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CONCEPT, METAPHOR AND IDIOM

Abstract: The paper describes how metaphorization is manifest throughout the idiomatic spectrum and provides insight into the cultural aspects of language use. It also focuses on the extension of cognitive mental operations, such as metaphorical mapping, facilitating the emergence of figurative scenarios out of the tangible, physical world. The paper argues that the overall English idiomatic language can be classified by conceptuality and most of it by conceptual metaphors (or metonymies, not discussed in this paper). To grasp the essence of global changes in language, one needs to advance from linguistic tools to the socio-cultural environment. Conceptualization is said to have played a crucial role in the development of human thinking. The paper suggests that conceptual metaphors are an integral part of idiomaticity, and both differences and similarities can be detected between different cultural environments. To offer a fairly comprehensive picture of idiom-based research into how the English language is structured, this paper draws on a corpus of around 220,000 words of journalistic and internet-based material.

Key words: corpus-based research, culture, metaphor, idiom, conceptuality

Introduction

Language is metaphorically-motivated and concept-based. This paper aims to investigate whether these traits are manifest in phraseology, or more specifically in idiomatic language. Conceptual metaphors emerging throughout the idiomatic spectrum are also largely motivated by the socio-cultural environment where speakers interact.

Facets of cultural exposure as well as intercultural distinctions will be, in particular, in focus, which may lead to subtle or major distinctions between root-causes of socio-cultural motivation of idiomaticity in various languages. This will

be exemplified through a host of examples which are supposed to yield some evidence for cultural-motivation of distinct linguistic means.

Previous research: cognitive aspects of metaphorically and metonymically motivated idiomatic language

One of the key claims of conceptual thinking is that realities and phenomena of life around us become manifest in concepts, especially in the way it was initially described by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggesting that, based on metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS A WAR, language is metaphorically structured. This conceptual metaphor demonstrates that we, as cognitive creatures, conceive of the world in terms of concepts which are metonymically or metaphorically motivated.

While conceptualizing our experiences for linguistic purposes, we may realize that the motivation of idioms is only valid to varying degrees. For instance, some develop and rely on rich metaphorical mappings of physical domains onto abstract ones, to exploit linguistic patterns available to enrich the lexicon. However, other idioms do not seem to yield to such an abundance of shared features of domain mapping evolved to facilitate our needs of vocabulary extension exhaustively. Profiling a domain against another is crucial to the claims that the ubiquity of lexical correspondences can heavily draw on scenarios that provide a cultural framework for a variety of social settings in various instances of discourse. It is suggested by Cuffari (2004: 5) that “meaning is constructed according to cognitive construals or conceptualizations of experience.” On another note, Allbritton et al. (1995) point out that conceptual metaphor provides schemata through domain mapping, where structural features of the source domain manifest themselves in the target domain.

Mastering and using idioms has long been considered a privilege of native speakers, who can handle the fuzzy and ever-changing set of idioms with ease and in appropriate context, as is suggested by researchers such as Fernando (1996), Keysar and Bly (1995), Gibbs et al (1997), Ranong (2014), while Laufer (2000: 195) points out that “partial formal similarity and distributional difference were avoidance-inducing factors” in learning idioms in L2.

It is also worth noting that idioms make language more colourful, entertaining and enjoyable by turning literal language into sets that are meant to trigger completely different scenarios than is suggested by its components. It has been proposed by Sprenger et al (2006) that idioms are not produced online and they need to be stored in our memory to be retrieved in discourse as salient features of the vocabulary. Owing to their innate cognitive capacities, language users tend to foster idiom creation in the process of language use, and yet, idioms do not proliferate or offer variability in all cases. Instead, they tend to store metaphorical and metonymic imagery available to facilitate extending the mental lexicon.

