The role of metonymic constructions in the conceptualization of emotional category fear

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Question(s) and approach

What is the role of language in structuring (emotional) experience?

* Cognitive approach: language is essential for conceptualizing emotional categories, elicitation and communication of subjective affective experience (Lakoff 1987, Gendron et al. 2012, Lindquist & Barrett 2008)

Problems of communicating the meaning of mental states:

* epistemological - intersubjectivity: HOW CAN WE RELATE/UNDERSTAND SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS OF OTHERS? (Zlatev et al. 2008)
* ontological - categorization: DO EMOTIONAL CATEGORIES/CONCEPTS REFER TO NATURAL KINDS OF ENTITIES? (Izard 2007; Feldman Barrett 2008)
* (inter/cross)cultural - contextualization: ARE EMOTIONAL CATEGORIES UNIVERSAL OR CULTURALLY CONSTRUCTED (Wierzbicka 1992)

Cognitive (Linguistic) approach:

* epistemological: WE UNDERSTAND OTHERS BY MEANS OF OUR OWN EXPERIENCE - EMBODIED COGNITION, MENTAL SIMULATION, MIRROR NEURON, ToM (Damásio 1999, Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia 2008, Bergen 2005)
* (inter/cross)cultural: LEXICAL CONCEPTS REFLECT COGNITIVE/CULTURAL MODELS, CONTEXTUALIZATION (Kövecses 2005, Feldman Barrett et al. 2011)
CL Theory and LS Hypothesis

(Emotional) lexical concepts are EMERGENT ENTITIES (bottom up) and ACCES POINTS (top down) to a network of image schemas, conceptual domains, frames and cognitive models (Langacker 1987, Fillmore, Lakoff 1987) realized in neurobiological<>cognitive<>symbolic structures (Lakoff 2008).

Semantic value of emotional concepts is constructed (primarily) via:

- **CONCEPTUAL METONYMY**

- **CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR**

The role of metonymy (and metaphor) in structuring emotional reality:
Affective experience is conveyed in symbolic constructions by activating conceptual profiling of PHYSICAL, SENSORY-MOTOR, BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS (A FOR B) and applying conceptual mapping of various other experiential DOMAINS (B IS A) onto TARGET DOMAIN EMOTION.

Study: Conceptualization of Fear

Corpus based analysis of the lexical concept FEAR "strah" in Croatian.

Goals:

- qualitatively and quantitatively describe salient domains, frames and cognitive models that structure lexical concept FEAR "strah" as well as their conventionality, cognitive entrenchment.

- identify conceptual metonymies and metaphors, and their corresponding linguistic construction patterns

- explain epistemic, ontological and cultural role of embodied metonymic constructions in the process of structuring and further conceptualization of lexical concept FEAR
Methodology

Metaphorical-pattern analysis of corpus data for lemma strah fear
(Stefanowitsch 2004, 2006)

1) Definition of source data: texts
   - Croatian language repository (CLR) (http://rznica.ihji.hr):
     corpus of 85 Mw
   - Croatian national corpus (CNC) (http://www.hnk.ffzg.hr):
     corpus of 46,8 Mw
   SUM (CLR+CNC) = 131,8 Mw

2) Extraction of concordances for lemma «strah»
   - HNR- 12 050 appearances
   - HNK- 2825 appearances
   SUM (HNR+HNK) = 14 875 concordances

3) Tagging and classification of metonymic and metaphoric domains
   - CATMA software

4) Scope: EMBODIED FRAME of metonymic profiling
   - Body parts
   - Somato-sensory-motor processes

5) Criteria: profiling the entity/event lexicalized with lemma strah "fear"

Body domains

1) [VOICE EYES] → FEAR
   “Eyes wide with fear.”
   2nd person [EVIDENCE OF PH.R.] - surprise

2) [EYES → CONTAINER] → FEAR → LIQUID
   06: je nase straha.
   “His eyes were filled with fear.”
   Frame
   2nd person [EVIDENCE OF PH.R] + TEAR

