

Tamta NAGERVADZE

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

e-mail Tamta.nagervadze@bsu.edu.ge

ORCID: 0009-0002-0287-7810

TRANSLATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR OF *THE KNIGHT IN THE PANTHER'S SKIN* – CORPUS-BASED ANALYSES

1. INTRODUCTION

The presented study offers a corpus-linguistic analysis of two English translations of Shota Rustaveli's poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* – those by Marjory Wardrop and Lyn Coffin.

The presented research is grounded in the theoretical foundations of cognitive linguistics and translation studies, particularly in the conceptual metaphor theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, according to which a metaphor is understood as the result of a complex cognitive process. The metaphors of emotion found in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are examined as cognitive structures that reflect the perception of reality and emotional experience. The study focuses on conceptual metaphors of emotion constructed through the notion of "tears." Based on corpus data, the paper presents an analysis of the translations within the framework of cognitive translation studies.

2. THE THEORY OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

Cognitive linguistics is a relatively recent approach within linguistic research that links linguistic knowledge to general cognitive systems and

human thought. According to Evans, cognitive linguistics examines language, the process of language acquisition, and the conceptual structures underlying it (Evans 2012: 129). The central concern of cognitive linguistics is the theory of embodiment.

According to Lakoff, for centuries the mind and the physical body were studied as separate entities. Through the development of cognitive linguistics, however, linguistic inquiry has returned to its philosophical foundations – namely, to the study of the interrelation between the body and meaning (Lakoff 1999: 50).

Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) argue that our cognitive structures form conceptual systems grounded in the unified perception of the external world through the interaction of the body and meaning, as well as through engagement with the environment and accumulated experience. The theory of embodiment is closely linked to the development of image schema theory.

Image schemas are regarded as abstract mental structures formed through interaction with and perception of the external world. According to the theory of cognitive linguistics, mental and linguistic categories are not abstract entities detached from the external world or from human evolution; rather, they constitute an integrated whole.

According to Johnson,

a schema is a recurrent pattern, that is, a systematic, continuous, and organised structure of actions – a form. These patterns emerge as meaningful structures primarily through physical movement in space, manipulation of objects, and interaction with and perception of the external world” (Johnson 1987: 67).

Johnson identifies several fundamental image schemas, among which the most dominant are the *container*, *path*, *force*, *balance*, and *cycle* schemas (Johnson 1987: 126). The development of the theories of embodiment and image schemas is closely associated with the emergence of the conceptual metaphor theory.

The conceptual metaphor is one of the central topics in cognitive linguistics. In their joint work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), Lakoff and Johnson proposed the view that everything around us is metaphorical: metaphors are created through our interaction with and perception of the environment, and they are inherently conceptual. As Lakoff and Johnson explain, metaphor has traditionally been regarded as a poetic and rhetorical

device – more expressive than ordinary language – and for this reason, people often assume that it is possible to speak without employing the metaphor.

Concepts govern our everyday activities, even in the smallest details. Our very concepts control our thoughts, our daily functioning, and all the minutiae of experience. They structure our perceptions and determine how we understand the world and interact with other people. If our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature, then so too are the ways in which we think, experience, and act (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 4).

Kovecses endorses the theory of Lakoff and Johnson and explains that a conceptual metaphor reflects the relationship between a source domain and a target domain (Kovecses 2002: 4). In other words, according to the embodiment theory, an individual “maps” the concept of the source domain onto the concept of the target domain, thereby creating conceptual metaphors. This process is schematic, while the conceptual metaphors themselves possess an image-schematic structure. The schematic connection between source and target domains is expressed by the term *mapping* – the “metaphorical projection of an image,” which involves projecting one image onto another; accordingly, the synonymous term for metaphorical mapping is *projection* (Lakoff 1993: 77).

3. THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY, THE ONTOLOGICAL METAPHOR

A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which the essence of one domain is understood through the other. In their book *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson classify metaphors into three categories:

- Orientational metaphors
- Ontological metaphors
- Structural metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1986: 264).

In the present study, we analyse the ontological conceptual metaphors of emotion found in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Specifically, we examine the image-schematic projections of the concept of “tear” and their English translations. The following editions were used for the study:

- *Vepkhistkaosani*, Shota Rustaveli (12th century), Tbilisi: Sakhelgami 1957, edited by Kekelidze and Shanidze.
- *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, translated by Marjorie and Oliver Wardrop London: *The Folio Society*, 1977.
- *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, poetic translation by Lyn Coffin 2015, Poezia Press.

Ontological conceptual metaphors, the third category of metaphors identified by Lakoff and Johnson, constitute a framework through which abstract experiences are understood as concrete realities. This conceptualisation simplifies the process of organising experience into specific categories, relations, and groups (Lakoff & Johnson 1987: 25).

