Metaphorical Conceptualization of EYE in Bhojpuri: *A Cognitive Perspective*

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Abstract

This paper specifically deals with the metaphorical conceptualizations of EYE in Bhojpuri from cognitive perspective. Bhojpuri metaphorical expressions containing the words   aankh with all its inflection form)ankhiyaa,ankhiyan,ankhiyan ,ankhiya(will be analyzed with the help of three established cognitive mechanisms, i.e. general conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies. These three mechanisms are regarded as the key elements motivating many metaphors in any language. The aim of this analysis is to show how the eyes are conceptualized by the Bhojpuri speaking people in meaningful ways.

Keywords: metonymy; metaphors; eye; conceptualizations; culture; emotions

Introduction

Cognitive Linguistics is the study of language in its cognitive function, where cognitive refers to the crucial role of intermediate informational structures in our encounters with the world. Cognitive Linguistics is cognitive in the same way that cognitive psychology is: by assuming that our interaction with the world is mediated through informational structures in the mind." (Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens 5)

Cognitive linguistics originated in the late seventies and early eighties in the work of George Lakoff, Ron Langacker, and Len Talmyan, the founding fathers. This is an approach to the

analysis of natural language.It considers language as an instrument for organizing, processing, and conveying information. In this perception the analysis of the conceptual and experiential basis of linguistic categories is most important within Cognitive Linguistics.

The dualism of mind and body get challenged with the theory of embodied cognition which is based on the empirical researches carried out in cognitive sciences. The embodiment hypothesis is the claim that *"human physical, cognitive, and social embodiment ground our conceptual and linguistic systems"* (Rohrer 27). Initially this hypothesis is formed by Lakoff and Johnson (112) as a constraint on the directionality of metaphorical structuring/ mapping.

Eyes not only mirror one's personality but also help people to scan various personalities and situation of the world we live in. On the basis of our perceptions through eyes we conceptualize different activities, persons, and situations. The way in which human eyes are conceptualized seems to be reflected in the language people use, particularly in metaphorical and idiomatic expressions used with the word 'eye'. These metaphorical expressions reveal a lot about people's perceptions of the shape, size, position, and function of the eyes, and thus help us to form a somewhat clearer picture people have of the general concept of the human eye.

Bhojpuri metaphorical expressions containing the words   *aankh* with all its inflection form)ankhiyaa,ankhiyan,ankhiyan ,ankhiya(will be analyzed with the help of three established cognitive mechanisms, i.e. general conventional knowledge, conceptual metaphors and metonymies. These three mechanisms are regarded as the key elements motivating many metaphors in any language. The aim of this analysis is to show how the eyes are conceptualized by the Bhojpuri speaking people in meaningful ways.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Metaphor is a basic facet of human cognitive faculty which plays a vibrant and creative role in production of meaning, construction of knowledge and in understanding reality. In cognitive linguistics metaphor is considered the main mechanism to understand abstract concepts.

Lakoff and Johnson with the help of empirical language data of English postulate that "abstract concepts are largely metaphorical". They argued that abstract ideas like events, causation, time, the self, the mind, and morality are largely metaphorical and these ideas are fleshed out by conceptual metaphors (134). Gibbs (7) also considers metaphor, and to a lesser extent metonymy, is the main mechanism through which we comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning. Kovecses (2) argued when the focus of understanding is on some intangible entity, such as time, our inner life, mental processes, emotions, abstract qualities, moral values, and social and political institutions, we understand intangible with metaphors.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory is a theoretical framework developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their book Metaphors We Live By. The basic premise of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that metaphor is not simply a stylistic feature of language but that our thought itself is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The theory propounded that our conceptual structure is organized by cross-domain mappings or correspondences between conceptual domains. Lakoff and Johnson describe the essence of metaphor is "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (5). In technical terms metaphor has been defined as a set of correspondences (or conceptual mappings) between two conceptual domains where one of the domain helps us to structure, understand and reason about the other domain (Lakoff 206-207).The two domains that participate in conceptual metaphor have special names i.e. the source domain and the target domain.

For example when we talk and think about *life* in terms of *journey*, about *argument* in terms of *war*, about *theories* in terms of *building* etc. we actually comprehending life, argument and theories in terms of journey, war and building. A convenient and precise way of capturing this view of metaphor is the following: CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL

DOMAIN B, (LIFE IS JOURNEY, ARGUMENT IS WAR, THEORIES ARE BUILDING). It is known as conceptual metaphor. Conceptual metaphors function at the level of thought and are realized linguistically by the expressions usually known as 'linguistic metaphors' or 'metaphors'. In Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is convention to write conceptual metaphors in capital letters.

