

## COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF METAPHORS FOR BASIC EMOTIONS IN ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN

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**ABSTRACT:** THE PAPER FOCUSES ON SOME COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF METAPHORS FOR BASIC EMOTIONS IN ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN, APPLYING A CORPUS-BASED METHOD. EXAMPLES FROM ON-LINE CORPORA OF CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND AMERICAN AS WELL AS PHRASEOLOGICAL DICTIONARIES HAVE BEEN USED. THE CONCEPT OF BASIC EMOTION IS DEFINED WHILE TRYING TO ILLUSTRATE IT WITH EXAMPLES FROM BOTH ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN. METAPHORS OF HAPPINESS, SADNESS, ANGER, FEAR AND JOY ETC. ARE ANALYSED AS EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONS WHICH ARE MOST COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS BASIC. THE APPROACH IS BASED ON FORMER RESEARCH BY LAKOFF, JOHNSON AND KÖVECSES. THE PAPER DISCUSSES METAPHORICAL SCHEMAS IN ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS. GENERALLY, IN BOTH LANGUAGES THE SAME SCHEMAS ARE PRESENT IN COGNITIVE METAPHORS FOR BASIC EMOTIONS SUCH AS THE CONTAINER SCHEMA, THE VERTICALITY SCHEMA, THE FORCE SCHEMA, ONTOLOGICAL SCHEMA ETC. THERE ARE SOME DIFFERENCES ON THE LEVEL OF LINGUISTIC METAPHORS THAT CORRESPOND TO COMMON CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN THE LANGUAGES UNDER DISCUSSION. SOME DISSIMILARITIES ARE DUE TO CERTAIN CULTURAL SPECIFICITIES WHERE MYTH AND CULTURE-BOUND PHILOSOPHIES ARE INTERTWINED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXACT 'LOCATION' OF SOME EMOTIONS IN THE BODY IS LANGUAGE SPECIFIC AS WELL AS THE COLOURS USED IN METAPHORS FOR PARTICULAR EMOTIONS. GENERALLY, THERE ARE MORE SIMILARITIES THAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN REGARDING CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS FOR BASIC EMOTIONS.

**KEY WORDS:** COGNITIVE, METAPHORS, SCHEMA, COGNITIVE MODELS, BASIC EMOTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

THE aim of the present study is to make the distinction between certain points of universality and culture specificities of metaphors of some basic emotions in two languages belonging to different language families (English and Bulgarian). It does not claim to be extensive but rather presents a bird's eye view of certain points of differences in schemas and domains of experience. The corpus includes examples from dictionaries, on-line corpora and papers listed under references.

COGNITIVE linguists have done considerable research in the field of emotion concepts (Lakoff, Johnson, Kövecses, Werzbicka). In fact, most linguists, psychologists and anthropologists have pointed out the close relationship between language and emotions. Being expressive figures of speech, metaphors and metonymies are especially useful in research as they are often used to represent emotion concepts. Imagery that is characteristic of metaphors is typical of human thinking and actions (Lakoff, Johnson, Kövecses, Palmer). Metaphors and metonymies are also representative of folk theories of emotions, giving evidence of a picture of a world that is related to human cultural values and beliefs.

**THERE** are two general issues that linguists have been interested in: 1. Are there basic (prototypical) emotions common for most languages? 2. Is emotion meaning affected by culture?

**REGARDING** the first issue opinions differ. For certain researchers (Gibbs, quoted after Kövecses, and Palmer, 1999) anger, love, sadness, happiness and fear are among the best universal examples of the category emotion. According to psychologists (Izard, 1991) basic emotions are more. According to Werzicka only basic semantic elements building emotional meaning are universal. According to Kövecses, Palmer (1999) the emotion concepts combine universal experience of physiology with culture-specific models. Here common physiology is mixed with differences in cultural knowledge effected through different culture-bound rules and scenarios. Kövecses also mentions 'differential experiential focus' (Kövecses, 2005) focusing on the fact that different conceptual components can be emphasized in different cultures.

**THE** following part of the presentation discusses a number of schemas and their models (equivalent to conceptual metaphors) used in examples of linguistic metaphors for basic emotions, applying the broader understanding of 'basic' from psychology (Izard, 1991). Izard's list includes: interest, joy, surprise, sadness/grief/depression, anger, disgust, fear and anxiety, shame, guilt, love. The following schemas with examples from Bulgarian, have previously been researched by Karagiozova (2004, 2005, 2007).

