A Study of Structural Metaphor in Selected English Proverbs

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Abstract. *This study examines structural metaphor as one of the three forms of conceptual metaphor established by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their book Metaphors We Live By: structural, orientational, and ontological metaphor. According to this idea, metaphor is more than just an aesthetic tactic employed by writers and poets to embellish and decorate their writings and poems; instead, they are logical structures reside in our brains to conceive more sophisticated features. As a result, metaphor is more than just a linguistic element; it is also an embodiment of human nature. Similarly, proverbs are verbal results of human experience and connection with nature or the world, and have been believed to be one of life's guidelines. This paper adopts Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2010) models in which he divides conceptual metaphor into source and target domains. It aims at analysing proverbs by specifying the structural metaphors of the proverbs under study and identifying the source and target domains of these metaphors. Based on the data analysis, it was found that six out of the thirteen source domains and seven of the target domains identified by Kövecses (2010) were found in the study.*

Key words: *Structural metaphor, Proverbs, Source domain, Target domain.*

Introduction

This notion of the "Conceptual Theory of Metaphor" first came out by "Lakoff and Johnson (1980)". They posited the fact that metaphors make up a crucial part in our daily life and heavily contribute to our conceptual thought processes, which are used when thinking and acting. Such theories claim that metaphors make it easier to understand about cognition, emotions, as well as events of life itself, according to Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:3. In the first structural metaphor of "Argument Is War," they introduce the phenomenon of mental debate with a concrete and simply understood concept of physical conflict.

The basic idea of the "conceptual metaphor theory" is that there is a set of organised correspondences referred to as "metaphorical mappings" that could potentially be used to discuss the "abstract" target domain in terms of the "concrete" source domain. These analogies can be found in both innovative poetry language and ordinary language (Weisberg, 2012:10). In general, conceptual metaphor is a mental representation of two seemingly disparate but really linked areas; it is a mental process that allows us to perceive the universe (Lakoff, 1993: 206). He (ibid) goes on to say that conceptual metaphors are made up of ontological mappings between domains rather than words or grammatical components. In conceptual metaphors, letters "A" and "B" stand for the target domain and the source domain respectively; for instance, in the example "ARGUMENT IS WAR," letters "ARGUMENT" and "WAR" stand for the two domains-the target and the source respectively. The mapping can then be used to describe the two domains of the conceptual metaphor--the abstract aim and the concrete source. Mapping is a word that "systematic metaphorical correspondences between closely related ideas" (Grady, 2007:190). Conceptual metaphor theory terms metaphors as stable one-way mappings of content between disparate domains of thought. In that sense, they move from one domain to

another. 'Highlighting' and 'hiding' are metaphorical concepts inherent to maps. Kövecses (2010) states that, in this case, there are things that are highlighted in the target domain and others that are played down. Even with metaphorical mappings, there is the quality of "utilisation". Kövecses (ibid: 93) defines "utilisation" as the process of knowing the TD by drawing on just a subset of the SD. In addition, metaphorical mapping has the quality of 'entailment,' which means it can provide existing and new similarities. To attain this quality, extensive new information must be transferred across the source and destination domains that was not available to either previously. According to Lakoff (1993:245), metaphorical mappings are characterized by the following:

1. Metaphorical mappings take place between two conceptual domains, namely the source domain and the target domain.

2. Mappings are symmetric and partial, highlighting just some characteristics while hiding other ones.

3. When these mappings are activated, they can emerge inference patterns from the source domain and apply them onto the target domain.

4. The Invariance Principle structures metaphorical mappings. This means that the structure of image schema transmitted from the source domain to the target domain coincides with the intrinsic structure of the target domain.

5. These projections are based on what we feel and what we encounter in our daily lives, so they are not random.

6. Our conceptual system incorporates hundreds of conventional metaphorical mappings that are sub-systems of our conceptual system.

7. They are classified into two types: conceptual and image mappings. Many concepts can be transferred from the source domain to the target domain via conceptual mappings. image mappings, on the other hand, only map a single image to another. Nonetheless, they both follow the Invariance Principle.

