

USE OF 'EYE' METAPHOR IN IDIOMS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND URDU

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Original Article

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Abstract

Metaphorical conceptualization can vary across and within languages and cultures. Metaphors also vary along social and subcultural dimensions. The article focuses on the variation of idiomatic expression of "eye" metaphor in English and Urdu, to see how the metaphorical concept of 'eye' varies in the idioms of both languages. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) is used as a framework to investigate the metaphorical variations. Data has been taken from the standard dictionaries of both languages—"Oxford Learner's Dictionaries" for English and "Feroz-ul-Lughat" for Urdu. First, target and source domains of the use of 'eye' metaphors are identified. Second, the domain mappings for both languages are compared at conceptual level. Findings of the study show that although idioms of eye in both languages target same seven domains of EMOTION, STATE, FEELING, CAREFUL ATTENTION, LIMITATION, SPEED, ATTRACTION, the differences lie in the mapping of these domains. The findings have implications for future research in the fields of translation studies and comparative linguistics to understand that despite having universal properties, languages vary at the basic conceptual level.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, CMT (Conceptual Metaphor Theory), 'Eye' metaphor, comparative analysis

1. Introduction

Language plays an important role in the lives of people. It is a way of understanding people and different cultures. Cognitive linguistics offers a different perspective for studying language. Language performs two important functions that are symbolic and interactive. Cognitive linguistics studies the relationship between language, mind and sensory perceptual experiences. According to cognitive linguists, concepts shape our realities. It is how we perceive the universe around us. Our concepts are metaphorical in nature. Metaphors are not just devices of poetic imagination or flourished language as perceived by many people. Metaphors are present in our lives not only in language, but also in thoughts and actions. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of concept (target domain) in terms of another (source domain) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Concepts shape our realities. This is how we perceive the world around us. These concepts are largely metaphorical in nature. Thus, what we experience is metaphorical in nature. Metaphorical concepts have their basis in our physical and cultural experiences, and they can vary from culture to culture (Abernethy, 2022).

Idiom is a specific form of writing whose meaning is different from the individual meaning used by a particular person at a particular place and time (Oxford Learner Dictionary: 2019). Idioms are metaphorically rich, and they bridge the conceptual constructions with the abstract ideas. Language is the main source of communication and cannot be investigated without human embodiment. Everyone has different opinion of the world and perceives things in a different manner. Therefore, language used to explain these experiences must undergo changes according to different perceptions of the world. People's everyday interaction presents certain recurring patterns of embodied activity, and these patterns structure our abstract metaphorical concepts.

Therefore, most of the cognitive functioning, conceptual representation and process of language are crucially grounded in sensory perceptual experience of human being (Johnson and Lakoff, 1980). This makes embodiment an important aspect of figurative language—because figurative language is based on concrete terms, and their meaning is mapped on abstract concepts. Therefore, the perception of any phenomenon is more dependent on the context (Stanfield & Zwaan, 2001) and physical experiences are normally easy to comprehend as compared to abstract experiences (Zwaan et al., 2002). So, it is acknowledged that some figurative expressions, particularly metaphors are embodied.

All languages are incomplete without metaphors (Goalty, 1997, p.1). Metaphors are not just special use of language but are also embedded in our everyday interactions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2000). Moreover, Metaphors in different languages may reflect the cultural identities of language users (Eslami & Ghafel, 2015), and the embodied nature of abstract thought (Greenham, 2018; Ritchie, 2003a/2003b)). Language is thus used metaphorically to present varied realities (Kovecses, 2018).

Idioms are sometime used as metaphors. They are conventional multi-word units that are semantically varied in different cultures, but structurally fixed in every culture. Idiomatic constructions are based on semantic characteristics, structural irregularities and specific communicative functions (Yang, 2010; Bruening, 2020). Like metaphors, idioms also vary along different cultures. The variation is reported to be determined by varied embodiment (Kacinik, 2014).

