

Metaphorical Conceptualization of 'Happy' in Nepali Embodied Idioms

Binod Dahal¹

¹M.Phil. Scholar, Pokhara University, Nepal; <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6509-7840>

Corresponding email: binoddahal361@gmail.com

Abstract

The study focuses on phenomenology-based cognitive linguistics research in Nepali embodied idioms. The embodied emotional concept of Nepalese happiness is rooted in the conceptual system of Nepali speakers, which is examined and examined in consideration of the physiological state of the human body's organs to form a metaphor. The theoretical framework of this study is CMT (Conceptual Metaphor Theory), developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. The embodiment hypothesis in Nepali idiomatic expression is explored in this study; however, the primary metaphors, based on the body, are likely to be universal. This study investigates the experience of spatial and substance in the body container (physical source domain) in their understanding of the abstract conceptualization of happiness (target domain). The conclusion of this investigation shows that the conceptual system of Nepali, which has eight embodied idiomatic expressions for happiness, is deeply rooted in bodily spatial experience to establish an event/spatial structure metaphor with trajectory (landmark-trajector) in collective unconsciousness. The data were collected from the academic survey reports of Nepali idioms. The happiness-related conceptual metaphor of Nepali body-part idioms and their physicality and experiential enterprise have been empirically investigated in this research.

Keywords: *Phenomenology-based cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, happy, Nepali idioms.*

Introduction

The idioms are called tukka [tukka] in the Nepali language. Idioms are found in almost every language in the world. It is folk language and literature. The idioms are similar and different at the culture-specific and generic level in every language of the world. Idioms and metaphors are a morphological structure of natural language where single words or groups of words construct the visual image at the conceptual level. The second-generation cognitive grammar is constructed symbolically. The generalization is embodied by a schematic symbolic structure. Meaning is equally understood with the concept-building process.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argue that everyday reason is bizarrely linked to emotion. Emotions make an individual rational. All emotions are connected to a physical basis. The embodied mind plays an important role in constructing meaning and concepts in cognitive linguistics research, based on phenomenology. In a phenomenological study of metaphor, the physiological experiences and sensorimotor activations involve the actual mind.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) validate the various abstract concepts used daily. The various cognitive unconscious- abstract emotional concepts like love, anger, sadness, and happiness are explained by giving tangible examples.

The emotion and primary metaphor hypothesis are embodied in its nature. In Nepali idiomatic expression, the human emotional expression and experience with body part metaphor that shows more abstract emotional concepts (target-domain) of fear, happiness, and anger, are distributed to tangible/ more concrete with reference to human bodily organs (source-domain).

Nepali body parts; the head [tauako], [k^happər], [munṭo], [gərdən], [purpuro], [čəḍo], eye [āk^ha], [nəyən],[nəjər], mouth [muk^h], [t^huṭuno], [haudō], heart [muṭu], nose [nak], [pora], teeth [dāṭ], [dar^ha] ear [kan], hair [kəpal], [rəṭ], [ak^hi-b^həu], [pərela], [b^huṭla], [j^haṭ], hand [haṭ], [pak^hura], leg [k^huṭta, pau] etc., and their associated idiomatic expression entails the more abstract concepts i.e. anger, fear, happiness, sadness, guilty, sorrow, annoyed, surprise, etc.

The six major bodily organs head [tauako], face/ mouth [muk^h], eye [āk^ha], teeth [dāṭ], hand [haṭ], and feet [k^huṭta] related embodied idiomatic expression play a crucial role for the formation of the abstract emotional concept ‘happy’ with eight embodied idiomatic expression that are deeply rooted in Nepali conceptual system. The embodied idiomatic expressions āk^ha muk^h tḥəmkaunu, āk^ha natfnu, taukoma tḥəḍnu, udzjalo muk^h launu, bəṭtis dāṭ dek^haunu, ṭin haṭ ufrinu, b^hūima k^huṭta

nəhunu as source domain mapping target domain to “happiness” in Nepali metaphorical conceptualization.

