
“A Note on the Validity of Metaphor Universality”

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Abstract:

Metaphor universality has been a topic of long debate among interested researchers. A byproduct of claiming the universality of metaphors is admitting a common human cognition. This cognition is based on different factors external to the cognition itself. In the present study, metaphors from Arabic tweets were analyzed and compared to metaphors in English found in published research. Based on this comparison, it was concluded that metaphors are universal and culturally specific at two different levels. On one level, the shared human anatomy poses universality, and on the other level, factors working against such universality affect the cultural specificity of metaphors. Kövecses (2010b) proposes a list of factors including awareness of context, differential memory, differential concerns and interests, differential cognitive preference and styles, and creativity. Considering languages other than Arabic and English in the comparison can be a promising future research.

Keywords: Metaphor Universality, cultural-specific metaphors, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Arabic metaphors.

1. Introduction

When discussing issues in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the significance and controversy of the claim that conceptual metaphors are universal cannot be overlooked. The claim of the universality of conceptual metaphor should be carried out by answering the following questions:

- Are (all) conceptual metaphors universal?
- How accurately can we emphasize that conceptual metaphors are universal?
- What are the causes of the cultural specificity of metaphors?
- What are the forces that work against the universality of metaphors, proposed by Kövecses (2010b)?

2. Literature Review

In cognitive linguistics metaphors have been claimed to be universal. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003) argue that metaphor is pervasive in language, thought, and action which means that the way we think is metaphorical. In addition to this, they propose that conceptual metaphors result from the conceptual processing of different experiences. Sharing the same anatomy as human beings in connection to interacting interpersonally and within the environment are the seeds of the idea of universal metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) basic claim is that universal metaphors exist without ruling out cultural variation. They argue that a near-universal metaphor such as TIME IS MONEY organizes the way we conceptualize time systematically; however, "This isn't a necessary way for human beings to conceptualize time... There are cultures where time is none of these things." (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 9). They add that the natural kind of experience, which is the reason for metaphor universality is a product of "our bodies...our interactions with our physical environment...our interactions with other people within our culture" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 117). In addition, they state that this natural experience can be

universal or culturally specific. All this indicates that Lakoff and Johnson do not claim absolute or unfounded universality. They give an example of a conceptual metaphor, AN INSTRUMENT IS A COMPANION, as a potentially universal metaphor since it is based on commonplace human experience. They give the linguistic example, *Me and my old Chevy have seen a lot of the country together* to illustrate how experience can influence the production of a metaphor. In their revised edition of *Metaphors We Live By*, published in (2003), they refer to the distinction between primary and complex metaphors and say that primary metaphors are more likely to be universal than complex ones. This primary vs. non-primary, thereafter named complex, distinction of metaphor was originally proposed by Grady (1997). He claims that basic or non-primary metaphors are composed of multiple primary metaphors. He argues that primary metaphors help in identifying logical interpretations of the experiential motivation for metaphors. Grady continues explaining that primary metaphors can show certain conceptual mappings that arise from recurrent experience which are responsible for establishing linguistic patterns. These patterns are potentially found in many languages around the world, such commonality of metaphors implies potential universality. Of these examples he analyzes, THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS and IDEAS ARE FOOD, which he claims to be potentially universal.

Kövecses (2005, 2010b) argues that three factors can explain metaphor similarity which are:

1. It has happened by accident;
2. One language borrowed the metaphors from another;
3. There is some universal motivation that enables the metaphors to emerge in these cultures.