Structural metaphor is a sort of metaphor that demonstrates how metaphors are commonly employed in our life, even unintentionally. In their 1980 work, Lakoff and Johnson pointed out that there exist three types of conceptual metaphors that cut across one another. There are also two more types of metaphors that include ontological and orientational. Lakoff and Johnson (ibid) assert that the structural metaphor is a set of metaphors where one complex idea—not felt by the body and often abstract—is talked of in terms of another concept, often felt by the body and concrete—Lesz (2011: 13).

Proverbs are economic mental representations since they can explain many different circumstances. Proverbs are an intriguing and valuable source of folk knowledge. A proverb, according to Hussein and Khalaf, is an inner remark that seeks to advise or warn (2004:4). Because their literal meanings are not always realized, most proverbs are spoken metaphorically, as points out Saeed (1997:15). Meider referred to the proverb as "a short generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, moral and traditional views in a metaphorical and memorizable form and which is handed from generation to generation" (2004:3).

Studies on proverb comprehension have been conducted within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Turner 1989). For instance, take blind blames the ditch, which is regarded as "being not just about blind people but about a broader class of people, people who have some incapacity" (Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 162). Moreover, the proverb "barking dogs seldom bite" can be a representation of somebody who speaks out powerfully but cannot really harm somebody. That is, do not be afraid of those who fight very emotionally. You can apply this proverb to many cases. For instance, it can be used in the case where your manager is furious at you because you were late to the office but is afraid of reprimanding you.

The Problem of the Study

Since there are a lot of aspects of the metaphor, generalization regarding meaning, origin, and everyday application is pretty hard. Moreover, in most cases, it's also unclear whether the part of the

source or the part of the target domain is targeted by the structural metaphor. Nonetheless, this paper does its best to respond to the following questions:

1. What types of structural metaphors are found in the selected proverbs?

2. How can these structural metaphors be analysed and attributed to the source and target domains to which they belong?

Aims of the Study

It's going to analyze some selected English proverbs for structural metaphors with the help of frameworks set by Lakeoff and Johnson back in the 1980 publication Metaphors We Live By along with Kövecses conceptual model 2010.

Methodology

The Adopted Model

Our analysis of structural metaphor is dependent on Kövecses (2010) in which he classifies conceptual metaphors into source domain and target domain. Some of the most common domains that the conceptual metaphors are metaphorically drawn from include; the human body, diseases, plants, buildings, equipment, instruments, games and sports, economic transactions, cookery, temperature, lighting, darkness, forces, direction, among others. (Kövecses 2010: 18-22). Emotions, desires, nations, politics, businesses, human connections, communication, time, life/death, religion, and events/actions were the main categories into which his (ibid) moral framework was divided.
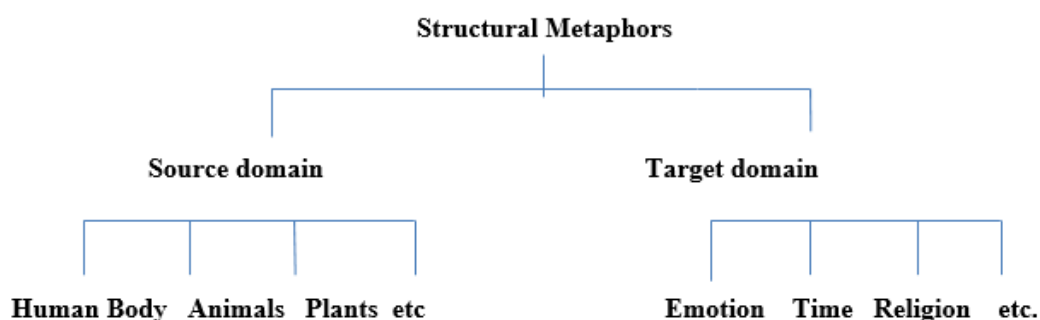

Figure (1): The Adopted Model

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

We rely on the English proverbs that come from Mieder's Dictionary of American Proverbs (1992), widely acknowledged as the first comprehensive book of its kind anchored on empirical field research. (Mieder, 1992, p. ix).