Metaphors with projections based on the *container* image schema belong to the category of ontological metaphors. In their co-authored book *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson discuss the concept of the *container* image schema. The *container* image schema is defined as a bounded space that possesses an interior. Its structure consists of an interior, which serves as a specific movable area (landmark), and an object that crosses this space, referred to as a trajectory.

Lakoff and Johnson argue that human cognition is inherently metaphorical. From the perspective of the *container* image schema, humans themselves can be understood as “containers” within which the mind, ideas, and concepts are housed. Ideas and concepts reside in the mind, that is, within the interior space, while what they may refer to or are directed towards exits in the external world (Lakoff & Johnson 1987: 31).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, conceptual metaphors projected through the *container* image schema include: “eyes are containers for the emotion,” with the generalised form being “the body is the container for the emotions” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 50). Accordingly, the human body, and in this case the eyes, serve as containers for emotions. In the present study, we examine ontological metaphors in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* that are projected through the *container* image schema, with the foundational conceptual metaphor being: “the body is the container for the emotions.”

Let us consider ontological conceptual metaphors projected through the *container* image schema in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*:

ვიცი, რომე გაუწყვედლად | თვალთათ ცრემლი | გისეტყვია

In this example, the eyes serve as containers of the sorrowful emotion, while the tears represent the manifestation of that emotion.

The same applies to the following example:

მათ თვალთა ცრემლნი სდიოდეს, | მინდორთა მოსალამენი

This metaphor is also ontological, as the tear is a fluid capable of “flowing out of the container,” meaning that the emotion arises and then manifests in the form of tears.

Another metaphor,

ველთა ცრემლი ასოვლებდა, | თვალთა ჩემთა მონაწური”,

likewise reflects the ontological metaphorical structure and image schema discussed above. However, the essence and scope of the container, the emotion, and its manifestation are expanded: the tears, implicitly compared to rain, are released in such abundance that they “moisten the plains.”

4. COGNITIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES

The theoretical foundation for studying the translation of ontological conceptual metaphors in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, specifically those projecting emotion through the *container* image schema, is provided by the theory of cognitive translation studies. Cognitive translation studies emerged from the framework of cognitive linguistics and examines issues related to the translation of conceptual metaphors and image metaphors. Translation is no longer viewed merely as the equivalent linguistic transfer of units from a source language to a target language; rather, each linguistic unit is embedded within a conceptual system. In our minds, everything is interconnected through a systematic network.

Schäffner (2004: 1267), based on her work in the German-English language pair, proposed some cases of metaphor translation:

1. Identical conceptual metaphor at the macro-level, but different individual manifestations not accounted for at the micro-level.
2. Replacement of structural components of the base conceptual schema in the TT by expressions that make entailments explicit.
3. A metaphor is more elaborate in the TT.

4. ST and TT employ different metaphorical expressions which can be combined under a more abstract conceptual metaphor.
5. The expression in the TT reflects a different aspect of the conceptual metaphor (Schaffner 2003: 1267).

5. CORPUS LINGUISTICS, METHODOLOGY IN TRANSLATION

According to McEnery and Wilson, corpus linguistics provides a means for studying and investigating living, natural language, based on large-scale text corpora (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 1). A corpus is a collection of texts belonging to a particular language, dialect, or other linguistic category, compiled for the purpose of linguistic analysis (Francis 1992: 17).

For the analysis of ontological conceptual metaphors in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, we employed the corpus linguistic method. The study was conducted using two corpus analysers:

1. The corpus platform and analyzer of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, developed within the framework of the Center for Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies. This analyser allows for the comparison of parallel texts.
2. AntConc, a corpus analysis tool created by Laurence Anthony in 2002 (www1). This analyser enables the placement of two parallel texts and the creation of a custom corpus. The program displays word concordances, frequency counts, token counts, keywords, and generally provides file viewing and downloading functionalities.

Ontological conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through the concept of “tear” in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* were annotated using the tag <Stl_mtf>.

The present study constitutes a part of the dissertation entitled “A Corpus Linguistic Analysis of the Artistic Translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin: Georgian and English Versions*.” A broader study on this topic was conducted at the Center for Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, under the title: “*The Knight in the Panther's Skin: Comparing Corpora of Image Metaphors in the Source Text and Its Translations, Spanning Different Cultural or Temporal Contexts*.” This research was published in the *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation* (Beridze & Nagervadze 2025: 188–211).

In the present study, according to corpus data, the number of conceptual metaphors is as follows: Rustaveli – 106; Wardrop – 101; Coffin – 87. During the marking of the texts, the concept of “shedding tears” was not annotated; in the current study, these concepts were included, resulting in different data. Below are the quantitative data for conceptual metaphors annotated in the corpus analyser of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University.