Novel factors emerge from the socio-cultural motivation grounded in the source-domain variability of languages. Phenomena pertaining to various conceptualizations of human experience can be observed in different cultural backgrounds. For instance, in French, idioms closely-related to FOOD and HATS seem to provide an abundant source of metaphorisation, as opposed to English, where idioms draw on the imagery of SHIPS, as is pointed out by Boers and Demecheleer (1999: 256), who add that “[t]he more salient a source domain becomes in everyday life, the more likely it is to trigger metaphorical projections as well.”

The hypotheses of the paper: the guiding principle of conceptuality

The first hypothesis emerging challenges earlier assumptions about idioms labelling idiomatic language too varied to be classified. Cognitively speaking, it is assumed that a conceptual umbrella can be extended over idiomatic language in general. The second hypothesis is that there are varying degrees of metaphorical and metonymic motivation observable in the idiomatic array of the *Conceptual Dictionary of English Idioms* (2017), which provides the databank of this paper. The third hypothesis involves potentially mismatching cultural motivation of conceptually-manifest idiomatic language in different languages, such as English and Hungarian. It is assumed that the two languages may exploit somewhat different spectra of the socio-cultural background due to a range of environmental as well as custom- and lifestyle-based factors.

The idioms available in *CDII* (*Conceptual Dictionary of English Idioms*, 2017), are all (4,500) categorized by concepts of the human lexicon and the sources of quotations can be checked in *CDII* too. Incongruent idiom behaviour, however, is manifest, owing to the fact that certain scopes of life seem to be prioritised over others. For instance, principles of human categorization inevitably reflect basic human needs (such as the need for FOOD) crucial in describing cultural scenarios. The FOOD metaphor is built around the idea that daily necessities are indispensable for existence. Consequently, scenarios appreciative of human relations tend to exploit the very same pattern to describe relations deemed precious. This involves the extension of currently existing patterns to account for valuable relations. This is reflected by addressing a spouse as *Honey* or *Sweetheart*, whereby a domain (FOOD) offers a different perspective to ordinary behavioural patterns emerging in literal interpretations.

Cognition

Recent neuroscientific research into L1 (native language) and L2 (foreign language) acquisition has revealed (Perani and Abutalebi, 2005: 202) that both

one's native language and a foreign language to be learnt "are processed by the same neural devices". As Tomasello and Call (1997: 10) point out:

All primate species cognitively represent the world. They recall where things are located after significant delays, they anticipate impending events, they use spatial detours and shortcuts creatively (cognitive mapping), they categorize novel objects on the basis of perceptual similarity, and they solve novel problems on the basis of mental trial-and-error or "insight".

Human cognition, undoubtedly, plays a crucial role in language development in terms of humans interacting with their environment, employing available patterns while accounting for existing behavioural, folk-custom and psychic factors for redesigning language components.

Exposure to linguistic exchanges of lexicon, structure and argumentation may, undoubtedly, contribute to the development of cognition. It is pointed out by Bybee and McClelland (2005) that cognition builds up with time with more and more intensive language use.

Metaphorisation and cross-domain mapping

A prime subject of this linguistic analysis is extending the lexicon. Language users, being aware of available patterns of the physical domain, extend them to abstract notions, whereby creating a funny, compact image while preserving 'vehicles' or key-words of the source domain. We have already alluded to instances of the FOOD domain mapped onto the target domain of INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP, giving rise to conceptual idioms such as *a man-eater* and *sugar daddy*, conforming to the conceptual metaphor A PERSON IN A RELATIONSHIP IS FOOD.

Presumably, in addition to being economical, the extension of source domain scenarios facilitates thinking of 'abstract' notions in terms of 'tangible' entities. The two domains are seemingly incompatible with each other, and yet, the experiential basis of human cognition provides specificity for standard, conventional palpable patterns. Domain-mapping, in fact, facilitates multiplying the potentials of human thinking while making human thinking more colourful and interesting. This leads to the reinforcement of existing patterns by expanding the visuals available to be adopted for novel thoughts.

