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THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION
AT INFANT SCHOOL LEVEL IN ZIMBABWE

Gamuchirai Tsitsi Ndamba

AN ANALYSIS OF BODY AND SENSORY PERCEPTION: CONCEPTUAL
METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND SHONA.

Dr Isaac Machakanja

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS' 'O' LEVEL DESIGN PROJECT WORK IN
TECHNICAL SUBJECTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE.

**Fredreck Chinyemba, Andrew Muzinda, Barbra Nhemachena
and Emily Motsi**

A CASE FOR TEACHING DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY TO SCIENCE AND
ENGINEERING UNDERGRADUATES IN ZIMBABWE'S STATE UNIVERSITIES.

Shadreck T. Mandiopera

CRY, THE BELOVED PROFESSION: A STUDY OF SHORT-TEXT MESSAGES
SERVICE (SMSS) ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

Nyoni Mika, Nyoni Tsisti, and Tavuya Jinga

SUSTAINABLE OUTSOURCING OF STUDENTS CATERING SERVICES AT
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN HARARE DURING THE HYPER
INFLATIONARY PERIOD: 2003-2008.

Miriam Mbasera

CUSTOMARY LAW OF INHERITANCE IN TRADITIONAL NDEBELE FAMILIES AS
DEPICTED IN SELECTED NDEBELE WORKS OF ART

**Bhebe Cordial, Bhala Timothy, Kadodo Webster, and Sithole
Nicholus**

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE NZIRAMASANGA COMMISSION ON
EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF 1999 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHAPTER
4 HUNHU / UBUNTU (HOLISTIC) EDUCATION.

Ngoni Makuvaza

Analysis of Body and Sensory Perception: Conceptual Metaphors in English and Shona.

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Abstract

English and Shona are two typologically unrelated languages and represent very different cultures. According to Kovecses (2002:165) it is possible for such different languages and cultures to conceptualize specific concepts in similar ways. Kovecses (2002:165) suggests that there is some universal motivation for the metaphors to emerge in these cultures. Kovecses (2002:165) claims that the near-universality of such metaphors is motivated by universal aspects of the human body. It has also been observed that cultural differences may arise because of differences in environments or ecologies. Such cultural differences give rise to differences in conceptual construals of reality and hence also in the conceptual metaphors of different languages (ibid). I am now going to apply the hypothesis that claims that humans experience their environment through their bodies and hence also construe the world in terms of their bodily experiences.

Background to the Study

Work on metaphor has been carried out mainly in English but the findings in the studies have been claimed to be applicable to all languages. Nothing substantial has been done on metaphor in African languages in general, or Shona in particular. Shona is a Bantu language spoken by people in most parts of Zimbabwe in Southern Africa. Shona is an agglutinating language. That is, according to Lyons (1968:187) a language in which the words are typically made up of a series of morphs with each morph taking the place of a morpheme.

Problem Definition

The main studies on metaphor have been carried out in English. The problem, however, is that, the insights into conceptual metaphors found to apply to English have been generalised to apply to language. The question that needs to be addressed now is whether Shona conforms to these claims made about metaphor and if it does why? Alternatively, whether it does not conform to these claims, why not?

Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- To apply insights on metaphorical mappings to an African language, that is, the Shona language.

- To reconstruct the ontology and the epistemology of the conceptual domains involved in the mapping in metaphorical linguistic expressions. [The main methodology that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose is that in order to understand the nature of metaphorical mappings you need to do a conceptual analysis of the conceptual domains but they do very little of this.]
- To compare conceptual metaphors in English and Shona in order to test the extent to which the claims that embodiment accounts for similarities in conceptual metaphors in languages while ecology accounts for differences in conceptual metaphors in languages.

Hypotheses

According to Kovecses (2002: 171) there are two hypothesis related to conceptual metaphors which can be summarised in the words below:

It is possible for different languages and cultures to conceptualise certain phenomena in similar ways because of the universal aspects of the human body. [English and Shona] cultures have similar ideas about their bodies and seem to see themselves undergoing the same physiological processes in given situations. When a metaphorical concept has such an experiential basis, it can be said to be embodied.

