Cognitive Study of Image Schemas in a Poem by "Fereydoon Moshiri"

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Abstract

The present study aims at analyzing image schemas in a poem by Fereydoon Moshiri called "koocheh"(The Lane). Culturally image schemas are represented differently in languages. It is essential to mention that conceptual structures are not just used in poetry but, in everyday language as well. Image schemas as mentioned by Johnson (1987) are conceptual structures derived from physical experiences, cultural background and ideology of a nation. All human beings have access to a universal collection of image schemas, such as containment, path and force schemas. The present study is a descriptive-analytic research. The analysis of the poem "koocheh"(The Lane) by Fereydoon Moshiri as the corpus of this article shows that some linguistic forms are connected with some schemas; some special prepositions with containment schema, verbs (or nouns derived from them) containing the concept of motion with path schema, and verbs (or nouns derived from such verbs) containing the concept of power accompanied by two nouns with force schema.

Key Words: *cognitive linguistics, image schemas, Fereydoon Moshiri, koocheh*

1. Introduction

Cognitive linguistics is a branch of cognitive science which came from interest that researchers held in the connection between language and mind in 1970s. According to Croft and Cruse (as cited in Asgari, 2013) cognitive linguistics adheres to three central positions. First, it denies the existence of an autonomous linguistic faculty in the mind; second, it understands grammar in terms of conceptualization; and third, it believes that linguistic knowledge arises out of language use. Cognitive linguists deny the existence of a unique and autonomous module for language acquisition in the mind. This is in contrast to the stance adopted in generative grammar. They also argue that knowledge of linguistic phenomena is essentially conceptual in nature. However, they assert that there is no significant difference between the storage and retrieval of linguistic data and other kinds of knowledge, and that we must employ cognitive abilities similar to those used in other non-linguistic tasks for understanding via language.

According to Talmy and Rasekhmahand (as cited in Sharifi & Mayamei, 2012) cognitive science deals with the operations of human mind and the fact that how it gets the information from the outside world through the five senses, compares them with the previous data and finally categorizes and stores them in the memory. The central concern of cognitive linguistics is to represents conceptual structure in language. So, it focuses on the linguistic structuring of basic conceptual categories, such as space and time; it believes that language is a system of structures which mirrors thought patterns. The physical form of language represents these structures and is affected by both the environment and experience.

Noam Chomsky (1959) put forth the theory that language is innate. Cognitive linguists rejected this notion and argued that language acquisition is a learning process not different from the process of learning other skills. Cognitive linguists seek to understand how memory, categorization, imagery and attention affect language. They try to create psychological models for language that cover various linguistic phenomena, such as figurative language. (Asgari, 2013: 182)

As part of cognitive linguistics, Taylor (2006) states, cognitive semantics is also conceptualist, i.e., it focuses on meaning as a mental entity. In this regard, the study of metaphor and schema is of considerable importance because their concepts are the exact concern of cognitive linguistics. These two concepts are closely connected. Metaphor was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) with schema being developed by Johnson (1987). Schema theory was devised to account for the fact that linguistic denotation underdetermines meaning. (Sharifi & Mayamei, 2012: 329-330)

The purpose of the present article is to study the identification of image schemas in "Koocheh" (The Lane) poem by Fereydoon Moshiri with respect to type, frequency and linguistic form. Fereydoon Moshiri (1926-2000) was one of the prominent contemporary Persian poets who versified in both modern and classic styles of the Persian poem. He is best known as conciliator of classical Persian poetry at one side with the New Poetry initiated by Nima Yushij at the other side. (Wikipedia) Moshiri's poems are written in a simple language similar to the daily speech; therefore this article can provide us insights about the role of schema in the daily spoken language. In this study, we'll first shed light on image schema and its different types. Then these types of schemas are presented in this poem. We'll then categorize them into different types, and will finally count the number of items in each category. The presented results are categorized based on the most frequent types of schemas linguistic elements of schemas and will look for probable relations between their occurrence and frequency of the schemas.

2. Image schemas

Image schemas according to Saeed (2013) are conceptual structures in the cognitive semantics literature. The basic idea is that because of our physical experience of being and acting in the world – of perceiving the environment, moving our bodies, exerting and experiencing force, etc.

– we form basic conceptual structures which we then use to organize thought across a range of more abstract domains. In Mark Johnson (1987), these image schemas are proposed as a more primitive level of cognitive structure underlying metaphor and which provide a link between bodily experience and higher cognitive domains such as language. (Saeed, 2013: 366)

Johnson determined some types of schema, three of which are as follows:

2.1. Containment schema: derives from our experience of the human body itself as a container; from experience of being physically located ourselves within bounded locations like rooms, beds, etc.; and also of putting objects into containers.