რუსთაველი უორდროპი
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ქართული
ინგლისური
რუსული
გერმანული
ფრანგული

ტეგი: stl_mtf, რაოდენობა: 118

ნაპოვნი ტექსტი

ქალი ტირს და ცრემლთა აფრქვევს, | ჰხრის ყოონისა ბოლო-ფრთათა
ამად ტირს, ბალი ვარდისა | ცრემლითა აივსებოდა
ცრემლსა ვარდი დაეთრთვილა, | გულსა მღულრად ანატირსა
წვიმს წვიმა ბროლისა
ცრემლსა სისხლი ერეოდა, | გასდის, ვითა ნაგუბარი
თვალთათ ცრემლი | გისეტყვია
ბროლსა სეტყვს და ვარდსა აზრობს, | ტანსა მჭევრსა ათრთოლებდა
ცრემლსა ვითა მარალიტსა | სწვიმს ვარდისა დასანაზოდ
ცრემლი ცხელი ასოვლებდის | ნარგისთაგან ვარდსა ზრულსა
თვალთათ | ვითა მარგალიტი | ცხელი ცრემლი გარდმოღვარა
ვარდი დათრთვილა
მუნ ეძებს, ცრემლი მტირალსა
ლანჯისა ბანანი
ბროლმან, ლალსა გარეულმან , | ვარდნი თხელნი ანატიფნა
მათ თვალთა ცრემლნი სდიოდეს, | მინდორთა მოსალამენი
ცრემლითა, | ზღვათაცა შესართავითა
ცრემლნი გარდმოსცვიდეს
სისხლით სწვიმდეს
დაინყო ცრემლთა ფრქვევა
ვარდისა ბალსა მოგუბდა | ცრემლისა საგუბარია
ას-კეცთა ცრემლთა დინება
ვისთვისმე ხელი უცილოდ, | მას ცრემლი ემალმალეხის
ვარდსა ნუ აზრობ, | ცრემლითა ნუ ითოვნების
მალღად ცრემლითა, | ზღვათაცა შესამალითა
ამრატის ფერად შეცვალა | ბროლი ცრემლისა ბანამან
ცრემლნი მოჰკვეთნა | შავმან გიშრისა დანამან
სისხლისა ცრემლსა გაენნა | შუა გიშრისა სატები
ცრემლნი გარდმოსცვიდეს | ას-ნაკეცნი, ბევრის-ბევრად
ცრემლთა მიღისა

Figure 1. Based on corpus quantitative data, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by Shota Rustaveli contains 118 conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through the concept of a “tear”

რუსთაველი კოფინი
×

ქართული
ინგლისური
რუსული
გერმანული
ფრანგული

ტეგი: stl_mtf, რაოდენობა: 88

ნაპოვნი ტექსტი

With each tear that streaked the rose garden of her cheeks
 From the jets of his eyelashes, clear waters could be seen to flow
 Tears mingled with blood, and flowed forth as from floodgates, wave after wave
 Hail rained down and froze the rose; in his body, he felt trembling start
 He shed pearl tears: his cheeks softened, and seemed then of a paler sort
 Snow had fallen, freezing and bruising the rose so young and slender
 He cries while searching, his tears a river flowing into the sea
 Ruby and crystal made the pale roses of his face seem to dim
 From their eyes, hot tears flowed, moistening the plains. They rode as if blind
 Her abundant tears were like a river flowing wave after wave
 his tears raining down, so spoke he
 let his tears flow
 shedding tears that seemed to flow from her heart's core
 They wept together. Tears could have flowed to the sea from either face
 His crystal face darkened to amber as he let his hot tears go,
 His jet lashes seemed plaited together with tears of blood and gore
 I feel great grief for her: that is the reason I readily bleed
 The queen poured forth enough tears over my body to make a sea
 I mounted my horse; as I left, tears flowed down my face in a stream
 Narcissus tears must have tormented you. You must have felt spurned
 It was as if I were a pale rose and heavenly dewdrops wore
 shed a stream of tears
 Again and again she groaned, and cried such tears as would hollow stone
 She said nothing to me, but her tears kept cascading to the ground
 A shower of tears bedewed her face, brilliant with radiant shine
 "Remember when you kept sighing, 'Ah! Ah!' when your tears bathed the field
 The rain which had frozen the rose had turned to a much milder flow
 I asked the reason tears had been flowing
 The fields around us, far and wide, were wet with tears my eyes did squeeze

Figure 2. Corpus data indicate that in Lyn Coffin's translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, there are 88 conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through the concept of a "tear"