Even though the first two factors cannot be ruled out, he opts for the third factor and attempts to find reasons for such similarities to support this claim of universality. Geeraerts and Grondelaers (1995) state that metaphors are not necessarily universal, and culture can influence variation in metaphorical conceptualization. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) explain that metaphors are the results of ‘the embodied mind’. They say that metaphors are created on sensorimotor basis, which is an extension and elaboration of their view of the physiological and interactional basis of metaphors in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). This is to say that the way we sense and interact using our bodies shapes our thinking, which in turn shapes our metaphors. They say that this embodiment is influenced largely by the similarity of the composition of our human bodies and of the environment we interact with and within. In such a situation where the embodied experience is universal, the primary metaphor that talks about this experience is universally acquired, which is why many primary metaphors are universal (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). An example that they analyze is the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING which they claim to be embodied through the experience correlation between the visual and tactile exploration of things as in the example *I picked his face out of the crowd*.

In relation to the universality of metaphor, Kövecses (2000) analyzes the anger concept(s) to explain his view of ‘body-based social constructionism’, which is a view he claims to work as a compromise to enable us to consider a concept like anger as both universal and culture-specific. He found that English, Hungarian, Japanese, and Chinese speakers use very similar metaphors, on the image-schematic level, that relate to ANGER IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER. The proposed reason for this similarity is that they reflect how the people of these cultures have very similar concepts about their bodies and find themselves experiencing similar physiological processes when being angry. This is not to say that such shared physiological experience produces similar conceptual metaphors but that they make other

metaphors that do not go in line with such experience seem incompatible or unnatural (Kövecses 2000). On the other hand, he found that this metaphor of anger can show differences when comparing the same cultures, English, Hungarian, Chinese, and Japanese. A reason for such differences can be that each culture develops its own unique concepts that direct explanations of experience. In addition to this, small differences in conceptualizing physiology may also affect differences in people's understanding (Kövecses 2000). He gives examples of these different metaphors in the four cultures:

- In the Euro-American Tradition, including the Hungarian, the notion of the 'four humors' influences the conceptualization of Anger and other emotions. The four humors are blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm, which correspond respectively to the temperaments: sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic.
- In the Japanese tradition, the concept of *hara*, to mean anger, is constituted by truth, real intentions (called *honne*), and the real self. This is related to the situation of keeping anger under control and hiding the truthful and innermost self while displaying a called-for face in that situation.
- In the Chinese tradition, the notion of, *nu* which means anger, is bound with the concept of *qi* which means the energy that flows through the body, as a result of the traditional Chinese belief that the human body is a homeostatic organism. The homeostatic organism is unstable when there is anger and is balanced when the person is calm.

Kövecses (2005) discusses two related misconceptions that appeared in different papers about metaphors. These misconceptions are in relation to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) claim about the universality of metaphor which are:

- The cognitive linguistic view of metaphor regards metaphors to be largely universal.

- It disregards the diversity of metaphors within and across cultures.

He says that the recurring bodily experience produces what are called ‘image schemas’, which are defined by Langacker (2008) as:

schematized patterns of activity abstracted from everyday bodily experience, especially pertaining to vision, space, motion, and force. Image schemas are seen as basic, “preconceptual” structures that give rise to more elaborate and more abstract conceptions (Langacker, 2008, p. 32).

As a solution for these issues, Kövecses (2005) explains that since humans are similar in how their bodies and brains function, and metaphors can be based on the manner of function of our human bodies and brains, then such metaphors are potentially similar across different languages. This does not include all the metaphors in the language to be similar nor does it consider them to be totally and largely universal. In addition, he argues, based on a large amount of evidence, that metaphors, as they can be universal, mainly on the primary level, they show variations both across cultures and within cultures on all their levels of existence.

Gevaert (2005) argues that diachronic research can be used to check claims on the universality of metaphors based on human-shared physiology. Doing diachronic research on ANGER IS HEAT in English for 12 centuries, she found that the frequency of use of ANGER IS HEAT has not been constant. She concludes that such metaphors claimed to be based on human physiology such as, ANGER IS HEAT, are actually based on folk theories of human physiology of anger rather than real physiology. Later on, Geeraerts and Gevaert (2008) claim that a reconciliation of the universality with cultural and historical variation is not entirely convincing due to this same reason of the folk-theory physiology. However, Steen G., Aletta D., Herrmann B., Kaal A., Krennmayr T., and Pasma T. (2010) argue that the historical meaning is not optimal when doing metaphorical research and it may only be used

to check the basic meaning of the word from a linguistic perspective and not from a behavioral and cognitive one.