Data Analysis

A hedge between keeps Friendship green

This proverb is taken from the structural metaphor FRIENDSHIP IS A PLANT. The target domain friendship is understood in terms of the conceptual organization of the source domain of Plants instantiated by the word (green). People approve privacy and individuality. Friendship is likely to be more successful when there may be a degree of privacy among friends. The hedge does not represent only the physical barrier, rather it is a reminder that a good friendship doesn't have to be intrusive.

A soft answer turns away wrath

This proverb belongs to the structural metaphor "ANGER (WRATH) IS A MOVING OBJECT" . Here, the TD of Emotion represented by 'anger' is conceptualised in terms of the source domain of objects. It is taken from the Bible. The background knowledge offers understanding of the power of words in altering difficult circumstances and soothing individuals in peaceful and relaxing ways. We much too frequently fall into people's traps when they are attempting to get a rise out of us , especially when we react violently, in a snappish manner, or with an angry outburst. Responding harshly to

someone who enjoys picking conflicts simply serves to inflame rage by putting fuel onto the fire. Instead, it would be better to respond gently, other times, it would be better to keep quiet or just walk away.

Let not your tongue cut your throat

This proverb is taken from the structural metaphor "TONGUE IS A CUTTING INSTRUMENT". It maps the cutting instrument to the tongue and the murderer to the speaker. The background knowledge informs us that it is crucial to be careful and cautious while selecting our words. The use of inappropriate language can be fatal. One should pay attention to every word he utters, and not to speak words that will be the cause of his doom.

Thunder without rain is like words without actions.

This proverb is taken from the structural metaphor **HUMAN ACTIONS ARE NATURAL FORCES**. The element 'words' is conceptualised in terms of 'thunder' and 'action' is conceptualised in terms of 'rain'. This structural mapping can be interpreted as the following proposition: Human behaviour, including words and deeds, may have unanticipated results.

A fox is not caught twice in the same snare

People are animals is a structural metaphor that encompasses this proverb. 'fox' from the source domain Animals is mapped into the target domain Humans. The following idea can be used as a vehicle for this mapping: one should not repeat his mistakes but rather learn from them.

Men and melons are hard to know

This proverb is derived from the structural metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS. The conceptual organization of the source domain of Plants, represented by (melon), is used to view the target domain of People. According to this adage, it's very difficult to read people's minds. The relationship between this fruit's thick rind and its interior is comparable to the relationship between a man's outward appearance and his core principles. This relationship shows how difficult it is to understand men and melons. This proverb so illustrates the dual aspect of human nature because there is a distinction between men's outer (appearance) and interior (values) sides.

Women are the devil's net

The structural metaphor of this proverb is People ARE OBJECTS / TOOLS . Here, the source domain of Objects represented by the word 'net' is mapped onto the target domain of People , particularly 'women'. In this proverb, the devil is viewed as the hunter , men as the prey, and women as nets. The devil employs females to entice men into his traps. This proverb could be expressed through the proposition : The relationship between devil and women are the same as that of the hunter and the net.

As the baker , so the buns ; as the father so the sons

This proverb belongs to the structural metaphor PEOPLE ARE KINDS OF FOOD. Here, the 'baker' is mapped onto 'father' and the 'bun' is mapped onto 'son'. This projection or mapping yields the father - son and the baker-bun relationship. According to this proverb, there is an inseparable bond between the father and his son since children usually resemble their parents in character or as it is said, the apple doesn't fall far from its tree.