With reference to language and culture, Ayers (2015) reports that universal ideas are expressed in a number of ways and universality of human experiences are also based on culture. This cultural embodiment was earlier explored by Awwad (1990), who concluded that even translation of idioms into another language may lead to the incomplete translation of idioms, as they carry different meaning that is culture specific. A recent study by Ciprianová and Kováčová (2018) explored the relationship among thought, culture and figurative language, and concluded that cultural variation determined figurative language and its use.

Metaphor and metonymy are reported to give a semantic motivation for a large number of idiomatic expressions (Negro, 2019). The findings of the study show that metaphoric amalgams and metonymic chains, as well as the interaction between metaphor and metonymy, are frequently used in idiomatic meanings. This research helps to further explore the claims that metaphors are culture specific. Many researchers (Barcelona, 2000; Mendoza, at. el, 2002; Masegosa 2011; Bolognesi and Vernillo 2019) conducted their research to study conceptual relationship between metaphor and metonymy, but very few studies have been conducted to explore the cognitive motivation of idiomatic expressions with respect to embodiment.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To explore the nature of domain mappings in the idiomatic expressions of “eye” metaphor in English and Urdu
2. To analyze the patterns of variation of idiomatic expression of “eye” metaphor in English and Urdu

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do idiomatic expressions of “eye” metaphor map target domains onto source domains in both English and Urdu?
2. How does the concept of ‘eye’ vary in two different languages that are English and Urdu and?

2. Theoretical Framework

To achieve research objectives and to answer research questions, the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) is used. In CMT, mapping is a systematic process which is based on the elements of source and target domain. The relationship is in the form of A is B. A is the target domain which is always in abstract form and B is a source domain which is in concrete form. Both forms are present in the mind (Lan and McGregor, 2009). It illustrates that TARGET DOMAIN is SOURCE DOMAIN. The application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) on varied use of ‘eye’ idioms in both English and Urdu will help investigate conceptual mappings across both languages and their cultures.

3. Research Methodology

The data of the present study is collected from two different languages. Only idioms of ‘Eye’ are collected through purposive sampling. The idiomatic expressions of ‘eye’ for English are collected from “Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries” available online at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>. Data for Urdu language is collected from “Feroz-ul-Lughat”. Total 85 idiomatic expressions were selected (44 from English and 41 from Urdu). The research is qualitative in nature as no quantitative data is generated. The data is analyzed qualitatively based on subjective experiences.

The collected data is analyzed in two steps. Firstly, the target and source domains are identified for the idiomatic expressions of both English and Urdu. Secondly, the findings of the domain mappings are compared to find out the similarities and differences regarding conceptualization of ‘eye’ between both languages – English and Urdu.

4. Data Analysis

Identification of Target Domains

The idioms of ‘eye’ in both the languages target certain abstract concepts. Some of the target domains in both the languages are same. However, there are a number of concepts that are targeted in English language using the idiom of eye, that are not targeted in Urdu language and vice versa.

EMOTION IS EYE

In the given idiomatic expressions of both English and Urdu language, variety of emotions have become visible in the form of words. Table 1 shows examples of metaphor for affection, love, anger and sadness. There is a strong association between source domain ‘eye’ and the target domain ‘emotion’ which is love and preference. This association promotes the conceptual metaphor of EMOTION IS EYE.

Table 1: Idiomatic expressions for EMOTION IS EYE

EMOTION	English	Urdu
Affection	The apple of somebody's eye. For somebody's eyes only	Aankh ka tarahona Aankh ki thandak
Love	Only have eyes for/have eyes only for somebody.	Aankhrakhna Aankh ka tarahona Aankhlaraana Aankhлагаana Aankhonmeinbasna Aankhmaarna Aankhainchaarhona Aankhbharr kay dekhna
Anger	----	Aankhon se khoonbarasna Aankhon se sholaynikaalInna Aankhaidekhaana Aankhdikhlaana Aankhmeinaankhdaalkardekhna
Sadness	----	Aankhbharaana Aankhain laal karna Aankhon se khoonbarasna Aankhon se sholaynikaalInna Aankhaidekhaana

EMOTION IS EYE is a metaphor found in a variety of cultures and languages (Ciprianová & Kováčová, 2018). The source domain of this metaphor is Eye. On one hand, eye is very sensitive part of human body and on the other hand, it is also very precious to human beauty in the sense of affection and love. It is a symbol of emotions. In different situations the welling up of eyes or the reddening of eyes shows different internal emotions. In fact, in many situations the internal feelings and emotions are revealed through eyes. That's why, culturally it is believed that eyes express emotions of a person and is used in linguistic expressions to represent emotions.