Other scholars in the field also claim that cognitive linguists neglected the fact that metaphors can be culture-specific. For example, Bernárdez (2013) says that deciding about something to be universal has been done too often without confirming such claims using sufficient evidence while neglecting the possibility of disconfirming evidence. This is done by studying English only and deciding about the universality of the metaphors. He invites scholars to be careful when claiming such universality.

Interestingly, Kövecses (2010b) replaced the more general reference ‘universal metaphor’ with ‘near-universal’ or ‘potentially universal’ to show that this universality is intended to be incomplete.

Kövecses in several of his papers, Kövecses (2005, 2010b) for example, proposes that as there are causes for universality, such as the embodiment of mind, there are “forces that work against universality”, in his words. These forces can be seen as the reasons for cultural variations of what are expected to be potentially universal metaphors. He listed five of these forces as follows:

- awareness of context: (physical environment, social context – power relations and social pressure, cultural context, communicative situation including topic and physical settings– pressure of coherence)
- differential memory: the role of history (social history, and personal history)
- differential concerns and interests: (social concerns and interests, personal concerns and interests)
- differential cognitive preference and styles (experiential focus, viewpoint preference, prototype and framing, and metaphor vs. metonymy preference)
- metaphor creativity: (the more creative a metaphor the less likely to be universal)

Kövecses proposes that we are adapted to the world which we live in. This means that we screen and select different aspect of the world to conceptualize. These aspects are: the physical environment, social context, cultural context, communicative situation and pressure of coherence. An interesting example he gives is the people of South Africa who speak the same language of their original places, Dutch and/or English, but developed a unique system of metaphors that fits the physical environment to which they were newly located. The African language, which is based on Dutch, was found by Driven (1994) to share several metaphors with Dutch that include images of lightning, light and shadow, stars...etc., while they have some culture specific metaphors of different kinds of animals and special images of nature that do not exist in Dutch. Another force that works against universality of metaphor is the differential memory in which the role of personal and social history can affect the use of metaphors. The comparison Kövecses gives for this is between the American and Hungarian metaphors which include LIFE as their target domain. American utilizes the metaphors, LIFE IS A GAME and LIFE IS A PRECIOUS POSSESSION, while Hungarian utilizes the metaphors, LIFE IS WAR and LIFE IS A COMPROMISE. Differential concerns and interests can also be a force against the conceptual metaphor universality. An example for that is the conceptual metaphors used by people with episodes of depression in comparison to the ones used with the non-depressed, only sad, people. Both the depressed and non-depressed people used the metaphors:

- DEPRESSION IS DARKNESS - *it is really like a black cloud*
- DEPRESSION IS WEIGHT - *I felt just so – so heavy*
- DEPRESSION IS DECENT - *I just was down*

However, the depressed people uniquely used the conceptual metaphor:

- DEPRESSION IS A CAPTOR - *I want to break out of this*

This is a personal concern that is uniquely experienced by depressed people, which may be a potentially universal conceptual metaphor that is used by the people who share this similar illness.

In relation to this, El Refaie (2014) introduces the idea of the ‘dynamic embodiment’ based on functional/dysfunctional human bodies. Having a body with dysfunction can be a source of the universality of metaphors. She exemplifies dynamic embodiment with the conceptual metaphor CANCER IS WAR, which may not be conceptualized by people with functioning bodies.

In addition, Kövecses (2000) proposes the differential cognitive preferences and styles as a force against universality of metaphors. An example of these cognitive preferences is the differential experiential focus, which means that people may prefer to focus on one of the aspects of their bodily functions in relation to a target domain. An example Kövecses uses is the similarity and differences between English and Chinese when regarding the metaphor of ANGER, when the focus is on the increased pressure or heat of the human body, this physiological change will be used as a source domain in the metaphor, resulting in ANGER IS HEAT and ANGER IS PRESSURE. He found that Chinese speakers used more metaphors for ANGER IS PRESSURE than ANGER IS HEAT, which indicates that they focus more on the increase pressure than the increase heat of the human body.