Review of Literature

Lakoff and Johnson (1993) define metaphor as ‘cross-domain mapping’. They said, “The word metaphor has come to mean in a conceptual system, and the term metaphorical expression can be used to designate a linguistic expression (word, phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping.”

Goatley (1997) explains that metaphors arise when units of discourse are used to refer to objects, processes, or concepts in non-traditional ways or are combined in non-traditional ways. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that a conceptual theory of metaphor involves a two-domain model for conceptualizing metaphors. Mapping conceptual structures from one semantic domain (source) to another target domain. Perception constitutes the domain of experiential knowledge. CMT argues that meaning is based on embodied experiences that shape language and thought, that sources and objects are processed metaphorically, and that mappings appear to some extent automatically and unconsciously.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that all experiences are meticulously cultural; i.e., we perceive the world in a way that culture is already present in the experience itself. They also argue that our concepts are based on cultural premises that are more physical and more cultural. They explain that ‘concepts’ are influenced by certain values in society, but that these values may vary depending on the cultural environment. Here, cultural values correspond to metaphorical systems.

Kovecses (2002) explains that idioms are not only linguistic properties with morphosyntactic construction, but rather each vocabulary of an argument is instinctively linked to a motivated, embodied conceptual system that is preconceptual rather than linguistic. He also listed the hypothesis that the universality of conceptual metaphors in English is: ‘Happiness is off the ground, ‘Happiness is upward, ‘Happiness is light, ‘Happiness is matter(liquid), and ‘Container’. These almost universal metaphors have a general level of structure and arise from universal aspects of the human body. Lakoff and Johnson further argue that human concepts and meanings are not only external realities, but are also internally formed and controlled by the body, brain, and sensorimotor systems. The concept and meaning are based on the concept of color, a

basic-level concept, and spatial relationships. The analytical philosophy of language, its meaning, and its central concern have always been based on disembodiment. It rigorously defines formal universals and formal mathematical provisions for constructing meanings and concepts. Analytic philosophy summarized that imagination and emotions play no role in meaning, and believed that meaning had nothing to do with our embodiment, imagination, or emotions.

Deignan (2003) uses corpus linguistics to compare the relative productivity of different metaphor source domains across languages. Evidence from corpus linguistics suggests that there are differences in metaphorical expressions that represent cultural differences. Additionally, it is argued that a historical perspective on metaphorical expressions and a systematic analysis of metaphors are useful for foreign and second language learners.

Kovecses (1995) explains the Lakoffian model with sub metaphors, 'body is a container for emotion', 'emotions are fluids. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) further claim that human concept and meanings is not just our external reality, they are also internally shaped and governed by the body, brain, and sensory-motor system. The concept and meaning are rooted in the color concept, the basic-level concept, and the spatial relations concept.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that our spatial concepts are constructed through spatial experiences. Human spatial concepts include up-down, front-back, inside-out, and near-far, which are related to the daily functions of the body, highlighting the possible structures of spatiality. Thanks to the spatial constant, the structure of spatial concepts is possible. The bodily experience and physical basis of these up-down, in-out, back-and-forth concepts are more salient than the separate functioning of spatial and perceptual movements, as well as other components of conceptual structuring.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) clarify that spatial-relation concepts are at the center of the human conceptual system. They make sense of space for us. The spatial-relations concepts unconsciously impose our perception and conceptual system. Most spatial relations are complex elementary spatial relations. Spatial relations have an internal structure consisting of an image schema, a profile, and a trajector-landmark structure.

Kovecses (2000) argues that conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonymies, and related concepts rely on prototypical models of specific emotions. Reconciliation occurs in three ways: The first is that the conceptual components together constitute a cognitive model, the second is

that they are based on existing cognitive models, and the third is that some of them are constructed and some are based on prototypical cognitive models. Prototypical cognitive models can be thought of as folk theories about specific emotions. Kovecses (2006) concluded that happiness and pain differ primarily in their evaluative and phenomenological nature. Phenomenological metaphors appear to be based on distinct causes and expressive physiological and behavioral responses that characterize happiness and pain. Metaphorical conceptualization, based on the distinction between cause and effect associated with a concept, appears to be a general property of our cognitive apparatus. These two concepts, 'happiness' and 'pain', share many of the metaphorical sources of power dynamics that characterize the concept of emotion.