Lakoff and Johnson (247) write: "*conceptual metaphor is a natural part of human thought, and linguistic metaphor is a natural part of human language*."

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory is a complex theory in which metaphor is seen as being constituted by a variety of parts, aspects, or components that interact with each other. The most important components of conceptual metaphors which need elaboration are the source domain and target domain, the correspondences among them and the kind of relationship between them. The understanding of metaphor is based on a set of systematic correspondences which is popularly known as mapping that exist between elements of source domain and elements of target domain. In other words the constituent elements of the source domain systematically correspond to the constituent elements of the target concept. But the constituent elements in the source domain are taken literally whereas in the target domain they are metaphorical. To see the mappings between source domain and target domain, let's take the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor as given by Kovecses (123).

Source: JOURNEY Target: LIFE

the travelers ⇒ people leading a life

motion along the way ⇒ purpose of life

the destination (s) of the journey ⇒ the purpose(s) of life

obstacles along the way ⇒ difficulties in life

different paths to one's destination(s) ⇒ different means of achieving one's purpose(s)

distance covered along the way ⇒ progress made in life

locations along the way ⇒ stages in life

guides along the way ⇒ helpers or counselors in life

crossroads in journey ⇒ major choices in life

Now, it is clear that through the above shown mapping that we comprehend 'life' in terms of 'journey', but it is not possible to comprehend 'journey' in terms of 'life' because the relationship between source domain and target domain is not reversible. We cannot comprehend 'journey' in terms of 'life' or 'war' in terms of 'argument' or 'buildings' in terms of 'theories' because conceptual metaphors typically employ a more abstract concept as target (LIFE) and a more concrete or physical concept as their source (JOURNEY). This is called the principle of unidirectionality; that is, the metaphorical process typically goes from the more concrete to the more abstract but not the other way around (Kovecses :7). Our experiences with the physical world serve as a natural and logical foundation for the comprehension of more abstract domains. The mapping between source and target domain is not completely arbitrary at all, rather the mapping is guarded by the *invariance principle*.

Kovecses (82) writes: *Each source is associated with a particular meaning focus (or foci) that is (or are) mapped onto the target. This meaning focus (or foci) is (are) constituted by the central knowledge that pertains to a particular entity or event within a speech community. The target inherits the main meaning focus (or foci) of the source*.

Bhojpuri Language

Bhojpuri is spoken in two adjoining states in India, and two contiguous countries of South Asia, India and Nepal. Furthermore, it is also the chief lingua franca of sizeable communities of Bhojpuri speaking settlers in Mauritius, Trinidad Guyana and Surinam. All this does in a way accord Bhojpuri the state of an International language. Extends to the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh with roughly the districts of Basti, Azamgarh, Varanasi and Mirzapur marking the western flank. In Nepal, Bhojpuri is spoken in the Tarai tract bordering India from Baharaich in Uttar Pradesh to Champaran in Bihar, and includes such places in Nepal as Kailali on the west and Mahottari on the east. On its western border, Bhojpuri meets Avadhi, with a transition area.

Western Bhojpuri includes the areas of Varanasi, Azamgarh, Ghazipur and Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh. Bhojpuri is not providential enough to have enriched literature, but its folk lore, and folk culture are revivified by the eminent presence of writers, poets, politicians and actors. Like other languages Bhojpuri also has metaphorical and figurative touch in many contexts.

Aim and Objective: The main objective of the paper is to highlight the metaphorical conceptualization of EYE in Bhojpuri and folk understanding of it from cognitive point of view. It will also focus the cross cultural similarities in conceptualization of EYE due to similarities in the human body.

In **Methodology,** data cited from the general conversation with local people or heard in day-today conversation or read in folk literature (specifically in Varanasi Region).

Metaphorical Conceptualization of EYE in Bhojpuri

The color, size and shape of the eyes convey culturally grounded meaning and it is beautifully utilized in many languages like there is an interesting conceptualization of eye in Bhojpuri which is actually concerned to the shape of the eyes : *aankhi ba ki poaa* (is it eyes or the seed of

jackfruit), here we can say that such conceptualization has deep cultural impact as jackfruit is favourite vegetable as well as fruit after being of the native people , and its seed 'poaa' is big and thick in size and covered with the flesh of the like shape inside, thus 'eye' is conceptualized in terms of 'poaa' culturally.