The comparison of idiomatic expressions shows that a number of same domains are targeted in both the languages. Same concrete source domain targets same abstract concepts as target domains in both languages. As mentioned above idioms are multi-word units that are fixed in different languages and cultures and have metaphorical conceptions, therefore, the same entity that is 'eye' targets a number of similar abstract concepts in two entirely different languages – Urdu and English.

However, the target domains that are similar in both the languages have different conceptual mappings. The domains are targeted differently in both the languages. Though the basic abstract concepts (target domains) are similar, the difference lies in their mappings. Both the languages have targeted the same domains differently. For example, in English idioms 'Only have eyes for/have eyes only for somebody', 'the apple of somebody's eye', 'for somebody's eyes only' and in Urdu language idioms 'Aankhrakhna', 'Aankh ka tarahona', 'Aankhlaraana', 'Aankhлагаana', 'Aankhonmeinbasna', 'Aankhmaarna', and 'Aankhainchaarhona' target domain is same which is 'love'. In these idiomatic expressions, though target domain is same which is 'love', mapping is different in both languages. When mapping is different, the meanings are changed that are

associated with those idiomatic expressions in both languages. So, in Urdu, love is used in the sense of romance or flirtation but in English it is used in the sense of care and preference. Thus, in both the languages the target domain is same but they have different entailments. Although domain of 'love' in English has entailments of romance, care and preference, in Urdu it has the entailment of flirt as well. So, mapping is different in both languages for same target domains and thus they convey different meanings when used in respective languages.

Many differences are also found in both languages. For example, Urdu idioms like '*Aankhbharaana*', '*Aankhain laal karna*', '*Aankhon se khoonbarasna*', '*Aankhon se sholaynikaalna*' promote the target domains of sadness and anger which are conceptualized in terms of eye. But in English language idioms, these target domains are not found for the idioms of 'eye'.

STATE IS EYE

Variety of different abstract concepts are used in the idiomatic expressions of eye in both English and Urdu – such as imagination, disbelief, confidence, shame, avoidance, awareness, ignorance and trust as shown in table 2. All these abstract concepts highlight a common target domain of 'state' because state is something a person is in specific circumstances or at specific time. This target domain of 'state' is conceptualized in terms of eye which gives rise to the conceptual metaphor of STATE IS EYE. Eye is the symbol of state because eyes are considered as a mirror which reflects everything such as emotions, feelings, states, etc. A person can imagine something with his eyes. Similarly, disbelief, confidence, shame, awareness, ignorance and trust also have strong relation with eyes. Therefore, eyes are the key element of metaphorical idiomatic expressions.

Table 2: Idiomatic expressions for STATE IS EYE

STATE	English	Urdu
<i>Imagination</i>	Your mind's eye.	Khuliaankhon se khawabdekhna
<i>Disbelief</i>	My eye.	----
<i>Confidence</i>	Look somebody in the eye(s).	----
<i>Shame</i> <i>Avoidance</i>	----	Aankhchupalena Aankh bacha jana Aankhbarabarnakarsakna Aankhainchaarnakarna Aankhain upper nauthaana Aankhainjhukna
<i>Awareness</i>	----	Aankhaashnahona
<i>Ignorance</i>	Turn a blind eye (to something).	----
<i>Trust</i>	With your eyes shut/closed.	Aankh band kar kay de dena

In the conceptual mapping of state, target domains of 'imagination' and 'trust' in both languages are same in which mapping is also same. These domains have similar entailments in both the languages and convey somehow similar meanings in both languages.