And further (2002: 183)

There can be differences in the 'range' of conceptual metaphors that cultures have available for the conceptualisation of particular target domains. Two languages can share the same conceptual metaphor but the metaphor will be elaborated differently in the two languages. Broader cultural context, the principles and the key concepts in a given culture may bring about cultural variation. Natural and physical environment (ecological factors), the environment in which a culture is located can bring about cultural variation.

Significance of the Study

This study departs from other theses on metaphor in that, whereas Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and subsequently others, proposed that in order to understand the nature of metaphorical mapping you need to do a conceptual analysis of the conceptual domains, they do very little of this type of analysis. In this study, an ontological and epistemological reconstruction of domains is done and a conceptual application of the ontology is also carried out. Another contribution that this study is making is that very little has been done on metaphor in African languages in general and Shona in particular. This study carries out a comparative study of conceptual metaphor between English and Shona.

Methodology

The researcher is going to compare conceptual metaphors in English and Shona at the conceptual level to see the extent to which Shona conforms to the claims made about metaphor for language and if so, why? If it does not why? These two languages are structurally incomparable. English is both an isolating and agglutinating language. That is, according to Robins (1988:377):

English is in fact a fairly mixed type of language in respect of the three types.... Invariable words such as prepositions, conjunctions, and adverbs, are isolating in type: they exhibit no formal paradigms, in many cases they are monomorphemic (e.g. since, from, as, when, seldom, now) and their grammatical status and class membership are entirely determined by their syntactic relations within the rest of the sentences in which they occur, without formal mark of these appearing in their own word structure. Morphologically complex words, in which individual grammatical categories may be fairly easily assigned to morphemes strung together serially in the structure of the word, exemplify the process of agglutination. Illegalities (...), ungodliness (...), unavoidable (...), stabilizers (...) are examples from English of agglutinative word structure.

Shona on the other hand is mostly agglutinating. Shona exhibits the characteristics that Lyons (1968:187) claims are typically associated with this language type. Shona makes use of prefixes, for example, 'ma- ruva' "flowers", 'mu-danga' "in the kraal", 'ma-tanga' "kraals", 'aka-pinda' "he went in", 'ari-mumba' "he is in the house", 'to-enda' "we are going", to convey grammatical functions such as plurality, possession and prepositional value and so on. Therefore, to make the comparison possible, I will do ontological and epistemological reconstructions of the domain

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Metaphors

The classical understanding of metaphor differs considerably from contemporary thought on the subject. Aristotle cited in Eubanks (1999) says that metaphor is a two part expression. Something is something else. Aristotle maintains that a metaphor has two main discursive locations namely the place where it has originated from and the place to which it has been transferred. He claims that it is made of two parts which can be easily extracted or concealed because all metaphors can be stated as similes and all similes as metaphors.

According to Aristotle the two parts of a metaphor work on each other by sharing some obvious feature. Max Black (1962) offers a different view of metaphor. He calls Aristotle's theory a comparison theory in which there are

pre-existing similarities between compared terms. Black offers an alternative view in which he claims that when we say 'man is a wolf' we do not simply project the pre-existing characteristics of a wolf onto man but rather newly involve man in a system of commonplaces or an 'implicative complex' about wolf. According to Black (1962) the metaphor 'man is wolf' influences both our idea of man and wolf. Metaphor theory has since undergone a revolutionary change.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that our conceptual system, in terms of which human beings both think and act, is basically metaphoric in nature. Further, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that the way we as humans think, what we experience, and what we do everyday, is very much a matter of metaphor. Metaphor then seems to function at the conceptual level. That is, at least, according to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor is a cognitive instrument whereby we conceive of our world. On the other hand, we communicate these metaphorical conceptual construals in expressions that reflect the metaphoric nature of the concept, viz. metaphorical linguistic expressions.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:05), in metaphor interpretation, we understand one kind of thing or experience in terms of something else of a different kind. For example, in the conceptual metaphor, ARGUMENT IS WAR, we understand argument in terms of war. What we are saying is that, the structure of war is mapped onto the structure of argument to the extent that we see similarities between war and argument. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989: 38-39) the mapping is unidirectional: we use metaphor to map certain conceptual properties of a conceptual source domain onto a conceptual target domain thereby creating a new understanding of the target domain. That is, the mapping takes place at the conceptual metaphor level.