Methodology

This study is theoretically based on the conceptual theory of metaphor developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. This study investigates universal or near-universal metaphors that share general-level structures that arise from universal aspects of the human body. The embodiment hypothesis in Nepali embodied idioms is the primary concern for this study. The data of this study is collected from the various survey reports of Nepali idioms, where the body-part-related idiomatic expressions are selected. The happiness-related embodied idiomatic expressions are chosen for the interpretation and analysis to test the embodiment hypothesis in Nepali. The classified heading 'happiness' is further analyzed and interpreted descriptively with physiological experience and image-schematic logic developed by Lakoff and Johnson.

This study is theoretically based on the conceptual theory of metaphor developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. This study investigates universal or near-universal metaphors that share general-level structures that arise from universal aspects of the human body.

Results and Discussion

Kovecses (1991) described the concept of 'happiness' using different types of conceptual metaphors. There are three types of conceptual metaphors. Metaphors for general emotions, metaphors that evaluate the concept of happiness, and metaphors that reveal much of the phenomenological essence and characteristics of happiness. Common emotional metaphors: 'Happiness is a liquid in a bowl', 'Happiness is heat/fire', 'Happiness is a force of nature',

'Happiness is physical strength', 'Happiness is social superiority', 'Happiness is the enemy', 'Happiness is the captive animal'. 'Happiness is madness', 'Happiness is a force that replaces personality', and 'Happiness is a disease'. The second is a metaphor for evaluating happiness. 'Happiness is light', 'Happiness is the feeling of light', 'Happiness is above', 'Happiness is in the sky'. A third type of metaphor provides a phenomenological characterization of happiness. 'Happiness is an animal that lives well', 'Happiness is a pleasant physical sensation', 'Happiness is pleasure', 'Happiness is life force', and 'Happiness is warmth'.

In *Metaphor and Emotion*, Kovecses (2002) states that emotion is inside the human body, which is a near-universally cultural-conceptualization of emotion. The container image schema is defined as a metaphorical inference for the comprehension of all emotions. The container image schema defines the inside and outside status related to the human body.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) explain that the concept of spatial relationships is at the center of an individual's conceptual system. They give us a sense of space. The concept of spatial relationships unconsciously influences our perception and conceptual system. Most spatial relationships are complex elementary spatial relationships. Spatial relationships have an internal structure consisting of image diagrams, profiles, and landmark trajectory structures.

Kovecses (2002) listed hypotheses about the universality of emotional conceptual metaphors in English, for example, the container. These almost universal metaphors have a general level of structure and arise from universal aspects of the human body.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) explain that the concept of spatial relationships is at the center of an individual's conceptual system. They give us a sense of space. The concept of spatial relationships unconsciously influences our perception and conceptual system. Most spatial relationships are complex elementary spatial relationships. Spatial relationships have an internal structure consisting of image diagrams, profiles, and landmark trajectory structures.

Kovecses (2002) listed hypotheses about the universality of emotional conceptual metaphors in English, for example, the container. These almost universal metaphors have a general level of structure and arise from universal aspects of the human body.

Kovecses (2002) listed the hypothesis that the universality of emotional conceptual metaphors with English instances is: 'Being happy is being off the ground', 'Happy is up',

‘Happiness is light’, ‘Happiness is substance’ in a container. Such a near-universal metaphor shares a generic-level structure and arises from the universal aspect of the human body.

Kovecses (1986,1990) and Lakoff and Kovecses (1983) suggest that the concept of emotion is best viewed as a category or set of cognitive models centered on one or more models. At its core, the cognitive model (prototype) arises from a conceptual metaphor system, a conceptual metonymy system, and a set of implicit concepts. They proposed three archetypes of happiness implicit in these linguistic materials.