3) [CHANGE IN HEART RATE] → FEAR
   Sreo mi je bilo hukalo od straha.
   “My heart was pounding out of fear”
   3rd p. NARRATION OF PH.R - excitement

4) BONES → CONTAINER → FEAR → OBJECT/LIQUID
   Poteska je utjerda straha u kosti rdnicima.
   [K.Agent putja FEAR; Put into BONES of Y.Location]
   3rd p. CAUSATION
   frequency driven by newspaper discourse

5) PARTS → EXCRETION (ORGANIC) → FEAR
   “He filled his pants with fear.”
   Taka/akine driven euthenmom METATHESIS

(EXPRESSOR) BODY PART → FEAR
   - epistemic: enables interpersonal simulation
   - ontological: conveys quality of AFFECT
   - cultural: profiles pragmatic inference
Sensory-motor domains

6) TREMBLING = FEAR
"I was trembling out of fear."
Framing (Loss of control)

7) FLIGHT = FEAR
"We fled in terror."
Framing (flight or fight reaction)

8) COLD = FEAR
"He was taken over by cold fear."
COLD FEAR = metaphoricity FEAR = COLD OBJECT

9) PALE = FEAR = FEAR IS COLD WIND
"She became pale and was wrapped around her like cold wind."
1st person SONIC+ 2nd person VISUAL evidence

(BODY) = PHYSICAL REACTION > FEAR
- epistemic: enables simulation
- ontological: conveys quality of AFFECT
- (C/C) profiles pragmatic inference, framing, cognitive-cultural model
Linguistic profiling of SENSORY-MOTOR DOMAINS reflects and promotes simulation of underlying neuro-biological processes that produce affective experience.
BODY PART AND/OR SENS.-MOT.
QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE $\rightarrow$ FEAR
Sav drhtim.
"I'm shaking."
Simulating embodied Quality

**Embodied metonymic constructions**

? Quantifying embodied frame of domains

QUALITY $\times$ F and F is OBJECT
Ošjetila je hladan dodir straha.
"She felt the cold touch of fear."
Simulating embodied Quality + Mappings physical OBJECT domain

**Metaphotonimic constructions**

FEAR IS (SCHEMATIC PHYSICAL) OBJECT
[STRAH + V\_ONTLOGICAL ("be","become"...)+(N/Adj)]

a) Nestalo je straha.
'There is no fear.'
Schematic REPRESENTATION OF AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCE $\rightarrow$ EXISTENCE
b) Sanjnu je strah.
Sanju\_Nacc. is\_V\_3sg.(BE) fear\_Nnom.
"Sanja has (HAVE) fear."
FEAR AS CATEGORY $\rightarrow$ PARTICIPANT OF EVENTS
c) Strah je velik.
"Fear is great" $\rightarrow$ Velik strah "great fear"
Equation $\rightarrow$ Attribution

**Ontologic constructions**
Spatial constructions

FEAR IS OBJECT (in external spatial relations)
FEAR IS CONTAINER/ED (in external spatial relations)

Participant in different spatial relations:
locality, supralocality, sublocality, extralocality, intralocality, translocality

CASE: locative, ablative, adlative, perlative
Framing causal relations, priming action verbs

Thematic and agentic constructions

EXISTENCE OF EMOTION IS POSSESSION OF AN OBJECT
EMOTION IS CONTAINER/ED BEING IN A BOUNDED SPACE
EMOTION IS A LIVING ORGANISM/NATURAL FORCE/SOCIAL SUPERIOR/OppONENT/ANIMAL/BURDEN/ILLNESSE
FEAR IS A HIDDEN ENEMY
(Kovesz 2000)
Conclusion

Semantic value of the emotional lexical concept strah ‘fear’ is constructed from metonymic and metaphoric connections forming a neural, conceptual and linguistic framework of cognitive domains and models.

Metonymic profiling of the embodied domains is essential for the activation of appropriate quality of meaning and structure of the emotional lexical concept.
Thank you!