Conceptual array and underlying metaphors

Detailed proposals are offered below to shed light on moral issues deeply-rooted in physicality as well as imagery emerging from interactions between humans and their environment, and between humans and humans. As a result, a

variety of socio-cultural construals are grounded in the source-domain. The databank outlined above offers moral issues such as CHEATING, DECEPTION, DISHONESTY, FAIRNESS, HONESTY and TRICK, each associated with the domain of MORALITY and yet, drawing on dichotomies of ‘cleanness’ versus ‘dirt’, ‘badness’ and ‘goodness’, as well as ‘journey’ and ‘pain’. Underlying metaphors support the conceptual structure of the MORALITY domain. The ubiquity of language universals suggests that both English and Hungarian largely rely on similar scenarios construed in the human brain.

Socio-cultural ramifications

Considered one of the prerequisites of human thinking, a socio-cultural environment provides a broader setting for vocabulary extension. The conceptualization of human experience manifests itself in a variety of ways. The domain of MORALITY offers a disparate range of metaphors that reveal the physical world triggering the evolvement of figurative space. Incorporating the experiential basis of bodily-interactions involves reapplying templates of the existing world for novel purposes. Kövecses (2000: 199) points out that “in emotion, the self turns out to lose control, in morality it turns out to maintain control, while in rational thought the self is its own master.”

Conceptuality, conceptual metaphors and cross-linguistic aspects

HONESTY

Owing to the fact, that humans’ embodied experience is largely universal, most idioms draw on the same humans/environment interactions, sensed and expressed in terms of similar principles. However, language-specific traits do produce alternative aspects in different languages. Below, English idioms and their Hungarian counterparts are listed, each reflecting the socio-cultural environment the set phrases emerge from.

HONESTY IS STRAIGHTNESS

English: *have a spine to do something*, ‘to be honest and frank enough to do something’;
But will lawmakers have the spine to stand up to industry lobbyists?
Hungarian: *gerinces*, literally ‘someone with a spine’.

English: *straight from the shoulder*, ‘frankly and honestly’; *A community straight from the shoulder about rock and roll.*

Hungarian: *rezenéstelen arccal*, literally ‘with an unemotional face’ – emotions and intentions can best be read in someone’s face

English: *the straight and narrow*, ‘honest and moral’; *The Palestinians may have re-offended during the recent intifada but, according to Mahmoud Abbas, their new president, they are back on the straight and narrow.*

Hungarian: *egyenes út*, literally ‘a straight road’

Based on the initial assumption, straight roads do not pose any threat or block visual senses. As, especially indecent behaviour involves ominous journeys for the deceived, the Hungarian set expression is a relevant component of the DECEPTION IS A JOURNEY metaphor. The conceptual metaphor reveals fundamentally identical idiomatic content in both English and Hungarian, conforming to ubiquity theories of various languages viewing the HONESTY IS STRAIGHTNESS conceptual metaphor as being present in several languages owing to bodily experience.

Inferences emerging from the metaphor suggest that ‘straightness’ correlates with the idea that a straight road offers good visibility. No blockage, no hidden entities, but predictability to be identified with ‘honesty’. The idiom *have a spine to do something* draws on the cultural assumption that having vertebrae involves having high moral principles, which ranks humans at the top of the world around. This perspective of morality is firmly grounded in sensing and visualizing, paralleling principles underpinning correct ethical attitude with possessing a strong physical structure. This instance clearly instantiates meaning extension based on tangible, physical sources available. *Straight talk* is a collocation reflecting the common knowledge that whatever is ‘crooked’ is apt to mislead or deceive. The Hungarian counterpart of the idiom *straight from the shoulder* (*rezenéstelen arccal*) differs from English by prioritizing ‘face’ and facial expressions in reference to MORALITY.

HONESTY IS CLEANNES

The notion of cleanness assumed to be ubiquitous in folk theories and symbolism in different languages seems to be corroborated by the set phrases in the two languages.