Example: John has gone into a deep depression after divorce.

Such a schema has certain experientially-based characteristics:

a) Containers are a kind of disjunction: elements are either inside or outside the container.

b) Containment is typically transitive: if the container is placed in another container, the entity is within both. (Saeed, 2013: 367)

2.2. Path schema: This schema reflects our everyday experience of moving around the world and experiencing movements of other entities. It consists of a starting point, an end point (a goal), and a series of intermediate points. (Saeed, 2013: 368) Its basic logic tells us that if you go from a source to a destination along a path, then you must pass through each intermediate point on the pass and that the further along the path you are, the more time has gone by since starting. (Pena Crevel, 1999: 189)

Example: He's writing a PhD thesis and he's nearly there.

2.3. Force schema: It is related to experiences of encountering an obstacle and using one's power to overcome it. (Sharifi & Mayamei, 2012: 330) There are three kinds of force schemas:

2.3.1. Compulsion: When we have a movement along a trajectory, the force may be blocked. (Saeed, 2013: 369)

Example: She pushes us to our limits.

2.3.2. Blockage: When a force meets an obstruction and acts in various ways: being diverted, or continuing on by moving the obstacle or passing through it. (Saeed, 2013: 369)

Example: My doctor has forbidden me to drink alcohol.

2.3.3. Removal of restraint: When the removal (by another cause) of a blockage allows an exertion of force to continue along a trajectory. (Saeed, 2013: 370)

Example: John did his best and passed the exam.

3. Data and Analysis

Image schemas in Koocheh (The Lane) poem

3.1. Containment Schemas

<div dir="rtl">شوق دیدار تو لبریز شد از جام وجودم</div>

My soul, a cup teeming with anticipation of seeing you.

The poet's mind is considered as a cup which is a container and his enthusiasm to meet his sweetheart is like a content which has overflowed this cup.

<div dir="rtl">در نهانخانه جانم گل یاد تو درخشید</div>

Within my soul, bloomed in joy the flower of your memory.

In this verse, "jan" (soul) is considered as a container and "yad" (memory) as a content that used to inhabit in it. So the containment schema is used here. Moshiri says that while passing through the lane, he remembered his sweetheart. Here his memories with his sweetheart are resembled to a flower.

<div dir="rtl">پر گشودیم و در آن خلوت دل خواسته گشتیم</div>

Wings wide-open, in cherished solitude, soaring.

Here the lover and his beloved are like birds that have flown in solitude. The solitude is like a container and the lover and his sweetheart are like contents.

<div dir="rtl">تو همه راز جهان ریخته در چشم سیاهت</div>

You, all the world's secrets in your black eyes.

Here the eyes of the sweetheart are considered as containers which contain all the mysteries of the world.

<div dir="rtl">خوشه ماه فرو ریخته در آب</div>

Moonlight, grapes pouring down into the water.

Here the moon, which is similar to a bunch of grapes, is poured into the water. The water is the container and the picture of the moon which is reflected in the water is the content.

<div dir="rtl">

تا به دام تو در افتم، همه جا گشتم و گشتم

</div>

Round your trap I wandered and wandered,
For to be captured by you, to surrender.

In this verse, the poet believes that his sweetheart is a hunter who has a trap. He has searched everywhere to find this trap and become captured in it. The trap is a container and the poet himself is located in it as content.

<div dir="rtl">

اشک در چشم تو لرزید

</div>

Tears in your eyes, gleaming.

The eyes of the sweetheart are considered as containers in which tears shudder.

<div dir="rtl">

پای در دامن اندوه کشیدم

</div>

The sorrow overshadowed my heart again.

The poet is grieving and grief is supposed as a lap (container) in which he has spread his feet (the content).

<div dir="rtl">

رفت در ظلمت غم، آن شب و شبهای دگر هم

</div>

Many a night have passed in melancholy darkness.

The darkness of the sorrow is the container and the night is the content.

3.2. Path Schemas

<div dir="rtl">

بی تو مهتاب شبی باز از آن کوچه گذشتم

</div>

Without you, in a moonlit night again,
I passed through that lane.

The poet is the trajectory and the lane is the landmark. There is a path image schema here. There is a beginning and an end point and a sequence of places on the way.

<div dir="rtl">

همه تن چشم شدم، خیره به دنبال تو گشتم

</div>

My body, an eye gazing in search of you.

