

Metaphors in Different Cultures

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Abstract

The most essential values of certain culture are closely connected with the metaphorical structure of the most essential concepts in language. Having analyzed the nature of metaphors and comparing Georgian and English metaphors we may come to the conclusion that the metaphors in these languages are both different and identical due to specific characteristics of Georgian and English cultures. This view was verified on the bases of specific examples.

I.

The values of certain culture are closely connected with the metaphorical structure of the most essential concepts in language, and the peculiarities of the spirit of nation are expressed in the "inner form" of language. According to this view, which I find convincing, the "inner form" is created by the "meanings" that compose the spirit of a nation and "world view" determined by this spirit. That is why I think that one of the most important ways of studying of "inner form" is by observing metaphor as it occurs in the language and characterizes conceptual system of the nation, and by attempting a comparative analysis of this phenomenon in different national languages.

From the later epochs on, metaphors play an important role, not only in everyday speech, but also in written works, and naturally enough, metaphors constitute a significant component in many languages of many writers.

If we consider the historical development of the Georgian language, it was always influenced by foreign invaders. The Georgian language experienced pursuit and oppression in the past centuries, especially in the 19-th century when it was expelled from state institutions and was replaced by Russian. Russian teachers who worked in Georgia at the time had one definite aim –a Russification policy. It lasted for many centuries, that is the reason we now have many metaphors with a Russian-meaning in Georgian. It is also worth noting another language influence--- that of English,

although its introduction has not been the result of an invasion. Nevertheless, there are many metaphors with an English meaning in contemporary Georgian.

According to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson Communication is structured as a process of sending certain physical substances. When people communicate with each other every day, they give information to an addressee. This process can be described in the following way:

1. Ideas are objects.
2. Linguistic expressions are containers.
3. Communication is sending.

The speaker puts the specific ideas into words. The recipient understands, receives these words, which means he/she "takes out" the ideas inserted into them. Many of these ideas are expressed metaphorically, and even complex metaphors are often present and easily detected in the language.

I gave that idea.

Your reasons came through to us.

It's difficult to put my ideas into words.

When you have a good idea, try to capture it immediately in words.

Try to put more thoughts into fewer words.

Don't force your meaning into the wrong words.

G . Lakoff thinks that there is another kind of metaphorical concept, one that doesn't structure one concept in terms of another but instead organizes a whole system of concepts which relate to one another. He calls them "orientation metaphors".

These metaphors give a concept a spatial orientation. Such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary as they have a basis in physical and cultural experience.

There are metaphors (cognitive) In Georgian: *bedniereba agaprens* which means in English --- *happy is up* and *ubedureba dzirs daganarcxebs* which means --- *sad is down*, which, in the conceptual system of the Georgian , are reflected in the language.

In this case the vertical location in the space is the source, and emotions (*happiness and unhappiness*) are the target. Their existence is clearly seen in the following metaphorical expressions:

1. *I'm feeling up;*
2. *that boosted my spirits;*
my spirits rose;
you are in high spirits
3. *I'm feeling down*

4. *I'm depressed;*

he is really low these day;

I fell into a depression

The cognitive metaphor - the *mind is a machine* is purely English. The association of the mind with a machine is conditioned by the cultural and psychological aspects which is basic for the western cultures.

The following cognitive metaphors exist in Georgian as well as in English. We can give some examples:

Emotions-heart;

Argument is war;

Time is money;

Chief-head etc.

Let us say a few words about the metaphor "Emotions are heart". In Georgian, the literal meaning of the word "guli" is "heart", but its figurative meaning in metaphorical expressions is emotion. This cognitive metaphor is reflected in the language by means of metaphorical expressions.

e.g. *to take to heart,*
with all one's heart,
to break a person's heart
to have one's heart in the right place,
to give one's heart to smb,
to set one's heart on smb, etc.

In the case of the metaphor "Argument is war", common features of phenomenon is completely objective and massively perceived. These features are confrontation, opposite positions, defense, opposing parties, gaining a victory, suffering a defeat. On the basis of these common characteristics, the connection between war and argument is quite realistic, i.e. the metaphor "argument is war is a real type.

As for "Time is money" apart from other metaphors this metaphor is used in the language as a proverb. It figures out money-related phrases which are used in connection with time in English.

These cognitive metaphors do not exist in a language in these concrete forms, they exist in "middle world". We can only become aware of their existence by means of observing all types of speech in Georgian language. This is where certain structures, expressions exist. They verify the existence of general national metaphor in the conceptual system, which is reflected in language in the form of certain metaphorical

expressions. Essence is perceived by means of color in “The Knight in the Tiger Skin”, written by our greatest poet Shota Rustaveli. These expressions can not be translated into English as the metaphor itself exists in Georgian only.

Judging from the evidence presented in language we think that sometimes one and the same concept might have several cognitive models.

We have come across the cases when one and the same source domain possesses several target domains and its cognitive models are reflected in the language by means of metaphorical expressions.

The phenomenon is expressed in the structure of metaphor in the following way. Both inputs employed in a metaphor have several signs, so that this input really possesses them or they are ascribed to it by people. Not all the signs take part in creating semantic parallelism or in creating metaphor, only just some of them. But all the signs enter our conception and stir our imagination. This is the very mechanism that results into creating several cognitive models by one and the same concept.

Sometimes the coincidence of material in Georgian and in English does not imply the similarity of world view. We can consider Georgian “Deda ena” and English “mother tongue” as an example. This term “mother tongue” has different socio-cultural coloring in different European languages.

In Georgian –“deda”, the word for “mother”, is a good example of this. It is a “generator” of positive semantic space. In compounding this word serves as an adjectival component meaning “main”, “principal”, “patron”, “protector”, “supporter”.

These cognitive models do not exist in English. “Tavi”-- the word for “head” is another good example of this phenomenon. It means not only certain part of human body but a” person in general”(with its soul and body) as well as “main”, “chief”, which is reflected in language by means of metaphorical words and expressions.

The conception was based on the English language material though I think it concerns other languages as well. It is therefore very important for me to establish the existence of the same phenomenon in the Georgian language, as well as coincidences and differences between the English and Georgian Languages in this respect.

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