Creativity can also be a force that works against the universality of conceptual metaphors. Kövecses (2010) proposes that metaphor blending is an example for such metaphor creativity. He says that conceptual metaphors such as PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED PROPELLED MOTION and HIGH STATUS IS UP can be blended together to result in the conceptual metaphor A CAREER IS AN UPWARD JOURNEY (climbing the social ladder). Although this conceptual metaphor is used naturally in English and some European languages, they are less

universal than either of the original conceptual metaphors that were blended to result in this one.

Metaphors have been analyzed extensively in the past couple of decades. Some of the studies tackled metaphor approached such analysis by comparing two or more languages to determine how metaphors occur universally and culturally specifically. Yu (1995), for example, found that the conceptual orientational metaphor HAPPY IS UP is used both in English and Chinese. Of the English example she used are *I'm feeling up* and *My spirit aroused*. And of the Chinese examples:

- Ta hen gao-xing.
He very high-spirit
"he is very high-spirited/happy."

- Ta hen xing-fen.
He very spirit-lift
"he is very spirit-lifted/excited."

In another study, Wang, Runtsova, and Chen (2013), found that British English and Russian use the same conceptual metaphors about the economic crisis. For example, they use the metaphors, ECONOMY IS A SICK ORGANISM and ECONOMIC CRISIS IS A LIVING ORGANISM. Consider the following English example, followed by a Russian example, and its translation:

- When Wall Street sneezes, New York catches cold.
- Как кризис «кушал» малый бизнес.
'How crisis was eating small business.'

However, they found that metaphors are more frequent in English than in Russian. They attribute this to metaphors conventionalization being more common in Russian than in English.

Al-Abed Al-Haq and El-Sharif (2008) also found similarities in conceptualizing ANGER in Arabic and English that can be represented by the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT. They argue that despite finding great similarity between the conceptualization of anger in Arabic and English, some details in the entailment of metaphors were language-specific. In Arabic, the contained substance was FLUID while in English it was STEAM, as in the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS THE HEAT OF FLUID IN A CONTAINER in Arabic and ANGER IS THE HEAT OF STEAM IN A CONTAINER in English. Consider the following Arabic and English examples, followed by transliteration, glossing, and translation for Arabic:

- ربّ غيظٍ قد تجرعته مخافة ما هو أشدّ منه!

rubba ḡayḏin qad tajarctuhu maxaafata maa huwa ? šadu minhu

probably anger PRF gulb-NOM-ACC fearing what is harder than-ACC

Many times I gulped (my) rage since I fear what could be harder than it.

- Have some fun and let off some steam at NYC's.

Notice how the Arabic word *بجرعته*, which means gulped, entails that ANGER is fluid, while the English word steam obviously means the different substance 'steam'. Another interesting finding is that ANGER IS INSANITY found both in Arabic and English but in different degrees of conventionalization. The Arabic words, *majnuun* 'insane' and *yujannu* 'become insane' can indicate anger; however, the emotion someone is mad with has to be specified in Arabic. In English, on the other hand, the word 'mad' is polysemic with 'angry' as in *He got terribly mad* and *Her son's death*

maddened her. This indicates that ANGER IS INSANITY is used in both Arabic and English, yet it is more conventionalized in English than in Arabic.

