

An Image-Schematic View to Guilaki Proverbs in the Domain of Food and Its Related Concepts

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Abstract

Proverbs are fixed sentential expressions that express the well-known truth, social norms or moral concerns of a specific culture. Therefore, they have a linguistic-cultural aspect and are transmitted through generations and applied to various states of affairs in the world. Since most proverbial expressions are metaphorical in nature which rooted in bodily experiments, the present paper offers an image-schematic view to Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts. It takes up the twin task of distinguishing the image schemas in Guilaki proverbs and of defining their domain of semantic usages. The proverbs of this qualitative research have been collected in a library research method and analyzed based on Johnson's (1987) opinions. The findings of the research reveal that the path, control and spatial schemas are used in Guilaki proverbs. They also showed that the desirable cultural concepts like kindness, hospitality and faithfulness are simultaneously applied alongside undesirable ones such as corruption, betrayal and ungratefulness.

Keywords: Image schemas, Embodiment, Conceptual metaphor, Proverb, Food, Guilaki Dialect

Extended abstract

1. Introduction

Proverbs form the gist of what cultures consider of real concern to them, presenting cultural desirables and undesirables, all of which betray the cultural models a culture lives by. Therefore, they have a linguistic-cultural aspect and are transmitted through generations and applied to various states of affairs in the world.

2. Theoretical Framework

“The notion of image schema is rooted in gestalt psychology (e.g., à la Arnheim) and the phenomenology of the body (à la Merleau-Ponty); it was developed by Mark Johnson from the early 1980s into linguistics” (Kimmel,

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2008, 159). In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, human being is an embodied subject. In Linguistics, embodiment refers to the ways person's bodies and bodily interactions with the world shape their minds, actions, and personal, cultural identities. Embodied accounts of mind and language embrace the idea that human symbols are grounded in recurring patterns of bodily experience. The study of embodiment demands recognition that thought and language arise from the continuous dynamic interaction between brains, bodies, and the world. Cognitive linguistic research has long embraced the idea that "our construal of reality is likely to be mediated in large measure by the nature of our bodies" (Evans and Green, 2006:2). Lakoff and Johnson (1991) suggested that there are three levels of embodiment which together shape the embodied mind. Neural embodiment concerns the structures that characterize concepts and cognitive operations at the neurophysiological level. The cognitive unconscious consists of the rapid, evolutionary given mental operations that structure and make possible conscious experience, including the understanding and the use of language. The phenomenological level is conscious and accessible to the consciousness and consists of our awareness of our own mental states, our bodies, our environment, and our physical and social interactions (Johnson, 1999: Gibbs, 2017: 451). Many cognitive scientists agree that an embodied understanding of mind and language require attention to all three levels of embodiment, and most importantly, the interactions to all three levels of embodiment, and most importantly, the interaction between them.

3. Methodology

Adapting the image-schematic view to Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts, the present article tries to achieve the following two goals. First, distinguishing the image-schemas found in Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts; second, defining the scope of their semantic usage. Specifically, it tries to answer these two questions complies with the previously mentioned goals: first, which kinds of control, spatial and motion schemas are there in Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts; and second, which target domains does this source domain refer to. Referring to the specific goal of the research -description and analysis of image-schemas found in Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts- the present qualitative research is categorized as fundamental studies. The broad framework of the research is cognitive linguistics and the narrow one is dialectology. The geographical research area is limited to Rasht. Data have been collected and selected in a library research method from *The Missing Guilaki Proverbs (Jadakafta Gaban)* by Moradiyan Garrosi (2007) and *Guilaki Proverbs and Expressions (Masalha va Estelahat e Guilaki)* by Fakhrai (2015). To be doubly sure of the use of proverbs in Rasht, beside the writer's intuition as a native speaker, some interviews were carried out with

aware speakers. Overall, it was known that 41 Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts are used. However, regarding the purpose of the research, those proverbs directly related to the concept of image schemas were analyzed. This reduced the sample size of the study to twenty proverbs. The data were analyzed by descriptive-analytic method based on Johnson's Image Scheme Theory (1987).

4. Result and Discussion

The analysis of Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts indicates the existence of three types of control, spatial and motion schemas with a frequency of 35%, 20% and 45% in this dialect, respectively. This finding is different from the results of Sheykh Sang Tajan (2017) since it showed the increasing frequency in the occurrence of containment, power and motion schemas. In addition, no example of power example was found in studied Guilaki proverbs. The findings of the study indicate that in Guilaki proverbs in the domain of food and its related concepts, the moral cultural values of kindness, hospitality and having belief are used along with the reprehensible acts of destruction, betrayal and ingratitude. That is, like pleasant and unpleasant taste, the figurative meanings they refer to are both positive and negative. This finding confirms the view of Lawal et al. (1999).

5. Conclusion and suggestion

It is important to study the image schemas hidden in the proverbs of different ethnic groups since these linguistic utterances reflect the modes of thinking and the strategies each culture and society used to form its attitudes. Proverbs as a part of intellectual and cultural tradition of a society can be estimated by image schemas as the origin of conceptual metaphor, since both have common roots in general human experiences. The hallmark of a genuinely socio-cultural perspective on image schemas must be its ability to account for their variation both across cultures and its situated cognition. The experiences of Guilanian embodiment in a fertile environment and being witness of generosity of the nature leads to the formation of image schemas referring to positive cultural senses. Investigating image schemas from this brand-new dimension, is a step opening an avenue to augmented descriptions of them. Since such apparently trivial details express the ethnic diversities, the researcher considers such study worth noticing. That is, image schemas propose mechanism for communities to assert their ethnic identities.

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