Many differences are also found in both languages. For example, Urdu idioms like '*Aankhchupalena*', '*Aankh bacha jana*', '*Aankhbarabarnakarsakna*', '*Aankhainchaarnakarna*',

'*Aankhain upper nauthaana*' and '*Aankhaashnahona*' promote the target domains of shame, avoidance, and awareness which are conceptualized in terms of eye. But in English idioms, these target domains are not found for the idioms of 'eye'. Similarly, target domain of 'ignorance' is not found in Urdu.

FEELING IS EYE

Metaphors are used to depict powerful feelings like pleasant, respect, justice and opinion to describe emotion as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Idiomatic expressions for FEELING IS EYE

Feeling	English	Urdu
Pleasant	Easy on the eye.	Aankhthandikarna, Aankhonmeinhandakparna Aankhonmeinjachna
Respect	----	Aankhon par jagahdena Aankhon se lagaana
Justice	An eye for an eye.	<i>Aankhbarabarkarna</i>
Opinion	In somebody's eyes. In the eyes of the law, world, etc.	----

It is a universal truth that people use metaphorical language to express their feelings. All such metaphorical expressions are embodied in nature because the observation of such feelings comes from eyes. Eyes are the symbol of feelings. It is the eye that is responsible for conveying feelings and emotions as well. So, there is an association between the source domain 'eye' and the target domain 'feeling' which is pleasure and pleasant. This association promotes the metaphorical representation of FEELING IS EYE.

Target domains of 'pleasant' and 'justice' in both languages are same in which mapping is also same. These domains have similar entailments in both the languages and convey somehow similar meanings in both, whereas differences are also found in target domains of 'respect' and opinion' in both languages. For example, Urdu idioms like '*Aankhon par jagahdena*' and '*Aankhon se lagaana*' have the target domain of 'respect'. Similarly, English idioms such as 'in somebody's eyes' and 'in the eyes of the law/world' have the target domain of 'opinion'. But, source domain is eye. So, both these conceptual domains give rise to the common target domain of FEELING. Therefore, the conceptual metaphor is FEELING IS EYE. However, for the idioms of 'eye' in both languages, one of these sub target domains is missing.

CAREFUL ATTENTION IS EYE

The source domain of the respective metaphors is eye which is very sensitive part of the human body. On one hand, eyes are very attractive part of human body which seeks attention, and on the other hand, they are also used to express emotions and feelings and without eyes beauty is not possible. Therefore, a careful attention is given to the physical appearance of eyes and a lot of metaphorical expressions are used to describe eyes in literature. So, we can say that there is a strong relation between the source domain EYE and the target domain CAREFUL ATTENTION which leads to the metaphorical expression of CAREFUL ATTENTION IS EYE as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Idiomatic expressions for CAREFUL ATTENTION IS EYE

CAREFUL ATTENTION	English	Urdu
	Keep your eyes peeled.	Aankhainchaartarafrakhna
	Keep a weather eye on somebody.	Aankhainkhulihona
	Be all eyes.	Aankhatakjana
	In the public eye.	Aankhaingarhjana
	Keep a close eye/watch on somebody/something.	Aankainlagayerakhna
	Keep an eye on somebody/something.	Aankhaindoraana
	Catch somebody's eye.	Aankahinchaartarafrakhna
	Make eyes at somebody, give somebody the eye	
	Set eyes on somebody/something.	
	Have one eye/half an eye on something.	
	Keep an eye open/out	
	In the public eye.	
	The naked eye	
	Have your eye on somebody.	
	Have eyes in the back of your head.	
	Have (got) eyes like a hawk.	

In this conceptual metaphor, domains are targeted differently in both the languages. Though the key abstract concepts (target domains) are same, the difference lies in their mappings. The same domains were targeted differently in two different languages. For example, English idioms 'keep your eyes peeled', 'keep a weather eye on somebody', 'be all eyes', 'in the public eye', 'keep a close eye/watch on somebody/something', 'keep an eye on somebody/something', 'catch somebody's eye', 'make eyes at somebody', 'give somebody the eye', 'have one eye/half an eye on something', 'keep an eye open/out', 'in the public eye', 'have your eye on somebody', 'have eyes in the back of your head', 'have (got) eyes like a hawk' and Urdu idioms 'aankhainchaartarafrakhna', 'aankhainkhulihona', 'aankhatakjana', 'aankhaingarhjana', 'aankainlagayerakhna', 'aankhaindoraana' and 'aankahinchaartarafrakhna' target the same domain of CAREFUL ATTENTION. In these idiomatic expressions, though target domain is same, but in both languages mapping is different. Due to change in mapping, the meanings are also changed in both languages. So, in Urdu, careful attention is used in the sense of furtive look but in English it is used in the sense of care, awareness and sharpness. Thus, in both the languages the target domain is same but they have different entailments which convey different meanings when used in respective languages. Thus, a lot of differences in target domain are found in both languages. So, the idiomatic expressions of 'eye' show variations in their mapping and meaning in different languages and different cultures.