## COGNITIVE SCHEMAS REPRESENTING EMOTIONS

1. **THE FORCE SCHEMA** Cognitive schema (prototype) of force or image schema of force after M. Johnson 1987.

**THE** most widely spread model for its realization is a vector of force (i.e source) - impact on an object – trajectory of the movement of the object under the influence of the force. Some authors (Cienky, 1996) represent that schema in the following way: "source (of the impact) – path (walked by the object) – aim", the path could be interpreted either literally or not literally (either as movement with a definite goal or as change in the state, caused by some reason, and even as development). The different interpretations of the prototype form the wide range of its application – for activities aimed at achievement of a specific goal, processes related with the change in condition or causality. Not all structural elements of the prototype are realized. On certain occasions only the source and goal are made explicit while on other occasions only the trajectory is made explicit in its final point (the result). This schema can be found in metaphors in both languages. It can be represented by the following models:

1.1. EMOTIONS ARE DIRECTED ACTIVITIES (THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE IMPACT AND THE SUBJECT - SOURCE). (THE TRANSLATIONS AFTER THE ASTERISK ARE LITERAL IN ORDER FOR THE IMAGERY TO BE PRESERVED.)

### **BULGARIAN:**

Поливам с вряла/студена вода някого /\*Pour hot/cold water on somebody. (take somebody by surprise in an unpleasant way)

Изкарвам акъла /ума на някого/\*Take the wits out of somebody. (frighten somebody)

Поставям пръст в раната/\*Put a finger in somebody's wound. (make somebody suffer)

### **ENGLISH:**

Scare the wits out of somebody/to be scared out of one's wits (frighten somebody)

The linguistic metaphor 'pour/throw cold water on something' is used informally with a slightly different meaning in English. If you pour cold water on opinions or ideas, you criticize them and stop people believing them or being excited about them. e.g. Margaret Thatcher poured cold water on the idea of a European central bank.

#### 1.2. EMOTIONS ARE THE IMPACTS OF A NATURAL FORCE (OBJECT).

##### **BULGARIAN:**

Камък ми пада на сърцето \*A stone fell on my heart. (grief)  
Червей ми гризе сърцето \*A worm is eating my heart (grief)  
Мравки ми лазят по гърба \*Ants are creeping on my back. (fear)

##### **ENGLISH:**

I was overwhelmed.

I was swept off my feet.

What is culture-specific about the examples from Bulgarian is the conceptualization of sadness/grief as an object from the environment moving of the entity from one location to another (the body).

#### 1.3. AN EMOTION IS PRESSURE ON A CONTAINER (THE BODY OR AN ORGAN). THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE ACTIVITY THAT IS REPRESENTED METAPHORICALLY.

##### **BULGARIAN:**

Пръска ми се, пука ми се главата \*My head bursts. (frustration)

##### **ENGLISH:**

Burst with pride, burst with excitement, burst with joy have their literal equivalents in Bulgarian, too.

My parents were bursting with pride when I graduated from college. / Joe was just bursting with excitement because of his triumph. When I got my grades, I could have burst with joy. In Bulgarian the phrase 'burst with pride' is also used. In other words one and the same domain (bursting of a container) is used for different emotions such as frustration and pride. It is also used for anger in both Bulgarian and English.

#### 1.4. AN EMOTION IS THE EFFECT OF A FORCE ON THE BODY/A BODY ORGAN THAT BREAKS ITS NORMAL FUNCTIONING. IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT IT CAN BE DESTROYED (THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE RESULT). THE RESULTS CAN VARY FROM CHANGE IN THE SIZE, TEMPERATURE, COLOUR, MAKING THE ORGAN MOTIONLESS, APPEARANCE OF ADDITIONAL PARTS.

##### **BULGARIAN:**

Надува ми се главата/ \*my head swells (boredom)  
Очите ми стават на ластик, понички/ \*my eyes become elastic (interest)  
Нозете му се скъсили/ \*his feet have become shorter (fear)  
Изсъхва ми сърцето, душицата/\*My heart/soul goes dry (sadness)  
Черно ми е, чернее ми пред очите/ \*it is all black in front of me (anger)  
Изтрили ми са се веждите/ \*my eyebrows are wiped (shame)  
Със замряло, премряло сърце (страх) \*with withering heart (fear)  
Къса ми се сърцето/\*My heart is torn. (sadness, grief)  
Позеленявам от яд/\*go green with anger (anger)  
Почервениям от гняв/\* go red with anger (anger)  
Огън в черния дроб (obsolete)/ \* fire in the liver (anxiety)

The last example is most probably related to some local myth as a similar example also exists in modern Greek. The location of anxiety/depression in the liver is not common for English at

all. In English anxiety is referred to by the linguistic metaphor 'have butterflies in one's stomach' where the location is the stomach.