The Conceptual Structure View

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:03) claim:

'The way we think, what we experience, and what we do everyday are very much a matter of metaphor. Actions, events, and objects are understood in terms of 'structurally meaningful wholes within experience or so-called ("experiential gestalts")'.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) exemplify their claims with reference to the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. They maintain that this metaphor structures not only the way we talk about arguments for example "he attacked the weak points of my argument", "to defend a position", "her criticisms were right on target", "he shot down my best arguments", but also the very way we conceive of and carry on arguments. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) say that the metaphorical meaning is based upon projections of one

common gestalt structure (WAR) onto another (ARGUMENT). In his 1993 work Lakoff elaborates Johnson and his theory of conceptual metaphor. It is in this work that he explains the nature of the mapping between the source domain and the target domain. He uses the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY to illustrate his claims. According to Lakoff (1993:207) the ontology that constitutes the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor arises from the mapping of the ontology of travel onto the ontology of love. According to Lakoff (1993:207) in the ontology of travel we can distinguish the following:

TWO TRAVELLERS are in a VEHICLE, TRAVELLING WITH COMMON DESTINATIONS. THE VEHICLE can encounter some IMPEDIMENTS and get stuck, that is, it can become non-functional. If the travellers do nothing they will not REACH THEIR DESTINATIONS. There are a limited number of alternative actions that they may take when they get stuck in their journey.

They can try to get the vehicle moving again by fixing it or getting it past the IMPEDIMENT that stopped it.

They can remain in the non - functional VEHICLE and give up REACHING THEIR DESTINATION.

They can abandon the VEHICLE.

The alternative of remaining in the non - functional VEHICLE takes the least effort, but does not satisfy the desire to REACH THEIR DESTINATION.

Lakoff's (1993) conceptual view of the nature of the mapping between the source and target domains is further elucidated by means of the Invariance Principle. He maintains that image schemas typical of the source domains (containers, paths etc.) are mapped onto target domains (categories, linear scales, etc). According to Lakoff (1993) the Invariance Principle states that

Metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (that is, the image schema structure) of the source domain, in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain. The Invariance Principle guarantees that for container schemas, interiors will be mapped onto interiors, exteriors onto exteriors, and boundaries onto boundaries; for path schemas, sources will be mapped onto sources, goals onto goals, trajectories onto trajectories, and so on.. One cannot find cases where a source domain interior is mapped onto a target domain exterior, or where a source domain exterior is mapped onto a target domain path.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have a particular assumption about how the nature of metaphor may be understood, namely, the ontology and epistemology of a domain underlying the mapping in conceptual metaphors. They show what the exact mapping from the ontological and epistemological point of view is. They show why there are source domains (SD) and target domains (TD).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphor is when we understand one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. Kovecses (2002:04) puts it differently when he states that:
 When we talk and think about life in terms of journeys, about arguments in terms of wars, about love in terms of journeys, about theories in terms of plants...

This is, according to Kovecses then, what we mean by conceptual metaphor.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the two domains that take part in the conceptual metaphor have special names. The conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain is called the *source domain* (SD) while the conceptual domain that we understand through the source domain is the *target domain* (TD). Basically Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff and Turner (1989) and Lakoff (1993) say the same thing about the direction of the mapping of the ontological and epistemic correspondences between the SD and the TD.

Lakoff and Turner (1989:62) categorically state that metaphorical mapping goes in one direction: They clearly spell out that uni-directional mapping is from SD to TD and not the reverse. They disagree with those who claim that the mapping in conceptual metaphors is bi-directional. Lakoff and Turner (1989) use the example of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and make the claim that we organize our understanding of life in terms of a journey. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989:62):

We map onto the domain of life the inferential structure-underlying journey, but we do not map onto the domain of journey the inferential structure underlying life.

