being sad is the reverse, e.g.

‡ar ‡ukk^ho s**o**b fima c^haralo (“His sorrow *crossed all limit.*”)

SADNESS is also sometimes compared to DARKNESS in both languages, e.g.

- a. ami k^hub bi**f**o**n**no bod^h kor^hi (“I am feeling *gloomy.*”)
- b. ‡ar muk^h‡a ‡ukk^he o**n**d^ho**k**ar hoe g**e**lo (“His face turned *dark* in grief.”)
- c. ‡ar b^ho**b**i**f**f**o**t ni**f**pr**o**b^ho d**e**k^hacc^he (“His future looks *dim.*”)

Words like bi**f**o**n**no (‘gloomy’), o**n**d^ho**k**ar (‘dark’) or ni**f**pr**o**b^ho (‘dim’) in the above sentences amply specify the mood of sadness.

But there are also dissimilarities between expressions of these two languages as in Bangla expressions sadness is frequently reflected by the metaphor SADNESS IS PAIN IN THE BODY PART, e.g.

- a. ‡e ‡ar bu**k**e be^ha ‡i**l**o, Lit. “He *hurt his chest.*” (i.e. “He made him feel saddened.”)
- b. ‡e ‡ar h**r**i**d**o**y**e a**g**^ha‡**u** kor**l**o, Lit. “He *struck his heart.*” (i.e. “He disheartened him.”)

Words like bu**k** (‘chest’), h**r**i**d**o**y** (‘heart’) act like the container which holds the pain inside it. Since sadness caused by pain is commonly kept hidden by most people, it cannot be communicated unless people express them through metaphorical terms.

Conclusion

Therefore, the cross-linguistic similarities in the conceptualisation of emotions like happiness or sadness through the same source domain elements are easily observable by this comparative study of English and Bangla expressions except in some occasional cases. In short, comparing these languages on the basis of orientational emotion metaphors, this study corroborates explicitly that emotion metaphors are universal or near-universal and could be found uniformly in languages which are markedly differentiated by distinct social, cultural and ecological salience or scenarios. There is no doubt that some emotion metaphors which are of orientational kind are truly common at least for these two languages. It is sufficient to believe that these metaphors happen to co-exist in both of the languages. This fact also provides strong support for the conceptual nature of fundamental human thought regarding certain metaphors, that they are not arbitrarily selected or originated in linguistic or pragmatic

context. Though it could not be denied that language faithfully reflects the related culture and metaphorical structure of a language stands for unique linguistic and cultural richness, it is comprehensively clear that bodily correspondence is dominant in any language whether or not they belong to same language group.

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