**ENGLISH:**

Driving through the mountains was a hair-raising experience.

The expressions 'to have cold feet' and 'to see red' are other examples for model 1.4. The above model is associated primarily with fear or anger in English while in Bulgarian there are more emotions associated with the model (sadness, interest, boredom). 'Hair-raising' has the same equivalent in Bulgarian.

## 2. THE CONTAINER SCHEMA. The container schema (after Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

The container scheme is realized by means of three models. (Body is a container for the emotions; The emotion itself is a container; The body/or part of it is experiencer.)

The reason why this schema is used for emotions lies probably in the fact that emotions occur in the human body, serving as a divide between the inner and outer world.

### 2.1. BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS.

**BULGARIAN:**

В X се събужда съжаление, любов....към ....( \*regret/love is aroused in X)

В X се ражда надежда за.... (\*hope rises in X)

**ENGLISH:**

Anger rose in him.

#### 2.1.1. THE HEART IS A CONTAINER.

**BULGARIAN:**

Напълва ми се сърцето/\* My heart is filled. (an expression of satisfaction)

Кръв капе от сърцето/\*Blood is dripping from my heart. (deep sorrow)

Мед ми капе, пада на сърцето/ \*Honey drops on my heart. (satisfaction)

Затваря ми се сърцето (мъка, скръб, безразличие) \* My heart is closed. (sorrow, sadness, indifference)

Пада ми, падне ми в сърцето \* Falls on my heart. (to like/love something)

**ENGLISH:**

The anti-hunting campaigners are just a bunch of bleeding hearts who don't understand the countryside.

One's heart bleeds is often used humorously to mean the opposite.

My heart bleeds for the poor children caught up in the fighting.

Brenda can't afford another diamond necklace? My heart bleeds!

#### 2.1.2. THE HEAD IS A CONTAINER.

**BULGARIAN:**

Качва ми се кръвта в главата/ \*Blood rises to my head.(anger).

#### 2.1.3. EYE IS A CONTAINER/EYES ARE CONTAINERS OF EMOTIONS.

**BULGARIAN:**

Пълня окото, очите на някого./ \* Fill the eye/eyes of someone. (liking)

Напълват ми се очите./\* My eyes are filled.(liking)

Наливат ми се очите с кръв./ \* My eyes are filled with blood. (anger)

**ENGLISH:**

The English noun 'eyeful' is based on similar metaphorical extension and is also used to refer to an object that is likeable.

## 2.1.4. THE SOUL IS A CONTAINER.

**BULGARIAN:**

Напълва ми се душата / \*My soul is filled. (satisfaction)

## 2.1.5. THE THROAT IS A CONTAINER.

**BULGARIAN:**

Сърцето ми се качва в гърлото./\* My heart goes to my throat. (fear)

**ENGLISH:**

The English 'frog in one's throat/lump in one's throat' is regarded as a sign of fear.

I feel like I'm getting a frog in my throat when I have to speak in public.

## 2.1.6. SKIN IS A CONTAINER.

**BULGARIAN:**

Излизам от кожата си \*Go out of one's skin. (anger)

**ENGLISH:**

'Get under somebody's skin' is used to mean 'annoy'. E.g. It really got under my skin when he said women were bad drivers.

It is used with its second meaning of 'like' in 'Something about the haunting beauty of the place really got under my skin.' This is one of the few examples of polysemy in metaphorical expressions.

## 2.1.7. EYE SOCKETS ARE CONTAINERS.

**BULGARIAN:**

Очите изскачат от орбитите си.\*My eyes go out of their sockets.

The **ENGLISH** expression 'my eyes pop out' has a similar meaning.

## 2.1.8. THE EMOTION ITSELF IS A CONTAINER. THE ANALOGY OF THE BODY AND ITS ORGANS AS A CONTAINER IS EVIDENT HERE.

**BULGARIAN:**

Обзема ме гняв, ужас, радост, тъга, безпокойство.....(\* be enveloped by anger, horror, joy - free collocation)

**ENGLISH:**

Despair overwhelmed me.

There are different variants in both languages. Soul, for example is viewed as a container in Bulgarian as in other Slavic languages (Russian, for example) but not so typically in English. Almost all body parts can be containers of emotions in Bulgarian. Besides, as will later be seen, the concept of 'container' is often combined with the motion and 'in' or 'out' orientation.