To support their claim, Lakoff and Turner (1989) point out that properties of life such as waking and sleeping cannot map onto journeys. In addition Lakoff and Turner (1989) point to the fact that we do not assume that travellers can have only a single journey as people can have only a single life. Lakoff and Turner (1989) conclude, therefore, that the direction of mapping in metaphors originates from a source domain to a target domain.

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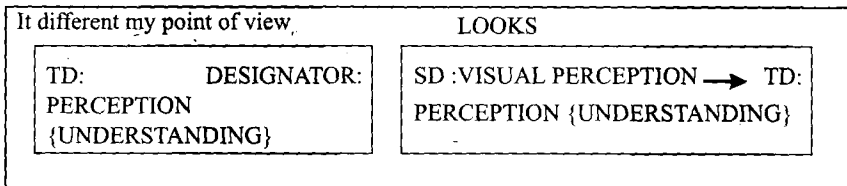
Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Body Sensory Perceptions

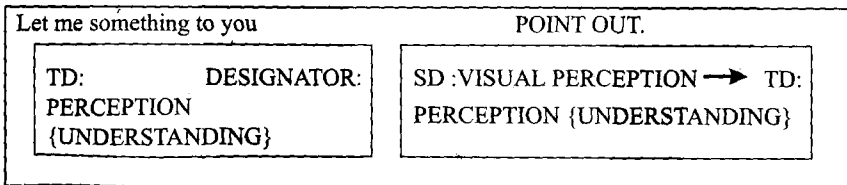
In this section the researcher is going to consider the conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING. The researcher would like to argue that UNDERSTANDING and SEEING are both universal concepts because they are bodily activities. The researcher is going to carry out a reconstruction of the ontology and the epistemology of the domains that are involved in both the English and Shona metaphoric expressions that instantiate the above conceptual metaphor. In the process the researcher hopes to show that there are similarities in the mapping of ontological and epistemological aspects of the source domain to the target domain in the English and Shona linguistic expressions that are illustrations of the Body and Sensory perception based conceptual metaphors.

English

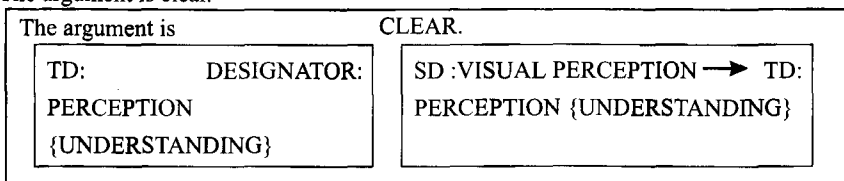
It looks different from my point of view.



Let me point something out to you.



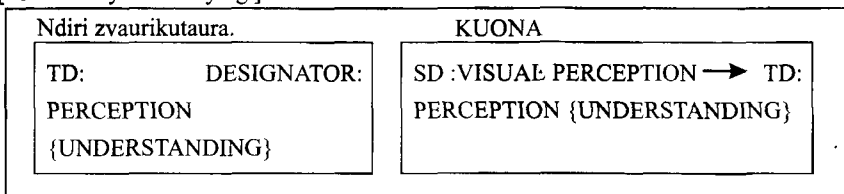
The argument is clear.



Shona

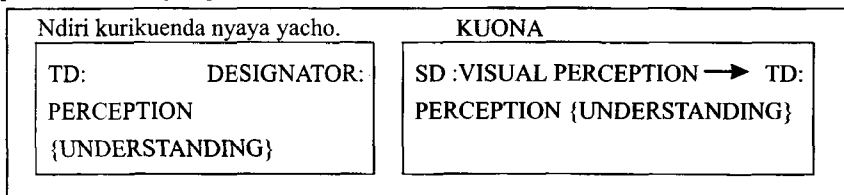
Ndiri kuona zvauri kutaura.

[I see what you are saying.]



Ndiri kuona kuri kuenda nyaya yacho.

[I can see where going the case.]



