Analysis of the Cognitive Model of Anger in the Persian Language

Zahra Hamedi Shirvan*, Shahla Sharifi

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Introduction: Lakoff and Kövecses (1987) argue that, at first glance, the conventional expressions used to express anger seem so diverse that finding any coherent system would seem impossible. They show that there is a coherent conceptual organization underlying all these expressions and that much of it is metaphorical and metonymical in nature.

Methods: This research describes the Cognitive Model of Anger (Lakoff, Kövecses, 1987) and analyses the ontological and epistemic correspondences of anger in the Persian Language (Farsi). The research corpus consists of Farsi expressions and idioms of anger and also five stories from Shahnameh, the Persian epic masterpiece in which the presentation of anger was more apparent. These stores are: Rostam and Esfandiar (1678 couples), the story of Siyavash (3684 couples), Rostam and Sohrab (1038 couples), Rostam and Shahab (230 couples) and the story of Farhad (1240 couples). The authors, native Farsi speakers, have also used their knowledge of the language to gather the data.

Results: It was found that the expressions which show anger are not a random and unorganized collection, but they are organized on the basis of a detailed cognitive model implicit in semantics of language. This indicates that anger is not an amorphous feeling but rather it has an elaborate cognitive structure.

Another finding of the paper is that the prototype scenario given by Lakoff and Kövecses including offending event, anger, attempt at control, loss of control and act of retribution is true in Persian, but a few other scenarios can also be presented in Persian or actually some changes can be made in some scenarios; for example in the illness scenario (offending event, anger, attempt at control, loss of control and becoming ill) it can be seen that anger has affected the angry person not the offending one. Another scenario of anger is offending event, anger, attempt at control, loss of control and spreading the anger out. These other scenarios have been explained in detail in the paper.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that the emotional concepts are appeared physically, that is the real content of the concepts are correspondent with physical experiences. This is especially important about metaphorical concepts because there is a correspondence between metaphor and physiology not directly between lexical meaning and physiology. So the claim of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that cognitive metaphors are not just flights of fancy, but they are based on physical experiences is confirmed in Persian too.

*Corresponding author. Email address: hamedishirvan@gmail.com.