MacArthur (2005) found that the conceptual metaphor CONTROL OF AN UNPREDICTABLE / UNDESIRABLE FORCE IS A RIDER'S CONTROL OF A HORSE can be a potentially universal metaphor providing that the social history of the respective culture regards the competent horseman as a prestigious characteristic. She compares two European languages, English and Spanish, and found that this metaphor is still used in the two languages although the source domain of the metaphor is not common in the current modernized society. Consider the following examples, the first is originally in English and the second is originally in Spanish:

- Australia are riding a little higher in the saddle after their first Test victory. (CCDOI)
- "Boris Eltsin sigue llevando las riendas de la situación" (CREA)
Boris Eltsin kept maintaining the rein of the situation.
Boris Eltsin Kept the situation under controlling.

Notice how *saddle* and *rein* entail a horse while *riding* and *maintain* entail a horseman. *Gaining victory* and *controlling the situation* are viewed as controlling a horse by a 'competent horseman' as an entailment of the metaphor CONTROL OF AN UNPREDICTABLE/UNDESIRABLE FORCE IS A RIDER'S CONTROL OF A HORSE.

The metaphor system THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING can be a reason for the universality of some of the metaphors covered by it. For example, since humans are higher in this hierarchy of beings, animal names can be used to indicate a derogatory feature when used to call humans. López Rodríguez (2009) studied metaphors of animals that relate to THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING and found that this 'chain of

being' can be modified to include two sub-levels into the human level of the hierarchy, the male and female levels. By checking examples from English and Spanish, she claims that this modification is potentially universal. She found that in both languages, animal names are used more with females, which may indicate general derogation. Interestingly, she found that when animal names are used to call women, such names are most likely derogatory, but when they are used with men, they are positive. Of the examples she gives are, *chicken/pollita* and *kitten/gatita*, when used to refer to women by projecting the submission feature of chicken and kitten. While for men, words such as *bull/toro* or *lion*, she only provided the English word for *lion*, are used to project the privileged status of *bulls* and *lions*.

3. Methodology

As it has been argued, and as it is logical, that the more languages checked to claim near-universality of metaphor the more accurate conclusions will be arrived at (Maalej 2007, Bernárdez 2013, and others). Considering this claim as an invitation to check the near-universality of the conceptual metaphor claims discussed above, the author attempted to find how some of these metaphors, excluding the ones already introduced in Arabic, apply to Arabic by searching for tokens using the Twitter domain. It is worth mentioning that these metaphors are far from extensively covering all the metaphors needed to accurately claim near-universality if this is even possible. However, they were discussed above and were used below only as illustrative examples. All the examples from Twitter are quoted verbatim and no grammatical or spelling mistakes are corrected. The translation of the Arabic tweets is made utilizing Alma'any dictionary, the Arabic to English section.

4. Analysis

The conceptual metaphor AN INSTRUMENT IS A COMPANION is used by Lakoff and Johnson to cover examples such as *Me and my old Chevy have seen a lot of the country together*. This metaphor is also found in Arabic tweets. Transliteration is italicized in all the examples below. An example is:

- السعوديات متى رسمياً يسوقون ؟ 🤔
ناوي اجيكم زياره انا وسيارتي 😊

Alsu'udiat mita rasmian yisugu:n nawi aji:kum
ana wa saiarati

DEF-Saudi-PL-F when officially drive-PRE-PL-F intend-NOM come-NOM-ACC me and car-POSS

- When will the Saudi women officially drive? Me and my car intend to pay you a visit.

Notice how in this example the conjunction *wa* 'and' is used to join *ana* 'me' with *saiarati* 'my car'. This linguistic metaphor is similar to the English one presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003), which indicates that the metaphor AN INSTRUMENT IS A COMPANION is also used in Arabic.

The conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING, is used by Lakoff and Johnson (1999) to illustrate the embodiment of metaphor. They also give the linguistic metaphor *I picked his face out of the crowd*. Interestingly, this conceptual metaphor was represented by linguistic metaphors in several Arabic tweets, consider the example below:

(: أنا ما شوفتها /: ولا لقطت شكلها ._. ولا شميت ريحتها ++, .. لا تظلميني -

*Ana mashuftaha
shameit*

wala lagatt

shaklaha wala

I NEG-see-PAST-NOM-F-ACC nor catch-PAST-NOM shape-ACC-F nor
smell-NOM-ACC

ri:hatha latidhlumini

smell-ACC don't-be-unfair-to-me

- I didn't see her, nor did I pick her face out, nor her smell. Be fair to me.