## 2.1.9. THE BODY/OR PART OF IT IS EXPERIENCER. THE MODEL WAS PROPOSED BY PALMER, BENNETT &amp; STACEY (1999).

**BULGARIAN:**

Плаши ми се, уплаши ми се окото \*my eye was scared

## 3. INTENSITY SCHEMA. The schema of intensity of emotions is combined with the container schema in some of the following expressions.

The above is an important characteristic in verbalization of emotions. The objects' location is fixed. The models are the following:

## 3.1. AN EMOTION IS HEAT/COLD IN A CONTAINER. (HEAT CAN BE ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EMOTIONS).

**BULGARIAN:**

Вря и кипя/\*boil and seethe (anger)

Кръвта ми ври/\*my blood boils (agitation, excitement)

Кръвта ми се смразява, замръзва/\*my blood freezes (fear)

Изстива ми сърцето към някого/\*my heart goes cold towards someone

**ENGLISH:**

Laura was seething with rage as she entered the tax office. /We were seething with disgust at the rude way they treated the people who had just moved in.

The sad condition of these refugees would move a heart of stone to sympathy.

There was a coldness in her voice which chilled him.

3.2. AN EMOTION (OR RATHER THE LACK OF EMOTION) IS IDENTIFIED WITH A THICKENED BODY PART, ASSOCIATED WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS.

**BULGARIAN:**

Имам дебели очи/ \*have fat eyes (be shameless)

**ENGLISH:**

thick-skinned - insensitive to criticism

tough-skinned - insensitive - deficient in human sensibility; not mentally or morally sensitive; "insensitive to the needs of the patients".

3.3. AN EMOTION IS THE DEPTH OF A CONTAINER.

**BULGARIAN:**

Потъвам в земята от срам. \*sink in the ground with shame

**ENGLISH:**

Be deeply moved./Deep in my heart./Deep in my soul.

Intensity of emotion is similarly represented in both languages. Blood-boiling is associated with anger.

4. ORIENTATIONAL (VERTICALITY/HORIZONTALITY) SCHEMA. These are models of space orientation in terms of the oppositions up/down, in/out etc. (up is good, down is bad). Many situations have space dimensions in real life and could be explained by physical and cultural experience. For example, happiness in English and not only in English, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out, is associated with upward orientation whereas sadness is associated with downward orientation. Similarly, antonyms such as health/illness, heavy/light, bright/dark, more/less etc. are also interpreted as spacial and evaluatory, which affects their association with positive/negative emotions. The models used for the linguistic expression of space relations are the following:

4.1. VERTICAL MOVEMENT:

**BULGARIAN:**

Настръхват ми, изправят ми се, шръкват ми косите. \*My hair rises. (fear)

Повдигам рамене. \* shrug shoulders (indifference)

Вдигам пара \*let off steam (irritation)

**ENGLISH:**

to shrug shoulders, walk on air

4.2. HORIZONTAL MOVEMENT:

**BULGARIAN:**

Излиза ми душата/\* my soul goes out (grief)



Вадя душата някому/ \*take someone's soul out (torture someone)

Тегли ме сърцето към някого/ \*my heart draws me toward someone (to like someone)

**ENGLISH:**

He looked into his son's smiling eyes and felt a tug on his heartstrings.

4.3. AN EMOTION IS LIGHTNESS IN THE BODY (ITS ORGANS).

**BULGARIAN:**

Олеква ми на душата \*my soul goes light (comfort)

Тежи ми, тегне ми на душата (мъка) \* my soul is heavy (grief)

**ENGLISH:**

The English lexeme 'light-hearted' is built on that model.

4.4. AN EMOTION IS LIGHTNESS/DARKNESS IN (OR AROUND THE BODY).

**BULGARIAN:**

Посветва ми пред очите/ \*I see light in front of me (comfort)

Притъмнява ми пред очите/ \*I see dark (anger)

**ENGLISH:**

She lit up when we told her about our team's success.

No examples referring to the oppositions front/back, right/left were found.

5. **ONTOLOGICAL SCHEMA.** Here what is abstract (including emotions) is examined in terms of ontological entities – material objects and substances that are captured through the senses.

5.1. EMOTION IS FIRE.

**BULGARIAN :**

Гори ми сърцето \*my heart is burning (grief)

Запалва ми се, запалила ми се е главата \*my head is set on fire (elation)

Прегоряха ми очите от срам. \*my eyes are burned (shame)

**ENGLISH:**

My face is burning. (as symptom of anxiety) This is one of the examples which show that emotions are accompanied by actual physical sensations.