English: *clean hands*, ‘to be honest’; *In one instance, \$25,000 allegedly changed hands at a meeting Roh himself attended.*

Hungarian: *tiszta kéz*, literally the same as the English idiom, meaning that in both cultures ‘cleanness’ can be mapped onto ‘honesty’

English: *pure as the driven snow*, ‘very honest’; *But the handling of Bayram case will be a big test of the government’s claim to be pure as the driven snow.*

Hungarian: *tiszta mint a hó /patyolattiszta*, reflecting the same idea, i e, ‘honesty’ can be thought of in terms of ‘cleanness’

English: *whiter than white*, ‘very good and honest’ (usually implies the opposite); *I just cannot accept the reality of there being such whiter than white characters in politics.*
Hungarian: *makulátlan*, ‘literally ‘spotless’

Owing to cultural beliefs, *clean* and *white* are associated with HONESTY, as is confirmed by the idiom *a little white lie*, employed rather to refine the meaning of the idiom. As opposed to this concept, ‘dirty’ and ‘dark’ conjure the image of DISHONESTY, corroborated by the collocations *dirty jobs* or *dirty jokes*. In line with cultural models, it is pointed out by Kövecses (1990: 17) that people create folk models based on their experience with *individual variation*.

HONESTY IS OPENNESS

English: *above board*, ‘an activity that is honest and legal’; *Even Lance Armstrong, the American cyclist who (inspirationally) recovered from cancer to become a multiple winner of the Tour de France, entered this year’s race – the sixth he has won – embroiled in a court battle with the authors of “L.A. Confidential”, a book alleging that his achievements were not wholly above board.*
Hungarian: *gyanún felül áll*, literally ‘above suspicion’

Morality issues seem to constitute a vertical spectrum where low levels represent lack of morality as opposed to high moral principles, at the top of the scale. This principle leads to the emergence of metaphor HONESTY IS HEIGHT, which, inevitably, provides a basis for its diagonal opposite: DISHONESTY IS BOTTOM.

English: *lay/put your cards on the table*, ‘to express your ideas and feelings about something honestly’; *It’s high time we put our cards on the table and told them how we imagine the future.*
Hungarian: *kiteríti a kártyáit*, literally ‘lay out your cards’

English: *call a spade a spade*, ‘to talk about something openly and honestly’; *Too simple, perhaps, but the point holds: we need to take a fearless approach; to call a spade a spade.*
Hungarian: *nevezzük nevén a dolgokat*, literally: ‘call things by their names’

All the Hungarian set phrases offer open space for intentions to be revealed, with the last manifesting itself at a verbal level.

Thorough linguistic analysis reveals a connection with the first metaphor: HONESTY IS STRAIGHTNESS, since ‘openness’ involves lack of obstacles just like ‘straightness’. Mapping a physically open space over relational aspects void of obstacles facilitates metaphorisation and idiomatic meaning extension. This conceptual metaphor does not offer a mismatch between English and Hungarian set phrases either.

DISHONESTY

Not all idioms seem to be motivated metaphorically. For instance, the ones related to the concept DISHONESTY are a mixed bag, offering a variety of tools to render an overwhelming picture of it. The source domain is FOOD, emerging from the cultural heritage of considering food (*a bad apple*), a vital part of human existence. Other aspects imply making noise (*blow the whistle on someone*), to call the attention of authorities to ‘funny business’, as well as ‘tolerance’ to be exercised in extreme cases. Yet, ‘cleanness’ and ‘dirt’ are contrasted as vehicles identified with ‘honesty’ and ‘dishonesty’. The word *foul* is primarily identified with our senses, and is mapped on morality in the target domain. Similarly, the idiom *smell fishy* also suggests ‘unfairness’. *Something is rotten in the state of Denmark*, a quotation from Hamlet, also corroborates the association of ‘bad smell’ and ‘wrong things’, i.e. food is a medium to characterize abstract ideas carrying a negative sense. The idiom *monkey business* is obviously identified with unfair behaviour, due to the often senseless and unpredictable attitude of a monkey. *Why on the fiddle* conjures the image of cheating can be explained by a connotation of fiddling, that is playing, involving lack of seriousness.

