

**METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND PASHTO: A CROSS CULTURAL ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract:**

Metaphors and their translations are foremost components of translation studies, characterized by using complicated dilemmas. This research hyperlinks conceptual metaphors in English and Pashto, emphasizing Pashto poetry particularly. The intention is to investigate metaphorical terms in each language in an effort to classify parallels and divergences within the approaches that they conceptualize truth regardless of linguistic and cultural restrictions. Drawing on Lakoff's metaphorical conceptual version (1980) and Peter Newmark's strategies for translation (1988), the evaluation exposes that an extensive range of metaphors are employed in each the original and translated text. However, Pashto texts incorporate a considerably better number of metaphors, which frequently lean towards abstraction, associating with inanimate principles. This occurrence of metaphors in Pashto literature can be ascribed to the social and cultural differences in Pashtun tradition. In this framework, many basics carry oblique and metaphorical meanings, highlighting the principal position of metaphors in Pashto literature. In summary, this study highlights the significance of metaphors in each language and highlights their cultural significance, imparting insights into the details of metaphorical translation within the framework of Pashto and English.

**KEYWORDS:**

Metaphors, English, Pashto, Cross-cultural, Analysis

**INTRODUCTION:**

Metaphor is a powerful linguistic tool that goes beyond mere linguistic embellishment. It serves as a gateway to understanding the intricate concepts and frameworks that shape our thoughts, actions, and communication (Gomez-Marin, 2022). As George Lakoff perceptively observes, "Metaphor is prevalent in our ordinary life, not only just in language but thoughts and actions as well" (Abdi & Rasouli, 2023). This assertion highlights the ubiquity of metaphor in human existence; it is not limited to the confines of spoken or written language, but rather permeates the very essence of our cognition and behavior (Liu, 2023).

Metaphors, as cultural signifiers, reflect the unique values, beliefs, and identities of a linguistic community (Lee, 2023). Whereas both English and Pashto are vehicles for human expression, they come from vastly different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. English, as a worldwide prominent language, carries a rich tradition of metaphorical expressions deeply ingrained in Western thought (Salomone & Salomone, 2022). On the other hand, Pashto, primarily spoken in Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan, represents a linguistic and cultural landscape distinct from English (Khkhalay & Wahdat, 2023). It is within this contrast that we find a wealth of insights.

The study implements a multi-layered approach, combining linguistic analysis, cultural studies, and cognitive science to discover the intricate web of metaphors in both languages (Yari et al., 2020). Through this cross-cultural analysis, we aim to contribute to the increasing body of knowledge on metaphor theory and enrich our understanding of the relationship between language and culture. This research not only offers an exceptional glimpse into the worlds of English and Pashto speakers but also highlights the significance of metaphors as windows into the human mind and society. Our research paper has the following research objectives:

1. To investigate how metaphors are used in Pashto and English.
2. To discover the methods wherein those languages' metaphors influence verbal exchange, expression, and idea.
3. To observe how metaphors feature as cultural signifiers that constitute the identities, values, and worldviews of the language communities wherein they are used.
4. To compare and categorize metaphorical phrases in Pashto and English, noting similarities and variations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

Metaphor theory, as offered and broadly developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their fundamental work "[Metaphors We Live By](#)" (1980), suggests that metaphors are not just rhetorical figures of speech but essential to human thought and language ([Subedi, 2023](#)). They contend that metaphors organize our understanding of reality and have an impact on our daily behavior. This idea, which emphasizes the use of metaphors in conceptualizing and cognitive processes, has been further explored by cognitive linguists. Therefore, analyzing metaphors in Pashto and English is a useful way to look at how different cultural ideas and cognitive tendencies are reflected in both languages.

Famous researchers in cross-cultural metaphor studies, such as [Kövecses \(2023\)](#), have discovered cultural variations in metaphorical concepts and their influence on effective intercultural communication. [Yu \(2022\)](#)'s research has also contributed meaningfully to this field. The research of metaphors in the English language has been developed by researchers like [Gibbs \(2022\)](#), who, in his work, has studied into how metaphors express complex emotions, cultural values, and ideologies. [Yusupova et al. \(2022\)](#) contributions have also suggestively enriched our knowledge of metaphors in English.