Shona conceptualises understanding as seeing just as English conceptualises it. One explanation that can be offered here is that since understanding is a mental activity, that is a bodily activity, it means that all cultures are likely to behave in the same way. This is embodiment motivating the conceptualisation.

In the next section the researcher is going look at the conceptual metaphor EDUCATION IS FOOD. First let me give the ontology of FOOD as source domain.

- People store, buy, value food.
- People cook, fry, boil food
- Food is chewed, nutritious.
- Food is sought after.
- People get full, surfeit with food, fed up, enjoy, eat food

Below I have done a reconstruction of the ontology and epistemology of the domains involved in mapping in the English and Shona linguistic expressions.

English

We have generated a lot of ideas this week.

We have a lot of ideas this week		GENERATED	
TD: DESIGNATOR IDEAS {GENERATED}		SD: FOOD →	TD: IDEAS {GENERATED}

He produces new ideas at an astounding rate.

He new ideas at an astounding rate		PRODUCES	
TD: DESIGNATOR IDEAS {GENERATED}		SD: FOOD →	TD: IDEAS {GENERATED}

His intellectual productivity has decreased in recent years.

He has decreased in recent years		INTELLECTUAL PRODUCTIVITY	
TD: DESIGNATOR IDEAS {GENERATED}		SD: FOOD {PRODUCTION} →	TD: IDEAS {GENERATED}

Shona

Akatsenga mabhuku.
[He chewed the books.]

mabhuku		AKATSENGA	
TD: DESIGNATOR EDUCATION {PROCESS}		SD: FOOD {EAT} →	TD: EDUCATION {PROCESS}

Akadya mabhuku.

[He ate the books.]

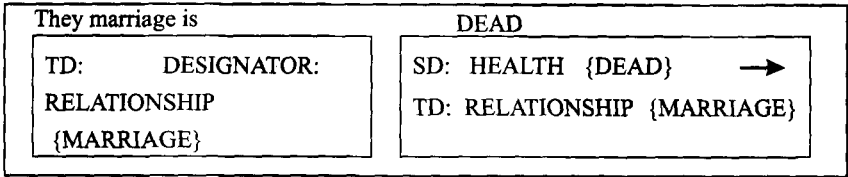
mabhuku		AKADYA	
TD: DESIGNATOR EDUCATION {LEARNING}		SD: FOOD {EAT} →	TD: EDUCATION {LEARNING}

Akamedza mabhuku.

[He swallowed the books.]

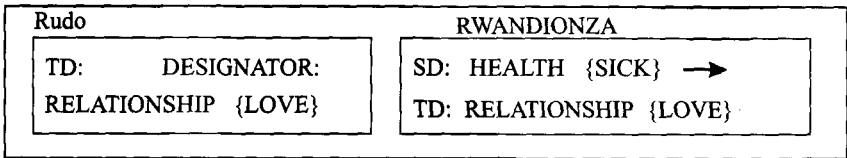
mabhuku		AKAMEDZA	
TD: DESIGNATOR EDUCATION {LEARNING} PROCESS		SD: FOOD {EAT} →	TD: EDUCATION {LEARNING} PROCESS

They marriage is dead.



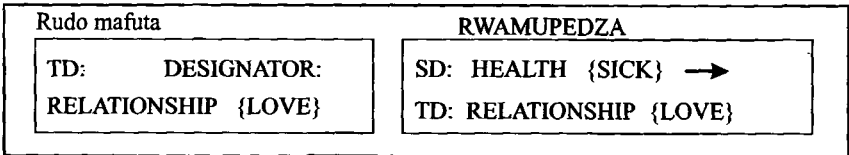
Shona

RELATIONSHIP {LOVE, MARRIAGE} IS HEALTH CONDITIONS
 Rudo rwandionza.
 [Love has made him thin.]



Rudo rwandipedza mafuta.

[Love has lost him fat.]



The reason why the above conceptual metaphor is common to both Shona and English can be accounted for by the hypothesis that claims that if the conceptual metaphor is motivated by embodiment, it is likely to be universal.