English: *all's fair in love and war*, ‘to explain away why even dishonest behaviour is acceptable in certain circumstances’; *Just when you think that love is true. Somebody makes a fool out of you. Like it or not one thing for sure. All is fair in love and war.*
Hungarian: *a cél szentesíti az eszközt*, literally ‘the goal sanctifies the means’, providing religious support to the means applied

English: *a bad apple*, ‘a dishonest person’; *Mr Bush denied all knowledge and blamed some bad apples.*
Hungarian: *bűnbak*, literally: ‘scapegoat’

English: *blow the whistle on someone*, ‘to report dishonest and corrupt behaviour to the authorities’; *In “SHE HATES ME,” Jack Armstrong (Anthony Mackie), a VP at a pharmaceutical company, is fired after he blows the whistle on his corrupt bosses.*
Hungarian: *beköp /felad valakit*, literally ‘blow on someone / give up someone’ – less noisy alternatives than the English one

English: *a dirty trick*, ‘dishonest behaviour’
Hungarian: *piszkos trükk*, literally the same as the English idiom, in fact, conforming to the conventional pattern identifying ‘cleanliness’ with ‘honesty’

English: *foul play*, ‘dishonest behaviour’; *As with many of Mr Sarkozy's cunning plans, Brussels suspects foul play.*
Hungarian: *aljas trükk*, literally ‘a mean trick’. Both expressions involve the scenario of playing games.

English: *funny /monkey business*, ‘dishonest behaviour’; *Aladdin and Jasmine must contend with some funny monkey business in the lead story, while other Disney Character*

favourites, such as those from Lion King, Mighty Ducks, Hercules, The Hunchback of Notre Dame features backup own their in appear Story.

Hungarian: *alpári viselkedés*, literally ‘coming from a settlement Alpár’, connotated with ugliness. Not following suit of the English idiom, the Hungarian counterpart conjures up the image of something ‘nasty and ugly’.

English: *a living lie / live a lie*, ‘a dishonest way of life’; *Was Bynum Weeks separated and living a lie in front of people teaching preaching a living lie as though they were together ?*

Hungarian: *megtestesült hazugság*, literally ‘embodied lie’

English: *on the fiddle*, ‘to be dishonest and corrupt’; *On the Fiddle. Documentary series following the work of benefit fraud investigators.*

Hungarian: *biztosítási csalás*, literally ‘benefit fraud cheating’

English: *smell fishy*, ‘something dishonest or suspicious’; *A Rotting Bigfoot or a Smelly Fish Story...*

Hungarian: *valami bűzlik Dániában*, literally ‘something smells in Denmark’

As the examples suggest, in addition to universal source domains such as SMELL and DIRT, Hungarian expressions focus on ugliness, game, underhand, religious and criminal aspects, reflecting different socio-cultural conditions of extending the lexicon. Based on the DISHONESTY IS BOTTOM metaphor reflecting a vertical scale of morality, it becomes evident that the ‘vehicles’ of the source domain also constitute a scale of ‘negative values’ including ‘smell’, ‘lie’, ‘monkey’, ‘foul’, ‘dirty’, ‘bad’.

CHEATING

CHEATING IS A JOURNEY

The idioms related to the JOURNEY metaphor must have emerged from old times when gangsters told their mates to *take someone for a ride* and kill them. Cheating is a more modest version of this cruel scenario.