Kovecses (1991) stated that metaphors reveal several properties of happiness. First, happiness often occurs in the context of unpleasant emotional experiences such as sadness or anxiety. Second, moving from these emotions to happiness is a change in perspective. Happiness is a positive outlook on the world ('bright side', 'illuminate', 'brighten', etc.). Third, happy people have the characteristic of being full of energy. The light appears to come from internal heat energy. Fourth, as heat energy spreads, happiness spreads. Fifth, metaphors arise in relation to happiness and other emotions.

Happiness is concentrated in the head [*tau*ko], face/mouth [*muk*^h], eye [*āk*^ha], teeth [*dā*ṭ], hand [*ha*ṭ], and feet [*k*^huṭṭa] in Nepali, where *āk*^ha *nat*f^{nu}, *tau*ko^{ma} *t*fəḍ^{nu}, *bā*ṭṭis *dā*ṭ *dek*^ha^{nu}, *ṭin* *ha*ṭ *ufrinu*, *b*^hūima *k*^huṭṭa *nə*h^{nu} are analysed below.

Kovecses (1991) clarified that the physical activity of jumping (up and down) is understood as an expression of additional energy or vitality. Happiness is generalized as a state of high energy characterized by high activity levels. This view is supported by an additional behavioral response that is assumed to accompany happiness: ‘dancing’ (e.g., ‘We dance for joy’). This metonymy not only describes happiness or joy as a state of high energy, but also shows the close connection between happiness and celebration. Highly intelligent ways to express happiness are usually found in social contexts (celebrations). Intense happiness is primarily a social experience, not an individual one.

Kovecses (2006) stated that the specific conceptual metonymy applied to happiness corresponds to behavioral, physiological, and expressive responses. Behavioral reactions – ‘jump for happiness’, ‘sing and dance for happiness’. The physiological responses are ‘blood flush for happiness’, ‘increased heart rate for happiness’, ‘body warmth for happiness’, and

‘excitement/excitement for happiness’. The Expressive answers are ‘happy is clear eyes ‘and ‘happy is a smile’.

1. *ãk^ha natfnu*
eye dance-INF
‘To be happy is being active and dancing eyes’

The body container (eye) moves from source to goal with bodily spatial experience. The image schematic logic is from a single landmark to various possible vertical and boundary trajectories. Happiness is spatial.

2. *taukoma tʃəɖnu*
head-LOC climb-INF
‘To be happy is being high with joy on head’

The trajectory is directed vertically upward from the landmark(source) and structured according to the source-path-goal schema. Happiness is spatial.

Kovecses (1991) suggested that the conceptual metaphor is a very typical expressive response associated with happiness: smiling (as in “they were all smiling”). A more intense form of smiling is laughter, which appears to be combined with a more intense form of joy. In an individual smile, the corners of the mouth are turned upward, and in sadness, they are turned downward. Each other's smiles also serve as a metaphor for 'light'. Teeth play an important role in our typical smile image. The image contains the brightness of white teeth. Linguistic evidence for the connection between happiness and the role of all teeth in the smile can be found in examples such as ‘He was all teeth’ in Nepali, too.

3. *bətt̪is d̪ãt̪ dek^haunu*
thirty-two teeth show-INF
‘To be happy is with totality (teeth)’.
4. *həriya d̪ãt̪ dek^haunu*
green teeth show-INF
‘To be happy is showing teeth(green).

The body vessel (mouth) is wide and divided from the center to the periphery. The trajectory is directed from the center to the periphery. The container image schema determines the

internal and external states of the human body. Wholeness (teeth) explains that happiness is holistic with space. In the Nepali context, teeth play an important role in the image of our typical smile. In English, the image suggests the brightness of white teeth, but in Nepali, the concept of happiness refers to 'green teeth' rather than 'bright teeth'.