In this verse, the poet is searching the lane for his beloved and the beginning of the lane is the source and the end of the lane is goal. The poet makes a movement all through the lane to find his sweetheart.

<div dir="rtl">

شوق دیدار تو لبریز شد از جام وجودم

</div>

My soul, a cup teeming with anticipation of seeing you.

The enthusiasm to meet his sweetheart has moved from the bottom of his soul (the starting point) and has overflowed his soul i.e., has passed the end point.

عطر صد خاطره پیچید

The scent of a hundred memories encircled me.

The memory of the poet with his sweetheart is like a flower which has a perfume. This perfume has spread through the lane. The flower is the source, the lane is the sequence of places, the end of the lane is the end point.

یادم آمد که شبی با هم از آن کوچه گذشتیم

That night, I recalled, through the lane we wandered side by side.

Two path image schemas are used in this verse:

a) "yad" (memory) is considered as a physical object which can move from one place to another.

b) The poet and his sweetheart (the trajectories) have passed through the lane (the landmark).

پر گشودیم و در آن خلوت دل خواسته گشتیم

Wings wide-open, in cherished solitude, soaring.

The poet and his sweetheart are like birds that have flown in solitude.

شاخه ها دست برآورده به مهتاب

The tree branches the heaven praised.

The tree is like a person who has stretched his arms (i.e., branches) toward the moon.

The tree is the starting point and the moon is the destination.

تا فراموش کنی، چندی از این شهر سفر کن

For forgetting this love,
I advise you to go for a trip.

The sweetheart has told the poet to travel to somewhere else in order to be able to forget her. Every journey has a starting point, a sequence of places o the way and an end point.

سفر از پیش تو؟ هرگز نتوانم

To take a trip, I never will.

The lover cannot make a journey in order to forget his love. The starting point is behind the sweetheart, the end point is another city far from the sweetheart, and there is a sequence of places on the way.

<div dir="rtl">

روز اول که دل من به تمنای تو پر زد

</div>

The very first time I fell in love's thrill,

my heart became a bird of desire.

The heart of the poet is like a bird which has flown from his chest in order to reach his sweetheart. The sweetheart's love has made the poet's heart, which is an abstract concept, move away towards her. In the real world, just physical objects can be moved from one place to another, but here the heart of the lover like all physical entities has the capability to be moved and it is going towards the sweetheart. The poet's chest is the starting point, the sweetheart is the destination and the distance between the lover and the sweetheart is the intermediate point.

<div dir="rtl">

تو به من سنگ زدی، من نه رمیدم، نه گسستم

</div>

Rocks, you cast at me,
I did not fly away.
I did not fall apart.

The sweetheart who is like a hunter has thrown stones at the lover. The sweetheart is the starting point and the lover is the end point. But the lover hasn't stampeded from his sweetheart (the starting point) to anywhere else (the end point).

<div dir="rtl">

تا به دام تو در افتم، همه جا گشتم و گشتم

</div>

Round your trap, I wandered and wandered,
For to be captured by you, to surrender.

The lover has searched through everywhere from the beginning (starting point) to the end (the end point) to find his beloved.

<div dir="rtl">

اشکی از شاخه فرو ریخت

</div>

From a branch, a teardrop falling.

A drop of water has leaked from a tree branch. This drop is like a teardrop which flows from the eye. The tree branch is the starting point and the ground is the end point.

<div dir="rtl">

مرغ شب ناله تلخی زد و بگریخت

</div>

The night bird uttering a bitter cry then fleeing.

"Morghe hagh" (night bird) is a bird like owl which hangs itself from the tree and makes successive screams. Here "morghe hagh" has fled from the branch of the tree (the starting point) and gone to somewhere else. (the end point).

اشک در چشم تو لرزید

Tears in your eyes, gleaming.

The tear in the sweetheart eyes has shivered. It has made a movement in her eyes and has passed through a path i.e., from the inside of the eye (the starting point) to the outside of the eye (the end point).

پای در دامن اندوه کشیدم

The sorrow overshadowed my heart again.

Here the poet has spread his feet from their normal position (the starting point) into his lap (the end point).

نگسستم، نرمیدم

I did not fly away, I did not fall apart.

The lover hasn't stampeded from his sweetheart (the starting point) to anywhere else (the end point).

رفت در ظلمت غم، آن شب و شبهای دگر هم

Many a night have passed in melancholy darkness.

The night is considered as an entity which is capable of moving, so it is the trajectory. The end point is the darkness of the sorrow.