In the next section I am going to look at the conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIP [LOVE] IS MADNESS [MENTAL CONDITION]. But first we need to start off with the ontology of madness if we are to understand the conceptual metaphor.

1. Consequences / symptoms of madness-sanity, insanity, uncontrolled behaviour, confusion, strange experiences / feelings in the head.
2. Causes of madness
3. Treatment of madness

Below are English and Shona metaphorical expressions that are a result of the conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIP [LOVE] IS MADNESS

English

I am crazy about her.

I am about her TD: DESIGNATOR: STATE {LOVE}	CRAZY SD: MENTAL CONDITION → {ABNORMAL} TD: STATE {LOVE}
--	---

She drives me out of my mind.

She drives me TD: DESIGNATOR: STATE {LOVE}	OUT OF MY MIND SD: MENTAL CONDITION → {ABNORMAL} TD: STATE {LOVE}
---	--

He constantly raves about her.

He constantly about her TD: DESIGNATOR: STATE {LOVE}	RAVES SD: MENTAL CONDITION → {ABNORMAL} TD: STATE {LOVE}
---	---

He has gone mad over her.

He has gone over her TD: DESIGNATOR: RELATIONSHIP {LOVE}	MAD SD: MENTAL CONDITION → {ABNORMAL} TD: RELATIONSHIP {LOVE}
---	--

Shona

Azengaidzwa nerudo.

[Mad because of love he is.]

Nerudo TD: DESIGNATOR: STATE {LOVE}	AZENGAIDZWA SD: MENTAL CONDITION → {ABNORMAL} TD: STATE {LOVE}
--	---

Apengeswa nerudo.

[He is mad because of love.]

Nerudo		APENGEWSA	
TD:	DESIGNATOR:	SD: MENTAL CONDITION →	
STATE	{LOVE}	{ABNORMAL}	
		TD: STATE {LOVE}	

Pfungwa dzapesana nerudo.

[His minds are not aligned because of love.]

Dzapesana nerudo		PFUNGWA	
TD:	DESIGNATOR:	SD: MENTAL CONDITION →	
STATE	{LOVE}	{ABNORMAL}	
		TD: STATE {LOVE}	

The conceptual metaphor BEING IN LOVE IS MADNESS is found in both English and Shona. Since madness is an illness that affects the body and since love is an emotion associated with the body, we can say that both are embodied. Therefore, the conceptual metaphor in question is motivated by embodiment and it is, therefore not surprising that the metaphor is found in both English and Shona cultures.

Shona, like English, seems to have conceptual metaphors in the domain of RELATIONSHIPS, LOVE, EDUCATION and UNDERSTANDING. Since these two languages are unrelated and have not influenced one another the explanation for the universality of these metaphors must be accounted for in a different way. The embodiment hypothesis can account for the observations and is, therefore, confirmed.

CONCLUSION

Metaphorical studies have been focused mainly on English. The objective of this research was to apply insights on metaphorical mappings to an African language. Nothing or very little has been done in an African language on metaphorical mapping. For this purpose, a comparative study of English and Shona metaphorical expressions was done. The main methodology that Lakoff and Johnson propose in order to understand the nature of metaphorical mapping is the reconstruction of the ontology and the epistemology of the domains that are involved. The researcher did this in his research. He compared the reconstructed ontology and epistemology of the domains involved in the metaphorical expressions of English with those of Shona in order to establish, on the one hand, the similarities and / or differences cross-linguistically or cross-culturally in the metaphorical construal of reality between these two languages and, on the other hand, to

establish what the underlying motivation is for the similarities and differences between these two unrelated languages. Two hypotheses guided this research, the one, embodiment, claiming that humans experience their environment through their bodies and hence also construe the world in terms of their bodily experiences. Kovecses (2002) claims that it is a result of embodiment that we find cultures construing reality in the same way. That is, embodiment accounts for universality of conceptual metaphors. The other hypothesis claims that cultural differences may arise because of differences in environments or ecologies. Such cultural differences give rise to differences in conceptual construals of reality and hence also in the conceptual metaphors of different languages.

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