

The conceptual metaphor of joy

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to study how 'joy', an emotional concept, is metaphorised in English from a cognitive perspective. It introduces the theoretical framework of Cognitive Linguistics, then briefly touches upon the definition of metaphor, the different types of conceptual metaphors and, finally, the conceptual metaphors of 'joy'.

We think in metaphors, which we learn very early. Our conceptual system, in terms of what we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff, & Johnson 2003: 8).

*Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors we live by* changed the way linguists thought about metaphor. Conceptual Metaphor Theory was one of the earliest theoretical frameworks identified as part of the cognitive semantics enterprise and provided much of the early theoretical impetus for the cognitive approach. The basic premise of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that metaphor is not simply a stylistic feature of language, but that thought itself is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.*

The cognitive model of joy can be described using the example of Lakoff for anger: JOY IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER: She was bursting with joy; JOY IS HEAT/FIRE: Fires of joy were kindled by the birth of her son; joy is a natural force: I was overwhelmed by joy; JOY IS A SOCIAL SUPERIOR: If I ruled the world by joy; JOY IS AN OPPONENT: She was seized by joy; joy is a captive animal: All joy broke loose as the kids opened their presents; JOY IS INSANITY: The crowd went crazy with joy; JOY IS A FORCE DISLOCATING THE SELF: He was beside himself with joy.

Keywords: Cognition; Joy; Conceptual metaphor; Emotion; Cognitive linguistics.