English: *take someone for a ride*, ‘to cheat someone’; *Why not as the man who took America for a ride and freed his country?*

Hungarian: *megvezet valakit, átver valakit, lóvá tesz valakit*, literally ‘take someone for a ride, push someone to understanding something, turn someone into a horse’

English: *take someone to the cleaner’s*, ‘to cheat someone and take away their property, money etc.’; *Fiona didn’t realise that the man was a swindler: he took her to the cleaners.*

Hungarian: *lecsupaszít, pőrére vetkőztet, elveszi az ingét, gatyáját*, literally: ‘strip’, ‘bare’, ‘undress to the skin’, ‘take away someone’s shirt, trousers’.

Miscellaneous

The FOOD metaphor seems an ever-returning source of meaning-extension, culturally-based, offering scenarios that are applicable for figurative thought as well. ‘Cheating’ emerging from a culinary scenario draws on the fact that cooking is a creative process. When associated with processing data in an unlikely manner, it may give rise to suspicion.

English: *cook the books/data*, ‘to steal money from a firm’; *They are putting UFJ under intense pressure to reduce its bad loans by next March, and will be very cross if they catch the bank doing this by cooking its books.*

Hungarian: *meghamisítja a könyvelést*, literally ‘create fake accounting’

The Hungarian set expressions reflect a) a horse-culture, where motion and control are especially crucial, and b) stripping someone of clothes rather than offering services and c) faking documents.

DECEPTION

DECEPTION IS (TAKING THE VICTIM FOR) A JOURNEY/A WALK

As has been demonstrated above, the JOURNEY metaphor facilitates extending the lexicon based on the experiential grounding of criminal acts. ‘Journey’ is expressed in terms of alternatives, such as walking, sailing, travelling, each exposing someone to illegal activities.

English: *lead someone up the garden path/ a blind alley*, ‘to deceive a person’; *Mr Schröder had led Germany up a blind alley, falling out with the Americans over Iraq, unthinkingly supporting the French in the European Union, and cosying up to Russia’s Vladimir Putin despite protests from Germany’s eastern neighbours.*

Hungarian: *megvezet valakit*, literally ‘lead someone away’

English: *sail under false colours*, ‘describes people who intend to deceive others’; *It turned out that the door-to-door sales rep was sailing under false colors and was actually a swindler.*

Hungarian: *hamis zászló alatt vitorlázik*, the same as in English.

DECEPTION IS A GAME

We, as cognitive creatures model the world according to how we conceive of it in terms of a variety of scenarios. Once the pattern available seems to share features with potentially-novel scenes, we tend to exploit features to describe

seemingly unrelated domains. Likewise, the GAME metaphor, which manifests a fine line between ‘fair’ and ‘unfair’ anyway, allows for some scope to identify ‘games’ with ‘deception’. Looking at a broader spectrum, one may realize that the GAME metaphor can be extended to as unrelated semantic fields as ACCUSATION in ACCUSATION IS A GAME: *a blame game, play ducks and drakes with someone, the pot calling the kettle black, play games, play someone for a fool* (Am.E.), and RISK in RISKING IS A GAME: *dice with death, play it safe, an ambler gambler, Nothing ventured, nothing gained, roll the dice, throw the dice*. So, there seems to be an abundance of idioms expressed with the GAME metaphor, and the picture is far from being complete.

DECEPTION IS LOSING SENSES

Visual senses allow for the physical domain to be profiled against the figurative domain of deception in different ways, such as blocking eyesight (*pull the wool over someone’s eyes*), deteriorating visual conditions (*smoke and mirrors, smoke-screen*) and exchanging materials (*all that glitters is not gold*).

English: *all that glitters is not gold*, ‘appearance may be deceptive’; *Though second-hand cars may also look bright and shiny, don’t forget that all that glitters is not gold*.

Hungarian: *nem minden arany ami fénylik*, the same as in English.

English: *fool the eye*, ‘to mislead someone’s senses’; *Advances in computer graphics have made it possible to create images that can fool the eye, yet they remain out of reach, mere phantoms trapped behind the glass of a computer monitor*.