The literature on metaphors in the Pashto language is comparatively limited, with [Subhan & Ahmad, \(2022\)](#) and [Hafeez \(2019\)](#) being noteworthy contributors. [Mujtaba Khan \(2021\)](#)'s work, discovers the significance of metaphors in Pashto culture and language, highlighting their role in expressing cultural nuances and values. [Ashraf & Farooq \(2022\)](#)'s study, have touched upon the importance of Pashto metaphors in expressing complex cultural ideas, moral values, and social norms.

## 3. RESEARCH METHADODOLOGY:

### 3.1 Interpretivism Philosophy:

In this research, we adopt the interpretivism philosophy, which acknowledges the subjective nature of data collection and analysis. Interpretivism allows for a deeper exploration of qualitative studies, which is a suitable philosophical foundation for this research ([Junjie & Yingxin, 2022](#)). The research population consists of all English and Pashto poetry, whereas the sample comprises 10 English and Pashto poetry books selected for cross-cultural metaphor analysis. The research population comprises all English and Pashto poetry, representing the central focus of this study.

### 3.2 Data Collection and Data Analysis:

Data collection in this research is founded on a secondary data sources method, using data from books, internet sources, and published papers. Content evaluation and textual analysis are used to examine the gathered facts, such as metaphors in each English and their translations (Kuckartz, 2019; Kleinheksel et al., 2020).

Secondary data sources were used for data collection, consisting of books, net sources, and published papers. These sources offer the crucial facts for the examination of metaphor translation. Thematic evaluation is used as a technique to evaluate qualitative data. It consists of classifying ordinary issues inside the data and reporting on their prevalence and significance (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). This method allows for a deeper know-how of the metaphors and their cross-cultural implications.

## 4. RESULTS and FINDINGS

This part is devoted to a thorough examination of poetry, with a focus on developing a framework for contrasting Pashto and English metaphorical roles. The epistemology and ontology of domains as put forth by Lakoff and Johnson's expressions of language are examined in this work. The purpose of this analysis is to enhance our comprehension of the parallels and divergences between these two languages.

### 4.1 Description

In this paper, the 930 landay served as the primary unit of analysis, as Noorzi (2014) explains. In order to categorize metaphorical phrases, the study team employed the Group (2007) suggested metaphor identification approach after first analyzing Pashto data. As advised by Zeeya (2009) and Momand & Sehray (1994), this method includes reading the text, using dictionaries to clarify lexical units, figuring out their meanings, and evaluating their metaphorical nature. For instance, the Pashto expression "major substance" (dranah khaburah) literally translates to "heavy stuff," although matter cannot have weight; it can only signify significance. This example is classified as a metaphor. Using this approach, the study recognized a total of 313 linguistic metaphoric terms, such as "*gulapi mukh-rosy face.*" which likens crimson cheeks to red roses. These metaphoric terms were thematically grouped based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) presented by Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980b).

For example, the sentence "judaaye raaghlah-separation arrived" is an instantiation of the conceptual metaphor "*Love is a journey.*" where distance traveled symbolizes the distance in a relationship. This metaphorical mapping arises from the fundamental principle of CMT, suggesting that metaphor is a central aspect of human language, illustrating how concepts in the human mental system are interconnected experientially (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a). It asserts that more

experiential or concrete concepts are understood using experiential notions. The analysis performed using CMT revealed 11 conceptual metaphor themes, which are explained below:

#### 4.1.1 Love is a journey

Within the analyzed Landay, our research identified 10 examples of the conceptual metaphor "Love is a journey," where the love connection is portrayed through the source domain of a journey. This is apparent in the following four metaphorical phrases:

*"Aab e kawthar jaanaanah rashah" ("Oh my sweet and fragrant beloved! Come,")*

*"Puh khluh bah jang dur sara wukrum" ("Going on the journey of separation, I would become thirsty")*

*"Judaaye raghlah laare dwe shwe" ("Separation came, Paths diverged")*

*"Da fekr taal de raathah jor kro" ("You made me pensive")*

In these examples, metaphors are drawn from the source domain of separation and union during a journey to map separation and union in the framework of love. This conceptual metaphor highlights the mapping of the feeling of love onto the journey domain.