It is interesting that the same conceptual metaphor that applies to the English example is applicable to this Arabic example. However, the verb used in Arabic, *catch*, does not totally match the one used in English, *pick*. This is because the expression 'face picking' has a different connotation, which is 'escaping an embarrassment' in Saudi Arabic. This selection of the broader meaning of '*shape*' instead of using the more accurate meaning of '*face*' is a result of the pressure of expressing clear context. This results in less similarity between the English and the Arabic examples despite the claim that such embodiment of metaphor can allow potential universality of conceptual metaphor.

The four conceptual metaphors of depression discussed by McMullen and Conway (2002): DEPRESSION IS DARKNESS, DEPRESSION IS WEIGHT, DEPRESSION IS DECENT, and DEPRESSION IS A CAPTOR were each found in several Arabic tweets. However, the one that is used more frequently by people with episodes of depression, which is DEPRESSION IS A CAPTOR, was only used in

Egyptian Arabic, the reason for which needs more investigation. Consider the following examples:

احس كأنه كانت فوقنا غيمة سودا تمطر علينا كأبه ☹️❤️❤️❤️❤️

Ahis kanuh fogana ghaima soda timtir 'alena ka'aba

Feel-NOM as if over-us cloud black raining on us depression

I feel as there was a dark cloud raining depression on us.

The example above is similar to the one by McMullen and Conway (2002), *it is really like a black cloud*, in representing the conceptual metaphor DEPRESSION IS DARKNESS. However, this metaphor is more creatively produced by elaboration, which is one of the four ways to carry out metaphor creativity (Lakoff and Turner 1989). It is worth mentioning that the other three ways of producing creative metaphors are: extension, questioning, and combining. This elaboration can be illustrated by the usage of the noun, *cloud*, when attributed the darkness feature, *black cloud*, which is equivalent to the English *dark cloud*. Using, *black*, in this example instead of, *dark*, is due to the pressure of being coherent with the lexicon of the respective language. This creativity of the linguistic metaphor is what makes it less conforming to what is supposed to be the near-universal one, which is the less creative one, translated as *it is really like a black cloud*.

أنا مهما حاولت نتفائل القرايا دمرتني والنتائج قتلني غمه بكل جيت بنرقد حسيت بثقل الدنيا علي

Ana mahma hawalt nitfa'al algiraia dammaratni walnata'ij

I no matter tried to be optimistic DEF-readin destroyed-me and-DEF-results

gatalni ghammah bikul ji:t binirgud haseit bithugl

killed-me melancholy with-all came-ACC sleep-ACC-PL felt-ACC heaviness

aldunia alaia

DEF-world on-me

No matter how much I tried to be optimistic, reading destroyed me and the results killed me. It's all melancholy. I tried to go to sleep and felt the world's weight on me.

The conceptual metaphor DEPRESSION IS WEIGHT is used in both examples, the one from Twitter above and the example by McMullen and Conway (2002). Interestingly, they differ in the experiential focus. In McMullen and Conway's example, the experiential focus is on the internal weight of the metaphor producer while in the Twitter example, the focus is on the outer weight of everything in the environment, the world, which is a way of elaborating the metaphor to include such hyperbole.

كلما حسيت بإحباط ويأس انشغل بأي حاجة المهم اني ما افكر

Kulma haseit bi'ihbat wa y'as anshaghil

Every time felt-NOM with-depression and desperation I-keep-myself-busy

bi'ai haja almuhim in:i ma 'afak:ir

wit-any thing DEF-important that-I don't think-NOM

Every time I feel depressed and desperate I get myself busy with anything. What is important is that I don't think.