نه کنی دیگر از آن کوچه گذر هم

You would not set foot in that lane again.

Here the sweetheart is the trajectory. There is a path image schema with the beginning of the lane as the starting point, the end of the lane as the end point, and there is a sequence of places on the way.

بی تو اما به چه حالی من از آن کوچه گذشتم

You cannot imagine how I felt in going through that lane again.

Here the lover is the trajectory who passes through the lane (the landmark). The beginning of the lane is the starting point, the end of the lane is the end point and we have a sequence of places on the way.

3.3. Force Schemas

3.3.1. Compulsion

<div dir="rtl">یادم آید، تو به من گفتی"از این عشق حذر کن"</div>

I remember you addressed me and said:
"Avoid this love".

The sweetheart has told the lover to forget her love. This utterance is an external force which is able to cause the lover to forget his sweetheart.

3.3.2. Blockage

<div dir="rtl">با تو گفتم: "حذر از عشق؟! ندانم</div>

"How would I avoid this love?! I do not know how", I said.

The lover is extremely in love with his sweetheart and her utterance cannot make him abandon his love.

<div dir="rtl">سفر از پیش تو؟ هرگز نتوانم، نتوانم</div>

"How would I leave your side?! I cannot ever", I said.

The lover cannot make a journey in order to forget his sweetheart. The journey is a force which the sweetheart believes that is able to make the lover forget her love.

<div dir="rtl">تو به من سنگ زدی، من نه رمیدم، نه گسستم</div>

Rocks you cast at me, but I did not fly away, I did not fall apart.

The lover is like a dove and the sweetheart is like a hunter who has thrown stones at him, but he hasn't stampeded.

<div dir="rtl">حذر از عشق ندانم، نتوانم!</div>

"How would I avoid this love?! I do not know how", I said.

The lover says that he cannot forget his love.

<div dir="rtl">نگسستم، نرمیدم</div>

I did not fly away, I did not fall apart.

The lover hasn't stampeded, although he has been like a dove whose beloved has thrown stones at him.

3.3.3. Removal of Restraint

This kind of schema is not found in this poem at all.

4. Results

4.1. The types and frequency of schemas found in "Koocheh" (The Lane) poem

The schemas found in this poem are categorized into three groups which accord with the types introduced by Johnson (1987). The frequencies of these types are shown in the following table.

Table:1

The frequency of schemas in "Koocheh" (The Lane) poem

	Number	Percent
Path Schema	20	57.1%
Containment Schema	9	25.7%
Force Schema	6	17.1%
Total	35	100%

As is shown in this table, path schema is of the highest frequency and the force schema, which is about overcoming an obstacle, is of the least frequency.

4.2. The linguistic forms specifying some types of schemas

According to the data collected, containment schema is usually used in the form of a prepositional phrase specified by these prepositions in Persian: dar (in), tu (informal "in"), daxel (within), birun ?z (out of). On the other hand, path schema is less restricted, although it can also be associated with some specific linguistic forms. Regarding the schemas found in this poem, path schema usually appeared in the form of verbs containing the concept of movement in a direction or the semantic feature of [+motion] or nouns derived from such verbs. (Sharifi & Mayamei, 2012: 332) For example the path schemas "rixtan" (to leak) and "labriz shodan" (to overflow) have the concept of motion and "safar" (journey) is a noun derived from the verb "safar kardan"(to make a journey). As for the force schema, the associated linguistic form is even less restricted, but it is worth noting that force schema usually occurs between two entities, one serving as the obstacle while the other one having the power to or trying to overcome the

obstacle. This relationship is completed by a verb with the concept of power or semantic feature of [+force]. (Sharifi & Mayamei, 2012: 332)

5. Conclusion

Image schemas are conceptual structures derived from physical experiences, cultural background and ideology of a nation. Using image schemas is a way of talking about abstract concepts. They are represented in the form of linguistic elements that contain the concept of concreteness. All human beings based on their unique characteristics have access to a universal collection of image schemas, such as containment, path and force schemas. Based on the data collected in this paper, it can be concluded that among the schemas introduced by Johnson (1987), path schema is probably the most frequent one. This could be due to the immense experiences involving movement and direction in human life. Containment schema has a less occurrence comparing to path schema, and the least frequent schema is force schema. These findings are compatible with the research conducted by Sharifi and Mayamei (2012). There are some linguistic elements specifying the types of schemas. Containment schema is usually associated by some special prepositions; path schema appears in the verbs containing the concept of motion, and force schema usually requires two nouns and a verb with the concept of power which is used to link them.

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