LIMITATION IS EYE

LIMITATION IS EYE is a metaphor found in the idiomatic expressions of English only, as the source domain of eye is the symbol of limitation because it has limited light-power and

frequency response. Human beings are not able to catch that much information in a single glance. They can see or observe to limited extent on the basis of the size and frequency of their eyes. So, there is a strong relation between the source domain of eye and the target domain of limitation or boundary. Both these domains interact with each other and give rise to the metaphorical mapping between these two domains as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Idiomatic expressions for LIMITATION IS EYE

LIMITATION	English	Urdu
Boundary	As far as the eye can see.	
	See something out of the corner of your eye.	----

English language idiomatic expressions such as 'as far as the eye can see' and 'see something out of the corner of your eye' promote the target domain of 'limitation/boundary' which is conceptualized in terms of source domain 'eye'. This target domain is not found in Urdu for the idioms of 'eye'.

SPEED IS EYE

In certain idiomatic expressions, the source domain EYE is used in the sense of observation. It is a characteristic of eye that it can observe some unnecessary scenes or movement as well. This specific characteristic of human eye sometime triggers the target domain of SPEED because speed involves movement, distance and time. All these qualities have a strong relationship between each other which leads to the metaphorical representation of SPEED IS EYE as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Idiomatic expressions for SPEED IS EYE

SPEED	English	Urdu
	Cast/run an eye/youreyes over something.	
	In the twinkling of an eye.	----

Idiomatic expressions in English language like 'cast/run an eye/your eyes over something' and 'in the twinkling of an eye' promote the target domain of 'speed' which is conceptualized in terms of source domain 'eye'. However, for the idioms of 'eye', this target domain is not found in Urdu idioms.

ATTRACTION IS EYE

Eyes are central organ of human body. They grab the attention because eye contact is generally considered as a sign of attraction. When someone takes an unintentional glance at something, it can indicate that a person finds something interesting or appealing. So, there is a strong association between source domain EYE and the target domain of ATTRACTION. This association creates conceptual metaphor of ATTRACTION IS EYE as shown in table7.

Table 7: Idiomatic expressions for ATTRACTION IS EYE

ATTRACTION	English	Urdu
Interest	Have an eye for something.	<i>Aankhgaarhna</i>

Target domain of 'attraction' in both languages is same in which mapping is also same. This domain has similar entailment in both the languages and conveys somehow similar meanings in both.

5. Conclusion

The present study has tried to explore the metaphoric use of 'eye' idioms in both English and Urdu, to find the similarities and differences in both the languages at conceptual level. For this purpose, the theory of Conceptual Metaphor is adopted. The theory talks about the mapping of abstract concept on concrete objects in the metaphors. The data has been collected from the standard dictionaries of both the languages. The findings of the study show that metaphors of 'eye' target same domains in both the languages; however, the difference lies in the mapping of these domains as they at times map different concepts of the same domain. There are also metaphors that target same domains with similar mappings in both the languages. There are also some metaphors in both the languages that target entirely different domains in both the languages that are not targeted in the other language and vice versa.

The present study will help in understanding the use of metaphors in both the languages. It will develop an understanding of how the metaphors of same entity vary in its use in different languages. It will also help in understanding the language variations. The study is limited just to the idioms of 'eye'. Similar studies can be conducted using different idioms and entities. A number of body parts are metaphorically used in different languages. The study can be stretched to other body parts and can be expanded to other languages as well.

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