#### 4.1.2 Love Is War

In the analyzed Landay, the conceptual metaphor "Love Is War" is prevalent and is represented in fifty-eight verbal instances. Various facets of love are described using elements from the source domain of conflict, including terms like *"da thuro guzaarunah-blows of swords,"* *"zakhmunah-wounds,"* *"dardunah-pains,"* and more. Examples of this metaphor are demonstrated in the following couplets:

*"Da sturgo jang de wurthah ting shah" ("It is a war of looks, stay strong")*

*"Puh laarah thle much de rasthun kro" ("I may wage a verbal fight with you")*

*"Aab wa daanah me shwah thamaamah" ("My subsistence has finished")*

*"Baaraan da ohko me waregi" ("My tears pour down like rain")*

These couplets employ war-related terminology to convey the different emotional states within the realm of love. The metaphor "*Love Is War*" serves as a figurative representation of love, emphasizing its combative nature.

#### 4.1.3 Love Is Fire

The conceptual metaphor "*Love Is Fire*" is prevalent throughout the analyzed Landay. The metaphorical mapping of love onto fire is evident in expressions like "tabibah mah gorah zuma da laas ragunah" ("O Doctor! Don't take my pulse") and "zuh da hijraan haamaar puh zruh khwaṛule yumah" ("I had been bitten by the Separation's snake"). These examples showcase how the source domain of fire is used to characterize the emotional states of love in a metaphorical context.

#### 4.1.4 Unrequited Love Is Disease

Within the analyzed Landay, the conceptual metaphor "*Unrequited Love Is Disease*" is identified. The idea that emotions are able to be thought of as forces is the root of this metaphor. Total 30 instances of love being classified as an illness were uncovered in the study. The psychosomatic conditions of unanswered or departed love are denoted by the underlying domain of illness. For example, the couplets "Tabibah mah gorah zuma da laas ragunah" and "Nuh de daaru shtah nuh de haal wayule shumah" demonstrate how the illness domain is used to map the state of unreturned love. This metaphor suggests that emotional and physical agony can result from unrequited love.

#### 4.1.5 Emotions Are Forces

The analysis uncovered that the source domain of forces also signifies emotions, predominantly in the framework of love. The study proved how emotions can lead to psycho-emotional or bodily variations. Twenty-four examples of this conceptual metaphor were identified within the analyzed Landay. These examples reflect how love's emotional impact can bring about physical and psychosomatic alterations, as understood in the couplets "*Haghah ranughlo che ye proth lah ghamah yumah*" ("He who caused me to lie in bed with grief did not come") and "Either he is pale, or are his lips are dried up." This analysis highlights the conceptual metaphor "*Emotions Are Forces*" and its role in portraying the transformative effects of love on individuals. The idea that emotions are able to be thought of as forces is the root of this metaphor. Total 30 instances of love being classified as an illness were uncovered in the study.

#### 4.1.6 Emotions Portrayed as Tangible Entities

Upon examining the data, it became apparent that the Pashto culture employs the conceptual metaphor "EMOTIONS ARE OBJECTS." In a total of fourteen (14) verbal expressions, emotions are portrayed as concrete, spatial entities. Below, we provide an analysis of four of these linguistic phrases:

*(21) "Zhund ke ye gham lidule nuh wu" - "He had not seen grief in life"*

*(22) "Mina pu thlo raathlo zyathegi" - "Love increases after mutual visits"*

*(23) "Da zruh da paasah me ambaar shah" - "Be piled up on my heart"*

*(24) "Kulah de gham raabande baar shi" - "Sometimes, my sorrow of love overburdens me"*

In verse 21, "gham-grief" is depicted as a visible physical object. In the same way, in verse 22, "minah-love" is portrayed as something that can grow or diminish, quantifiable in nature. In couplet 23, the death of a beloved is likened to a tangible thing that can be heaped upon the heart. Finally, in verse 24, both "gham-grief" and "minah-love" are presented as substantial entities, each having its own weight. These examples exemplify how Pashto speakers perceive emotions as originating from the realm of tangible objects.

#### 4.1.7 Heart as a Container for Emotions

The study also unveiled the Pashto landay's conceptual metaphor, "HEART IS CONTAINER," which is featured in seventeen couplets. Below is an analysis of four of these couplets:

*(25) "Zruh me nari darzunah wukur" - "My heart has been seriously cracked"*

*(26) "Rashah puh zruh me guthe kedah" - "Come! Check up my heart with your finger"*

*(27) "Nuh bah anTzar da wraTze gul shi" - "Just as a fig will not sprout a flower in daylight"*

*(28) "Shah da godarah (ford) rawaanegah" - "Go back from godar (ford)"*

In couplet 25, the heart is metaphorically portrayed as a container that can break, evident from the phrase "Zuh me nari darzunah wuku." In line 26, the heart is depicted as a container that holds emotions, and it can be touched to measure the pressure, as suggested by the phrase "puh zuh me guthe kedah - Check up my heart with your finger." Similarly, couplet 27 illustrates the heart as the container of the grieving person by using the term "khali-empty." The container metaphor is also seen in verse 28, where the heart is represented as a container filled with "burjunah - chimneys or funnels" and "naegi - roars" due to the steam. While the heart is not a literal vessel for carrying sensations or emotions, these couplets metaphorically map the heart as a container.