In Bhojpuri, EYE reflects conceptualizations of PERCEPTUAL ORGAN FOR PERCEPTION as well as THINKING,UNDERSTANING, and KNOWING IS SEEING. There is also a set of formal words that reflect the conceptualization of THINKING IS SEEING. The eye is also conceptualized in relation to emotions and personality traits such as love, happiness, envy, greed, attraction etc. This paper also flashes on various metaphorical uses by providing examples from everyday use of Bhojpuri expressions that include body part.

In Bhojpuri EYE IS THE SIGHT OF LOVE, the emotion most strongly associated with the eye is love. Here, it doesn't convey the sense of romantic love, but the love between mother and child. The following examples can be considered:

1. *hamaar betwaa hamaar aankh hau* (my son is my eyes. It means *I love my son dearly* or
   my son is everything to me)
2. *aankhi ka taaraa* (retina of eyes)

   hamaar betwaa hamare aankhi ka taaraa baa (my son is the retina of my eyes)
   hamaar betwaa hamare aankhi ka rosin baa (light of eyes or sight of eyes)

In the above mentioned examples love is conceptualized in terms of one's eye, in the sense that the loving person is equated with one's eye.. The loved person is also conceptualized as the retina of one's eye which is equivalent to the conceptualization of *apples of one's eye* in English which is prominent part of the eyes means very lovable person. In another expression   the

conceptualized *EYES are light sources* means without him/her nothing is visible but darkness, so much importance is conferred upon the person. Thus, eye is conceptualized as the sight of love basically, although many more metaphors are discussed under the conceptualization EYE IS THE SIGHT OF LOVE which motivates another very general conceptual metaphor like:

Aankhi ka putari (ball of eyes) it invokes an image to contain someone in one's eyes. Eyeball is loveliest person.

AVOIDING SEEING IS ENVY, here avoiding seeing means avoid to look at somebody to be envious or due to hatred.

aankh ferab (to turn his/her eyes)

u hamme dekh kea ankh fer lehana (seeing me he turned his eyes from me)

> Swartz (1998) observes the association of the eye with envy in Mombasa Swahili and maintains that for these speakers, "envy begins in the eyes that see what is desirable, is experienced and influenced in the heart where the desire to have what the other has is produced and may find expression through the tongue thus spreading and increasing the envy" (30).

Similarly, AVOIDING SEEING IS AVOIDING INFORMATION for instance :

aankhi ka mudab (to close the eyes)

sach dekh ke aankh naahi mudal jaa sakelaa (seeing the truth one cannot close the eyes)

The experiential basis of this metaphor is the function of eye and the general knowledge of the circumstances of avoiding seeing is not only information but also avoiding the responsibilities.

Hence, to close the eyes or to turn the eyes or to hide the eyes from something or someone conveys the sense of deliberately avoiding the person, situation or behavior.

EYE is also treated as a seat of love and affection or emotions. We can make it vacant when dislike. Thus, metaphorical conceptualization EYE IS SEAT OF EMOTIONS becomes relevant.

1.*aankhi par baithaaib* (to make someone sit on eyes)

ham unake apne aankhi par baithaa ke rakhilaa (I make her/him sit on my eyes) 'to love and respect someone a lot'

Here, seat is used as metaphor for eyes in the construction. In the example *najar se gir gail/aankhi se utar gail* (she fell from my eyes) is mentioned in terms of envy where eye is also conceptualized as a location from which someone can fall.

In another example we can find that eye is conceptualized as an object which can be kept on something or someone, thus the conceptual metaphor can be construed EYE IS AN OBJECT which suggests the sense to keep watching someone or something or spying. For example:

aankh rakhab (to keep eyes) *u hamare ghare par aankh rakha le* (she keeps eyes on my house) means she keeps watching my house or spying. Thus, such metaphors emerge while we correlate our experiences with the situations or our day-today experience.

Some linguistic expressions are also motivated by the conceptual metaphor THE EYES ARE CONTAINERS, generally container has limited holding capacity and beyond capacity it may cause overflow. For instance:

aankh bhar aail (eyes filled with tears)

aankh bhar ke dekh laa (to fill eyes with someone sight)

The general knowledge of container motivating the meaning of the above given expressions. In these expressions eyes are taken as container and the intense emotions are making container to overflow in the form of tears.

Conclusion:

The cognitive mechanisms of conceptual metonymies or metaphors drive the meaning of many Bhojpuri expressions on the basis of general conventional knowledge, and thus provide a clearer picture of them. Our body experiences or our day-today life's experiences are the prime factor which helps in the metonymic or metaphorical conceptualizations.

The eye is prominent to our life because it is simultaneously the organ and symbol of one of the basics and yet crucial manifestations of perceptions through which the whole life is perceived through various dimensions interestingly.

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