Kovecses (1991) argues that the concept of happiness is associated with an upward orientation: 'to be happy is to get off the ground' (as in 'I was flying high', 'she was on cloud nine'). The motivation for conceptualizing happiness as upwardly oriented may be that happiness and joy are associated with 'bouncing up' responses. The direction of the upward jump indicates that this metaphor is based on experiences commonly associated with happiness and joy.

5. *ṭin haṭ ufrinu*
three hand jump-INF

'To be happy is being three feet up (detachment)'.

The trajectory is directed three hand equal measurement (vertically upward direction) from the landmark(land) and structured the source-path-goal schema. Happiness is vertically up. Happiness is spatial.

6. *b^hũima k^huṭṭa nəhunu*
land feet NEG-be-INF

'To be happy is to be detached from land.'

The trajector is detached from the landmark. Detachment of the feet from the land is happiness. Happiness is spatial.

The above example (1), where the body container (eye) moves from source to goal with bodily spatial experience. The image schematic logic is from a single landmark to various possible vertical and boundary trajectories. Whereas in (3) the trajector is directed from center to periphery. But (2), (5) and (6) data conclude that 'happy' is vertically upward (spatial) where the trajector moves up to prove the 'happy is up' hypothesis. Example (1), (2), (3), (5), and (6) shows that the bodily spatial experience in the body container has a great influence on metaphorical conceptualization of happiness. The container landmark and its trajectory move from source to goal for 'happy' emotion conceptualization.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argue that color is not the only thing or substance that exists in the world. An adequate theory of the conceptual structure of color cannot be constructed based

solely on the spectral properties of surfaces. This must involve color cones and neural circuits. Since cones and neural circuits are implemented here, the essential conceptual properties of color are also implemented correspondingly. Happiness is conceptualized with color in the body-container in Nepali embodied idioms. Embodied color is not solely a property but has relational and relative reality, and is realized with body, object, and world.

Kovecheses (1991) hypothesized that an empirical basis may motivate the existence of specific happiness metaphors. Happiness is a form of visual behavior in which a person's eyes appear brighter than when they are unhappy. Bright eyes symbolize happiness. It is important to note that “the eyes are the seat of emotions.” Metonymy is partly motivated by metaphor.

7. *āk^ha muk^h* *tʃəmkaunu*
eye mouth bright-INF

‘To be happy is appearing brightness/lightness in the eye/face.’

In Nepali, the face is the container for the emotion corresponding to the eye container. The face and eye hold and convey the emotional linguistic expression.

The status of color of the body containers, the eye, and the face are bright and contrasted while expressing and experiencing happiness. Happiness is shifted in color and substance from the usual status in the body container. Happiness is bright, and a bright substance in the body container is articulated with idiomatic expression.

Kovecses (1991) claims that happiness is depicted as a source of energy and high activity. Happiness involves the production of a high level of physiological arousal (flushing, light).

8. *udzjalo* *muk^h launu*
bright face make-INF

‘To be happy is to appear brightness/lightness on the face.’

The status of color of the body container (face) is cheerful and more contrasted. Happiness is shifted in color and substance from the usual status in the body container. Bright color is happiness. Happiness is a substance in the body container.

In the above (6) and (7), the brightness is shared in the body container. The eye and face contain the happiness-related substance in the container. The substantial change with brightness on the body container face and eye conceptualized ‘happy’ conceptualization, whereas the opposite (darkness) change in the container is conceptualized as sadness.

Conclusion

In Nepali embodied idiomatic expressions, in understanding the abstract conceptualization of happiness (object domain), the basic emotion of happiness is conceptualized in relation to the physical experience of the space and substance of the body container (physical source domain). Examples of (1) include behavioral response metaphors such as ‘jumping for happiness’ and ‘singing and dancing for happiness’. Happiness is generalized as a state of high energy characterized by high activity levels. This view is supported by an additional behavioral response that is assumed to accompany happiness: ‘dancing’ (e.g., ‘We dance for joy’). This metonymy not only describes happiness or joy as a state of high energy, but also shows the close connection between happiness and celebration. Highly intelligent ways to express happiness are usually found in social contexts (celebrations).