#### 4.1.8 Abstract Concepts as Physical Entities

The Pashto landay metaphorically represents abstract concepts such as ideas, thoughts, life and death, fate or destiny, verbal discourse, and other abstract notions as physical objects. The analysis revealed thirty-eight (38) instances of this conceptual metaphor, and here we examine four linguistic examples:

*(29) "Khawundah murg puh Tzwaani warkre" - "Oh Lord! Give him death in his youth"*

*(30) "Yaa kho zumah nasib kharaab de" - "Either I have bad luck"*

*(31) "Mubaraki rakrai a'aalamah" - "O people favour me with your congratulations"*

*(32) "Da jaanaan zhube thah hayraan yum" - "I am amazed at the sweet tongue of my beloved"*

In verse 29, the verb "warke-give" suggests that "murg-death" can be given to someone. Verse 30 metaphorically represents "nasib-fortune" as something that can be "kharaab - bad or spoilt." In couplet 31, the term "thuhmat-slander/lies" is figuratively used as something that can be owned. Similarly, in couplet 32, the Pashto-speaking culture conceptualizes speech as something that can be "khwage pasthe-sweet, soft," drawing upon the sensory realm of food or flavor. In all these instances, the terms "murg-death," "nasib-fortune," "thuhmat-slander," and "khabure-speech" are metaphorical representations of things rather than actual items.

#### 4.1.9 Metaphors Based on Resemblance

The data also unveiled metaphors and similes that draw upon the comparison of two dissimilar things, following Aristotle's concept of metaphor and simile metaphor. These resemblance-based metaphors and similes are used to highlight various qualities and attributes. For example, phrases like "(aNbari zulfe - ambergris-scented or colored locks)," "(gulaabi mukh - rosy cheeks)," "(da sro zaro ghuncha - golden bunch)," and "(da gulo Tsaangah - a flowery branch)" derive from the source domain of blossoming plants and are often employed to highlight the beloved's beauty. The analysis identified a total of 63 instances of metaphors and similes grounded in similarity.

### 5. Conclusion and Discussion

This section serves as the conclusion of the study, offering a brief recap of the results and delivering conclusions pertaining to the research's initial hypotheses. Moreover, it discovers potential avenues for future investigations.



## 5.1 Findings and Discussion

While the bulk of metaphoric research has predominantly centered on the English language, the primary objective of this study was to leverage the insights attained from metaphorical mappings to shed light on the Pashto language. Remarkably, the topic of metaphorical mapping in Pashto has remained relatively uncharted. In light of this, the research undertook a comparative analysis of equivalent metaphorical expressions in both English and Pashto. The approach, echoing the method planned by Lakoff and Johnson, includes the reconstruction of the ontology and epistemology associated with the domains in question (Hanifah, 2017). This study thus compares the reconstructed ontological and epistemological dimensions of metaphorical expressions in English and Pashto to distinguish both the commonalities and distinctions in the metaphorical construction of reality in these two languages, from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective. Nevertheless, the study's author also sought to delve into the underlying reasons that explain the presence of these disparities and parallels. Two primary assumptions guided this study. The first is identified as the "*embodiment hypothesis*," which posits that individuals interpret the world in terms of their physiological experiences, owing to the fact that they perceive their environment through their bodies. Lakoff (2006) proposes that this embodiment is responsible for the shared perception of the world across diverse cultures. In essence, the universal appeal of conceptual similarities can be linked to their embodiment. Conversely, an opposing viewpoint contends that the cultural distinctions amongst people may be rooted in the distinct ecologies of their respective settings. The several ways in which different cultures comprehend reality significantly impact the conceptual metaphors employed in their respective languages. Kövecses (2016) encapsulates these concepts by stating that owing to the universal nature of the body, people from varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds are likely to share a common understanding of certain phenomena. Speakers of English and Pashto, for instance, are prone to possess shared conceptualizations regarding the human body and the notion that identical physiological processes occur simultaneously. An embodied metaphor is one that is grounded in real-world experiences that individuals have encountered.