In the example above, the word, احباط *ihbat* ‘depression’ means, فشال وتدني *fashal watadan*: I ‘failure and degradation’ according to Alma’any Aljam’e dictionary. Therefore, the word احباط *ihbat* ‘depression’ appears conventionalized in such a context. This reminds us of the Al-Abed Al-Haq and El-Sharif (2008) conventionalized English metaphor, ANGER IS INSANE, as a reason for less similarity of the metaphor in two languages, Arabic and English.

نفسى اخرج من الهم ده بس مش عارف .. أنا مش عارف من غيرك و اميرا كان زمانى ميت اکتئاب

Nafsi axrug min alham da bas mush ‘aref ana mush ‘aref

I wish get out from DEF-worry this but don’t know-NOM me don’t know-NOM

min gheirik wa amira kan zamani maiyt ‘ikti’ab
from other-than-you and Amira was my-time dead-NOM depression

I wish to get out of this sadness/concern, but I don’t know how. Without you and Amira I would have been dead of depression.

In this example, the tweeter views depression as an inevitable result of worry, if the addressed person and Amira did not offer necessary support. This inevitable cause of depression, which is ‘worry’, is conceptualized as a captor that the tweeter wants to escape from. This is an extension to the metaphor used in McMullen's example, *I want to break out of this*, when ‘this’ connotes depression. This metaphor extension works here as another force against metaphor universality. Other metaphors show similar and different patterns to the ones found above. Not including other metaphors cited above is due to the limited space of this paper.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, the author introduced two proponents of the universality of metaphor: Lakoff, Johnson, and Kövecses. The author also discussed one of the main opposing views against the universality of metaphor, argued by Geeraerts and Grondelars (1995) then by Geeraerts and Gevaert (2008). In addition, some causes of universality and how they are reflected in language were listed. The conclusion regarding the universality of metaphor, based on papers and books such as the ones cited in this paper is that metaphor is universal and culturally specific at two different levels. The fact that humans are the ones concerned by using metaphors and that they share the same anatomy and the similar ways they interact and experience life allows an interesting, but not surprising, universality of metaphor. On the other hand, some factors, or forces in Kövecses's terms, would work against such universality to affect what we see as culturally specific metaphors. This is the answer to the question, *Are (all) conceptual metaphors universal?*

To answer the question, *How accurately can we emphasize that conceptual metaphors are universal?* the author proposes that emphasizing that conceptual metaphors are universal without well-based evidence is both inaccurate and misleading. However, saying that similar linguistic metaphors occur in different non-biologically related languages can be due to metaphor universality is not totally incorrect and can be supported by evidence from more unrelated languages used in different areas of the world. Referring to metaphor similarity in two different languages as merely 'metaphor similarity', or near/potential-universality to indicate the fascinating reflection of the human body and human experience similarity can be logical.

As for the causes of the cultural specificity of metaphors, as forces working against the universality of conceptual metaphors, in the third question listed at the beginning

of this paper, the author would adopt the list Kövecses (2010b) proposes, which includes: awareness of context, differential memory, differential concerns and interests, differential cognitive preference and styles, and creativity.

The issue of the universality of metaphors is very significant as it tells something about how human cognition processes such figurative language. Finding supportive examples that indicate this universality, or near-universality to state a more accurate term, is both significant and remarkable. On the other hand, determining how and why expected universality can reduce, by virtue of causing more cultural variation, is the other side of the coin of universality. This is why some of the findings to support such universality were listed and discussed in this study. In addition to this, finding some naturalistic examples used on a platform for naturally occurring discourse such as Twitter, adds more support to the claim about universality and cultural specificity, hence, the author analyzed Arabic examples from Twitter to determine how much universality claimed in previous studies checks in Arabic.

A future plan is to include more languages in the analysis of data to determine the universality of metaphor. And if possible, such a project would join scholars from as many cultures of the world as feasible and possible. Such a large-scale project would promote accuracy in identifying and arguing about metaphor universality.

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