Money does not grow on trees

It is possible for money to be conceptualized as plants. This proverb, for example, is derived from the conceptual metaphor **MONEY IS A PLANT**. The term "plant" is used in the target domain to represent "money" in the original realm. When plants "grow" from one stage to another, it means just that. Money growth is sometimes compared to the expansion of a plant. Although there are some similarities between the two, earning money is not as simple as growing fruit, so this proverb usually expresses the sense that one should be careful about how to spend his money because it requires effort and hard work. This proverb refers to the reality that trees frequently yield fruit for people, whether or not these people cultivate them. Unfortunately, money cannot be picked from trees like fruit. You

have to work to earn it or be fortunate enough to be given it. Either way, you have to spend it carefully because it is limited in quantity. This proverb is said to warn people to be careful how much money they spend, because there is only a limited amount.

Why buy a cow when you can get the milk free

This proverb is a metaphorical expression of the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS. This proverb, which raises a rhetorical question, is employed in a variety of contexts, but it is most frequently employed as "an argument against marriage." (Mieder, 1992, p. 123 ; Speake , 2008, p. 63). According to this proverb, individuals avoid purchasing expensive goods if they can readily obtain the desired advantage. Men who don't want to get married because they may enjoy all the advantages of marriage without doing so are typically the target of this proverb.

Gluttony kills more than the sword

The exact meaning of gluttony is an excess of eating and habitual greed. It is an old proverb by Alexander Barclay. The obsessive desire to eat is called gluttony. It is linked to greed, and in Christianity, both are viewed as fatal sins. The proverb is derived from the conceptual metaphor GLUTTONY IS A SWORD. The source domain of machines and tools represented by the word 'sword' is mapped onto the target domain of desire represented by 'gluttony'. People who die because of satiety are more than those who die in wars. Excessive and unhealthy eating habits are more harmful to people's health than war.

Findings of the Analysis

Table (1): Structural metaphor in the English proverbs

The Proverbs	The Structural Metaphors	Source Domains	Target Domains
A hedge between keeps friendship green	FRIENDSHIP IS PLANT	Plant	Human Relationships
"Let not your tongue cut your throat"	TONGUE IS A CUTTING INSTRUMENT	Machines & Tools	Communication
"Thunder without rain is like words without actions."	HUMAN ACTIONS ARE NATURAL FORCES`	Forces	Action
"A fox is not caught twice in the same place"	PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS	Animals	Society
"Men and melons are hard to know"	PEOPLE ARE PLANTS	Plants	Society
"Women are the devil's net"	PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS / TOOLS	Machines & Tools	Society
"As the baker , so the buns ; as the father so the sons"	PEOPLE ARE KINDS OF FOOD	Cooking & Food	Society
Money does not grow on trees	MONEY IS A PLANT	Plants	Economy
"Poverty is the mother of crime"	POVERTY IS A MOTHER	Human being	Economy
"Why buy a cow when you can get the milk free"	PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS	Animals	Society
"Gluttony kills more than the sword"	GLUTTONY IS A SWORD	Machines and Tools	Desire

Table (1): Frequency Distribution of Source and Target Domains in the proverbs.

Source Domains	Number	Target Domain	Number
Human body	1	Emotion	1
Health and illness	0	Desire	1
Animals	2	Morality	0
Plants	3	Thought	0
Buildings and construction	0	Society/Nation	5
Machines and tools	4	Politics	0
Games and sport	0	Economy	2
Money and economic transactions	0	Human Relationships	1
Cooking and food	1	Communication	1
Heat and cold	0	Time	0
Light and darkness	0	Life and Death,	0
Forces and movement	1	Religion	0
Direction	0	Events and Actions	1

Conclusion

The study reaches the following conclusions:

1. Physical notions help us grasp and articulate abstract ideas, and metaphor, especially structural metaphor, is essential to our everyday lives.

2. Structural metaphor in the given proverbs were analysed according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2010) models.

3 The study proves that structural metaphors can be classified into source domain and target domain. Six out of the thirteen source domains ; namely , those related to human body, animals, plants , machines and tools, cooking and food, forces and movement were found in the paper. In addition, seven of the target domains; namely, those related to emotion , desire , society/nation , economy , human relationships, communication, events and actions were identified.

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