Moreover, Kövecses (2016) suggests that the "*spectrum*" of conceptual metaphors available to speakers of different languages and cultural backgrounds may exhibit variations concerning the specific target domains that are most adept at conceptualizing. Particularly, while the core of a metaphor can be found in several languages, Kövecses (2002) posits that each language shapes the metaphor in its distinct manner. The foundational ideas, values, and overall cultural climate of a society can be the source of cultural differences. Additionally, a culture's growth and evolution can be influenced by its physical and natural surroundings, as well as its geographical location. Lakoff and Johnson (2020) emphasize that determining whether two languages share a similar understanding of conceptual metaphors requires the reconstruction of the ontology and epistemology of the domains covered by metaphorical expressions (Rezanova & Khlebnikova,

2015). This approach aligns with two fundamental theories: firstly, that cultural distinctions may emanate from differing environments or ecologies, and secondly, the notion of "embodiment," which proposes that individuals make sense of the world based on their bodily experiences. Therefore, the distinctiveness of conceptual metaphors in different languages may be attributed to the inherent uniqueness of languages and cultures.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations put forth by the researcher are grounded in the study's findings, encompassing the following key aspects:

**For Translators:** The research revealed that inaccuracies frequently originate from the translation of metaphors into similes. To enhance the quality of translation, it is suggested that translators translate metaphor into metaphor and provide an explanation of its meaning. This approach not only preserves the elegance of the metaphor but also facilitates understanding for the reader (Shi, 2014).

**For Future Researchers:** When other researchers embark on similar studies, it is advisable to critically consider the metaphor's nature, strategy, and correctness. By assessing the acceptability and readability of the material, researchers can evaluate the quality of the translation. Engaging additional researchers, if possible native speakers, to confirm the results is critical. In cases where the views of raters differ, open discussions with these raters can provide valuable insights. The researcher should also pay close attention to how they define correctness, acceptability, and readability, as these dimensions are interrelated but possess distinct qualities.

## 5.3 Future Research

The current study did not investigate into the metaphorical structuring of events. Future research in this area is encouraged, as it holds promise for expanding our understanding of metaphorical expressions. The study also allows the potential utility of mixed metaphors, which could not be comprehensively explored due to its size. In light of these findings, it is suggested that further research be conducted to uncover the nuances of metaphorical expressions. Given that metaphors play a pervasive role in everyday speech (Lakoff, 2006), the outcomes of this study may have implications for language instruction. It is indispensable to get a deep understanding of how metaphors function, predominantly in the context of learning a second language. If students are to effectively learn and apply metaphors in real-world language situations, a potential shift in teaching methodologies may be warranted. Therefore, we recommend further research to

examine the link between metaphors and language teaching, emphasizing the importance of embodiment and cultural differences in the context of foreign language acquisition.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This research focused on the literal translation of metaphors from Pashto poetry, revealing that metaphors may not only function effectively in their original context but also hold utility in other contexts. Translating figurative language, predominantly in literary works, can be facilitated with the employment of several techniques, including literal translation, cultural and functional equivalence, translation labeling, naturalization, thorough translation, synonymy, modulation, recognized translation, compensation reduction, and expansion. While several metaphors were employed, the metaphor of "death" was the most prevalent. Translators frequently grapple with challenges when translating metaphors, particularly in the context of poetry, given its rich and metaphorical language, requiring intense concentration and intellectual effort. The study's primary findings underline the importance of culture and the local environment in shaping individuals' understanding of universal yet abstract ideas like emotions. Variations arise from the process of projecting the abstract idea of emotion onto discrete physical representations, which is the reason for this disparity in verbal expression. The research findings indicate that these metaphors have their origins in certain cultural contexts, and the application of metaphors frequently begins with how the environment shapes people's experiences. Gaining a thorough grasp of the distinctive experiences of people from different cultures is crucial for effectively establishing connections with them. Moreover, the study recognized multiple instances of metonymy-based figurative language that, despite being employed figuratively, create links between concepts. These metaphors demonstrate their universality by being widely used or being easily understood in a variety of linguistic contexts. The study concludes by showing how cultural characteristics affect the use of metaphors and emphasizes the value of cultural awareness in fostering cross-cultural communication. It also serves as an example of how comparable metaphors are employed across cultural boundaries to communicate concepts that are shared by a number of cultures.

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