Intense happiness is primarily a social experience, not an individual one. Example (2) is upwardly oriented happiness. Here, ‘to be happy is to be off the ground’ (e.g., ‘I was flying high’, ‘she was on cloud nine’). The motivation for an upwardly oriented conceptualization of ‘happiness’ may be the ‘bouncing up and down’ behavioral responses associated with happiness and joy. Examples (3) and (4) represent a more intense form of smiling, laughter that appears to be combined with a more intense form of joy. In an individual smile, the corners of the mouth are turned upward, and in sadness, they are turned downward. Each other's smiles also serve as a metaphor for 'light'. Teeth play an important role in our typical smile image. The image contains the brightness of white teeth.

Linguistic support for the link between happiness and the role of teeth in the smile can be found in examples such as ‘He was all teeth’. In English, the image suggests the brightness of white teeth, but in Nepali, the concept of happiness refers to 'green teeth' rather than 'bright teeth'. In example (5), the concept of happiness is upwardly oriented, such as ‘to be happy is to get off the ground’ (e.g., ‘I was flying high,’ ‘she was on cloud nine’). The motivation for conceptualizing happiness as upwardly oriented may be that happiness and joy are associated with behavioral responses (‘bouncing up and down’). The direction of the upward jump indicates that this metaphor is based on experiences commonly associated with happiness and joy. In example (1) above, the body container (the eye) moves from source to destination through the experience of body space. Schematic logic of images - from single landmarks to various vertical and boundary trajectories.

As shown in (3), the trajectory goes from the center to the periphery. However, data (2), (5), and (6) show that 'happiness' is vertically upward (spatially), where the trajectory moves upward, proving that the 'happiness is upward' hypothesis. Examples (1), (2), (3), (5), and (6) show that the experience of body space in the body-container has a great influence on the metaphorical conceptualization of happiness. Reference containers and their trajectories move from source to target for conceptualizing 'happy' emotions.

Example (7) suggests that a form of visual behavior whose eyes appear bright is happier than one who has a dark face and eyes. Bright eyes symbolize happiness. It should be noted that the metonymy 'the eyes are the seat of emotions' is partly motivated by metaphor, and the conclusion that in example (8), 'happiness' is depicted as a source of energy and high activity. Happiness is associated with the occurrence of high levels of physiological arousal (hot flashes, light). The conclusion of this study is to demonstrate that in Nepal's conceptual system, eight embodied idiomatic expressions of happiness are deeply rooted in the body's spatial experience, thereby establishing an event/space structure metaphor with a trajectory (landmark-trajectory) of the collective unconscious. In Nepali idiom, happiness is conceptualized as height, activeness, totality, and detachment.

References

- Deignan, A. (2003). *Metaphorical expressions and culture: indirection, metaphor and symbolism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goatley, A. (1997). *The language of metaphor*. Routledge.
- Kovecses, Z. (1986). *Metaphor of anger, pride and love. Pragmatics and beyond*. John Benjamins.
- Kovecses, Z. (1990). *Emotion concept*. Springer Verlag.
- Kovecses, Z. (1991). Happiness: an attempt at justice. *Metaphor and symbolic activity*, 6,29-46.
- Kovecses, Z. (1995). Anger: The language, conceptualization, and physiology of anger in light of cross-cultural evidence. J. R. Tyler and R. E. McLaury (ed.). *Language and the cognitive construction of the world*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kovecses, Z. (2000). *Metaphors and emotions: Language, culture, and the body in human emotions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kovecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor, practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Kovecses, Z. (2006). *Conceptual Framework of Happiness and Pain*, 13.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: Embodied Reason and the Challenge of Western Thought*. *Basic Books*.

Lakoff, G. (1993). *Modern Metaphor Theory*. A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors by which we live*. University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G., & Koveches, Z. (1987). A cognitive model of anger in American English. In D. Holland and N. Quinn (eds.) *Cultural Patterns of Language and Thought*. Cambridge University Press.