

Zoltán Kövecses, 2000. *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 223p.

Chaoqun Xie, Fuzhou (chaoqunxie@yahoo.com.cn)

This book raises many key issues pertaining to the role and nature of human feeling in the emotions. The author tries to reveal how people talk about emotions and more importantly, how people think about emotions.

In Chapter 1, “Language and emotion concepts” (1-19), the author illustrates several endeavors to characterize emotional meaning as follows: the ‘label’ view, the ‘core meaning’ view, the ‘dimensional’ view, the ‘implicational’ view, the ‘prototype’ view, the ‘social-constructionist’ view, and the ‘embodied cultural prototype’ view. In this chapter, the author also touches upon some issues in the study of emotion language, which constitute the bulk of the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 (20-34) deals with figurative emotion language in English. The conceptual metaphors of emotion examined include anger, fear, happiness, sadness, love, lust, pride, shame and surprise metaphors. It is suggested that the language people use to talk about various kinds of emotions is largely metaphorical.

The scope of emotion metaphors is the scope of Chapter 3 (35-50), where the author tries to discover if there are any metaphorical source domains unique to the emotions. It is suggested that most of the source domains associated with the nine emotion concepts discussed in Chapter 2 are not specific to emotion concepts but have wider applications instead. The author also in this chapter explains why some emotion concepts appear to be specific to the emotions.

The author examines in Chapter 4 (51-60) the relationship between emotion metaphors and Lakoff’s (1990) event structure metaphor. In Chapter 5 (61-86), inspired by Talmy’s (1988) notion of ‘force dynamic’, the author shows that what underlies most of the emotion metaphors is a “master metaphor”, namely, EMOTION IS FORCE. It is concluded in this chapter that our notion of emotion is “inherently metaphorical” (p. 86). Chapter 6 (87-113) extends the scope of discussion into the area of friendship, where the focus is mainly on the

conceptual metaphors of human relationships. One of the major points made in this chapter is that the conceptualization of emotions is both related to and different from that of human relationships.

Kövecses presents in Chapter 7 (114-138) folk and expert emotion theories, arguing against Naomi Quinn's (1991) view that metaphor reflects rather than helps to form cultural models. The author reiterates that metaphor does constitute the cultural model. Another point made in this chapter is that expert emotion theories are not necessarily "merely 'dressed up' variants of folk or cultural models" (p. 137). Chapter 8 (139-163) uses anger metaphors in four different languages (Chinese, English, Hungarian and Japanese) to show that a common basic structure exists in these diverse cultures. The reason is that these four cultures all have the same CONTAINER metaphor. As I see it, however, the universality of this claim needs further evidence simply because the relationship between universality and particularity is a very complex issue and any claims for universality should be made with caution (see Xie et al. to appear).

Chapter 9 (164-181) shifts the focus to cross-cultural and within-cultural variation in the conceptualization of emotion. Finally in Chapter 10 (182-199), the most important one, the author attempts to offer a new synthesis of emotion language in relation to body and culture. More specifically, this chapter makes three generalizations concerning the language of emotion. First, most emotion language is a shared property of several aspects of the folk theory of the mind. Second, social constructionist and universalist approaches to emotion concepts are complementary rather than mutually exclusive; together they can provide a unified view of emotions called "body-based constructionism". Third, a general picture of emotion language can be outlined. For instance, feeling states are both psychobiologically universal and culturally specific. In this final chapter, the author emphasizes once again the metaphorical and metonymical nature of emotion language.

All in all, this text highlights the important role of figurative language in the conceptualization of emotion, especially providing a new synthesis in the study of emotion from a cognitive linguistic perspective. That the author resorts to numerous metaphorical examples to account for abstract thoughts and ideas makes the text reader-friendly. This book

should be of much value and interest to those interested in emotional metaphors and Zoltán Kövecses. As is well known, Zoltán Kövecses is a very productive and influential scientist in metaphor studies. Of course, this is not to say that this book is about emotional metaphors only; rather, this book is more than emotion and metaphor because it tries to reveal what hides behind all the metaphorical emotions. Of course, it goes without saying that no book is perfect; nothing is perfect in this world, after all. This book is no exception. For instance, the author strongly argues for distinguishing folk (that is, commonsense) and expert (that is, scientific) theories of emotion, saying that “a scientific theory is scientific because it rejects what ordinary people ‘merely believe’” (127); however, one may wonder if there is any possibility that some scientific or expert theories may turn out to be unscientific or inexpert. Where do scientific theories come from? What is scientific and what is unscientific? Is there any possibility that sometimes what is labeled ‘scientific’ is simply a perspective on the subject in question and cannot be termed ‘scientific’ at all? Don’t forget that some laws of physics in the field of natural science may even tell lies and fail to give a truthful account of reality. Actually, the distinction made between folk versus expert theories of emotion is reminiscent of the distinction between (im)politeness₁ and (im)politeness₂ (see Xie et al. to appear for a full critical and in-depth discussion).

References

- Lakoff, George. (1990): “The invariance hypothesis: Is abstract reason based on image schemas?”, in: *Cognitive Linguistics* 1, 39-74.
- Quinn, Naomi (1991): “The cultural basis of metaphor”, in: Fernandez, J. W. (ed.): *Beyond Metaphor: The Theory of Tropes in Anthropology*, Stanford, S. 56-93.
- Talmy, Leonard (1988): “Force dynamics in language and cognition”, in: *Cognitive Science* 12, 49-100.
- Xie, Chaoqun/He, Ziran/Lin, Djin (to appear): “Politeness: myth and truth”, in: *Studies in Language* 29.