Hungarian: *káprázik a szeme, szemfényvesztés*, literally ‘your eyes are dazzled, lose your eyesight’

English: *pull the wool over someone’s eyes*, ‘to deceive someone’; *Bank regulators, terrified of “regulatory capture” –having the wool pulled over their eyes by clever bankers – have ended up committing themselves to almost nothing*.

Hungarian: *port hint a szemébe*, literally ‘throw dust into someone’s eyes’

English: *smoke and mirrors* (Am.E.), ‘something used to deceive people’; *An U.S. officials say privately that he may actually have plant the stories about summary executions as part of a psychological smoke-and- mirrors game*.

Hungarian: *a titkok világa*, literally ‘the world of secrets’

English: *smoke-screen*, ‘to mislead someone by saying or showing irrelevant things’; *His own unit had massed its mortars to provide a smoke-screen, which indeed masked his dash from many of the enemy*.

Hungarian: *ködösít*, literally ‘create a foggy environment’

As opposed to English, Hungarian associates ‘deception’ with *weakened sensation, earth and secrecy*. Hungarian seems to prioritize nature (especially the

earth is valuable in the public mind) and mysticism to artificial means of blocking sensation. A few other Hungarian set phrases below are inconsistent with the English idioms in terms of ‘spices’, and ‘experience gained earlier’ in the sense of leaving an uncommon location.

Miscellaneous

Other instances involve age-related (*(not) be born yesterday*), tendency-like (*a pack of lies*) and trade-rooted (*sell someone a pup*) cases, each potentially implying the idea of ‘deception’.

English: *(not) be born yesterday*, ‘to express that you are not so naive as to believe what the other person is saying/has said’; *Don’t think you can fool me; I wasn’t born yesterday*.
Hungarian: *nem most jöttem le a falvédőről*, literally ‘I came off the splash-cloth ages ago’

English: *a pack of lies*, ‘something that proves false’; *Initially, Ailsa mistrusts MCC - she believes all his stories are a pack of lies, but eventually he wins her trust, and then one day he has to leave*.
Hungarian: *egy rakás hazugság*, literally ‘a pile of lies’

English: *sell someone a pup*, ‘to sell something that is of poor quality’; *Many MPs feel that they have been sold a pup with this Bill and decide not to vote for it*.
Hungarian: *rásóz valakire valamit*, literally ‘load salt onto someone’

TRICK

Tricks played by magicians are partially based on speed and diverting someone’s attention from realizing the essence of the trick. The two alternatives are illustrated by the idioms below.

English: *pull a fast one*, ‘to play a trick on someone’ *Pulling a fast one on them seemed the only way to get out of the mess*.
Hungarian: *átejt*, literally ‘drop someone through’

English: *put a new twist on something*, ‘to use a trick’; *But this is Hollywood, these guys are producers and they’re putting a new twist on reality TV: better health*.
Hungarian: *új fordulatot visz be*, the same as in English

Finally, the concept of ‘unfairness’ with its underlying idioms correlates with the experiential basis of human thinking. This attitude seems to be rooted in use of physical force by one (*below the belt*) or both of the parties (*backbiting*). War-like scenes depicted by the idioms are common (*a lance through the spine* and *shoot the messenger*), where exposure of the party deceived is inevitable.

UNFAIRNESS

Unfairness seems to draw on source domain vehicles such as indefensible parts of the human body (*below the belt, back and spine*) to draw inferences about abstract notions in the target domain. There are correspondences between physical world and figurative representations based on schematic information. The similarity between is rooted in nature of bodily interactions. This is corroborated by Kövecses (2000:165), who points out that different cultures cannot create concepts that “contradict universal physiology”.