5.2. EMOTION (THE NEGATIVE ONE) IS UNPLEASANT TASTE.

**BULGARIAN :**

Правя кисела физиономия/ \*make a sour face (dissatisfaction)

С кисело лице/\*with a sour face (dissatisfaction)

Не се ядосвай, че ще ти се вкисне жлъчката \* Do not get angry. Your gall will get sour.

**ENGLISH:**

sour - ill-natured and disagreeable. The old man greeted us ill-naturedly, his face as sour as vinegar.

5.3. EMOTION IS A HARD OBJECT.

**BULGARIAN:**

Кораво сърце \* hard hearted (lack of emotion)

**ENGLISH:**

The sad condition of these refugees would move a heart of stone to sympathy.

5.4. EMOTION IS AN OBJECT-SOURCE OF SOUND.

**BULGARIAN :**

Писва ми главата/ \*my head rings (boredom)  
Гръмва ми главата/ \*my head blasts (boredom)  
Писват ми ушите / \*my ears ring (boredom)

#### 5.5. SCHEMA WITH A CULTURAL OR CULTURE-SPECIFIC ELEMENT.

This schema does not suggest that there is no cultural component in the previous examples. However, in the following models the cultural model is made more explicit. The following phrases refer to typical behavior – cultural habits, rituals, beliefs, etc.

##### **BULGARIAN :**

Обичам като леща на Великден \*like it as I like to have lentils at Easter (dislike)  
This example expresses irony because lentils is not traditional for Easter. Therefore, the meaning is 'I do not like it at all.'

С черен повой е повиван \*wrapped in black (misfortune)

The color of black is associated with suffering/ mourning. The expression is used to refer to someone who is very sad or unfortunate.

Срамува се като невяста в понеделник \*feel ashamed as a bride on Monday (shame)

Посипвам си главата с пепел \*put dust on one's head (despair)

#### 5.6. SCHEMA WITH A CHRISTIAN ELEMENT.

##### **BULGARIAN :**

Бълва огън и жупел/ \*let out fire (anger)

Разпъвам на кръст/\* crucify (cause suffering)

Вземат ме, хващат ме дяволите/ \*devils catch/grab me (anger)

Трънен венец/\*thorn wreath (grief)

Седни, па се кръсти \* sit and cross yourself (surprise)

The **ENGLISH** 'crucify' in its metaphorical meaning is used in a similar manner i.e. make someone suffer in 'crucified by guilt' for example.

#### 5.7. COGNITIVE SCHEMA WITH MYTHOLOGICAL ELEMENT.

##### **BULGARIAN:**

Танталови мъки \*Tantal suffering

The **ENGLISH** 'tantalize' is based on the same metaphorical extension used with degraded meaning for 'making someone frustrated'. The allusion is to Greek mythology.

#### **CONCLUSIONS:**

**AS** it has already been pointed out a cognitive schema (prototype) is realized through a certain set of mental structures (models) which every language has. This often means different imagery, different naive idea of the object present in metaphorical expressions for emotions. The differences presented above are primarily on the level of linguistic metaphors. The five schemas are represented in both languages. It seems that the force schema represents a wider variety of emotions in Bulgarian especially model 1.4 ( An emotion is the effect of a force on the body/a body organ that breaks its normal functioning.) There is a tendency of combining more than one model per emotion in both languages.

**IN** Bulgarian the acting force is combined with orientation (vertical). In Bulgarian the emphasis is on dynamics, the change of state. Eventually, common physiological experience and the ability to think metaphorically combine with certain specificities for each language.



Concerning anger Bulgarian is quite diverse in models. If one emotion is represented by more models can we claim that it is more important in a culture? It is difficult to prove the above hypothesis because more cultural components should be studied (not only emotions but also myths, traditions, beliefs, rituals, superstitions).

**FEW** of the models are related to different cultural codes such as beliefs, rituals and superstitions. From this point of view we can speak of not only linguistic but also ethnocultural specifics (schemas 5.6 and 5.7). On the other hand, there are certain language analogies. For example, there is an analogy in the prototype of intensity of emotions for the languages examined above.

**THE** exact 'location' of some emotions in the body is language specific (anxiety, located in the liver in a Bulgarian idiom) as well as the colours used in metaphors for particular emotions. For example, both green and red are associated with anger in Bulgarian (red/green with anger) whereas in English it is only red.

**GENERALLY**, there are more similarities than differences between English and Bulgarian regarding conceptual metaphors for basic emotions. The cognitive schemas and models of interpretation of emotions are most probably the same for all languages. However, different languages demonstrate different imagery and different lexicalization.

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