

Is Bodily Experience Shared by Different Cultures? Universality of Metaphors and Metonymies in English and Bosnian Language

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ABSTRACT

With the introduction of the terms conceptual metaphor and metonymy, the scope of cognitive linguistics has been considerably broadened and majority of linguists have set on to investigate the cognitive processes that structure our everyday language and thought. One such part of scientific investigation has been directed towards universality, i.e. the universality of conceptual metaphors and metonymies shared by different languages.

Universality of conceptual metaphors and metonymies has been primarily tested on English and some other worldly-known languages (Chinese, Japanese, German etc.). Never has such analysis been done with the Bosnian language. Analyzing English and Bosnian idioms with the lexical component hand, we shall show that these two distinct cultures share bodily experience, and that majority of conceptual metaphors, as well as conceptual metonymies are the same in both languages.

Starting with some theoretical background on conceptual metaphors and metonymies, as well as the notions of embodiment and universality, our paper analyzes idiomatic expressions with the lexical element hand/*ruka*/*šaka* and shows the similarities and differences in various abstract concepts that can be referred to through the notion of HAND. Discussing various abstract concepts, we analyze cognitive mechanisms on which these concepts have been formed, and compare their interaction between the two languages. Our analysis shows that universal metaphors exist, and that even if there are differences between the two distant languages, such as English and Bosnian are, they can be found on a specific level of language analysis.