English: *backbiting*, ‘unfair treatment of someone’ *The way they reacted to her proposal and the backbiting she had to endure was another lance through the spine so she decided to leave her job.*

Hungarian: *hátbatámadás*, literally ‘attack from behind’

English: *below the belt*, ‘unfair treatment’; *It’s not so much that it’s an unfair below-the-belt attack or anything like that.*

Hungarian: *övön aluli*, the same as in English

English: *give someone/have/a hard time*, ‘to cause someone to suffer for something’; *That the Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee are giving him a hard time about Vanguard shows how high the stakes are.*

Hungarian: *feladja valakinek a leckét*, literally ‘give someone an assignment’

English: *a lance through the spine*, ‘unfair behaviour’ *Mr Brian Sedgemore, who first became a labour MP in 1974, defected to the Liberal Democrats and urged voters to give Tony Blair ‘a bloody nose’ on polling day; Lord Kinnock, a former leader of the Labour party said that, for fellow MPs, Mr Sedgemore’s remarks would be a lance right through the spine.*

Hungarian: *hátbaszúrás*, literally ‘pierce through the spine’

English: *a low blow* (AmE), ‘unfair attitude’; *This time, by holding prices almost as low as pre-hurricane levels, Brazil undermined Florida’s ability “to recover from those devastating losses,” says Andrew LaVigne, vice president of Florida Citrus Mutual, which has joined other Florida growers groups in accusing Brazil of dumping cheap oranges in the United States before and after the hurricanes of 2004. It was a low blow.*

Hungarian: *övön aluli ütés*, the same as in English

English: *play rough*, ‘to be unfair to someone’; *The firm has a record of coming late to new technologies, but then playing so rough (and wielding its operating-system monopoly so shamelessly) that it still manages to be the last one standing.*

Hungarian: *törtet, tisztességtelen játékot űz*, literally ‘advance roughly, play an unfair game’

English: *shoot the messenger*, ‘to treat someone who has brought you bad news unfairly’; *Shooting the messenger. The continuing saga of Argentina and its creditors.*

Hungarian: *a küldöncön tölti ki a bosszúját*, literally ‘take a revenge on the messenger’

Fundamentally, English idioms and their Hungarian set phrases are identical. However, in a few cases, Hungarian rather involves more literal moral rendering as in *törtet* meaning ‘advance roughly’, as well as *feladja valakinek a leckét* i.e. ‘giving someone an assignment’.

Conclusion

To summarize, idioms yield to conceptual classification, even though, only part of the overall idioms classification has been examined. It is reflected by the databank surveyed that idiom behaviour within a conceptual set and even its antonyms largely conform to ubiquitous socio-cultural scenarios. This is clearly elucidated by the morality issues outlined above, relying on conceptual metaphors, such as GOOD MORALITY IS STRAIGHTNESS/CLEANNESS and OPENNESS, as opposed to BAD MORALITY IS DIRT / SMELL / TRICK / A JOURNEY/ POOR QUALITY or BAD BEHAVIOUR / LOSING SENSES. As illustrated above, idioms are motivated metaphorically (or metonymically), or simply comply with rules of conceptual classification. The lack of metaphorical-metonymic motivation may be due to socio-cultural interactions, environmental conditions and aspects of prioritizing.

The second hypothesis, assuming that there are varying degrees of metaphorical and metonymic motivation observable in idiomaticity, can be observed in the instantiation of concepts such as DISHONESTY, TRICK and UNFAIRNESS, which do not seem to receive enough metaphorical or metonymic motivation. Idioms underlying these concepts only reveal a variety of instantiations in the goal domain, which, however, do not offer enough consistency for metaphor to be produced. On the other hand, other semantically-related concepts such as DECEPTION, CHEATING and HONESTY reveal more fine-grained, metaphorical foundations.

The third hypothesis, aimed at exploring distinctions between English and Hungarian in facilitating the emergence of idiomatic language is also true. Based on experientially salient source-domain vehicles, it has been proved that socio-cultural factors provide lesser or greater discrepancy in describing the same scenario in the two languages. These culture-specific traits largely depend on historical, psychological, social and custom-related conceptualizations.

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