რუსთაველი უორდროპი

×

ქართული
ინგლისური
რუსული
გერმანული
ფრანგული

ტეგი: stl_mtf, რაოდენობა: 104

ნაპოვნი ტექსტი

wept, she shed many tears; she drooped her raven eyelashes (the tail feathers of the raven
therefore she weeps, filling the rose-garden (of her cheeks) with tears
the rose (of his cheek) was frozen in tears that welled up from his woe-stricken heart
a channel of jet (his eyelashes) rains a crystal shower
tears were mingled with blood, and flowed forth as from floodgates
I know that without pause the hail has fallen from thine eyes upon thy cheek
crystal hails down and freezes the rose, his graceful form was trembling
Tears like pearls were shed upon the rose, making it tender
Fresh snow had fallen, and, freezing on the rose, blasted it
There seeks he the shedder of tears which flowed to increase the sea
his cheeks will be bathed (in tears)
Ruby mingled with crystal beautified the pale roses (of his cheeks
from their eyes tears flowed, moistening the plains
she wept aloud, her tears uniting with the sea
the tears rained down
they wiped each other's tears of blood
he began to shed tears
In the rose-garden the pool of tears is dammed up
with heart sobs she began to shed tears a hundredfold snore
their tears flowing even to the sea
The bath of tears turned the crystal to the colour of jasper
They were silent; the black knife of jet (of their eyelashes) cut off the (flow of) tears
the jetty eyelashes are plaited by tears of blood
She told me that for three years the stream of tears was to flow without her
You, mighty, were sporting; we bathed our cheeks in tears
for whom flow streams of blood, from her I never expect comfort
he sat down and moaned bitterly, his tears were mingled with the earth
The queen poured forth tears enough to make a sea
The bath of tears changed the crystal (of my face) to saffron colour

Figure 3. Corpus data represent the conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through the concept of a “tear” in Wardrop’s translation of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. According to the corpus analyser, the total number of these metaphors is 104.

The differences observed in these data are attributable to changes and losses present in the translations. During the annotation process, metaphors in the translations that were not rendered as conceptual metaphors

were not tagged. Drawing on and synthesising the translation strategies of Schaffner, Mandelblit, Halverson, and Kovecses, in the translations we will examine changes in image schemas and metaphorical mappings, as well as translation-induced transformations.

6. TRANSLATION OF THE ONTOLOGICAL METAPHORS IN *THE KNIGHT IN THE PANTHER'S SKIN*

Let us examine the translations of the ontological conceptual metaphors expressing emotion, projected through the *container* image schema, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

The present example:

მან არა გვითხრა გაუშვა | წყარო ცრემლისა ცხელისა

the English interpretation: "he said nothing, he shed hot tears"

describes Nestan-Darejan's emotional state through the concept of a "hot tear." The metaphor is ontological, as the emotional experience is conceptualised in terms of a substance. The underlying conceptual metaphors are: "*the body is the container for the emotion*" and "*emotions are fluids*." In both Wardrop's and Coffin's translations, the image schema, the underlying conceptual metaphors, and the concept of the "hot tear" are preserved. "*She told us nought; she shed a stream of hot tears*" (Wardrop); "*She told us nothing in response. She shed a stream of hot tears, though*" (Coffin). The difference between the translations lies in the linguistic structures: Wardrop's language is more literary, employing archaic forms characteristic of the 19th-century English. According to Schaffner's translation procedures outlined above, this translation corresponds to the first procedure, in which the conceptual metaphor is identical at the macro level in both the source and target texts.

The next ontological conceptual metaphor is:

ცრემლისა ღვარსა მოეცვა | პირი, ელვათა მკრთომელი

the English interpretation: "her face that was flashing with radiance, was soaked by the avalanche of the tear",

which conveys Nestan-Darejan's emotional state. In the poem, the metaphor of "*lightning flash*" frequently recurs and is often used to describe beauty;

however, in this instance, the “flash” indicates that Nestan is angered. In Wardrop’s translation, “a shower of tears fell on her face flashing with radiance”, the image of the stream of tears is replaced by a “shower” of tears, while the lightning flash is equivalently rendered as radiance. In Coffin’s translation, “A shower of tears bedewed her face, brilliant with radiant shine”, similar to Wardrop, both the image schema and the structure of the conceptual metaphor are preserved.

Both translations correspond to Schaffner’s fourth procedure, which involves the use of different metaphorical expressions that can be subsumed under the same conceptual metaphor. Another ontological conceptual metaphor projected through the *container* image schema is:

დაჯე წერად ჭირთა ჩემთა, | მელნად მოგცემ ცრემლთა ტბასა

the English interpretation: “sit and write about my woes, I will give you a lake of tears for ink”.

Like the previously discussed conceptual metaphors, this ontological metaphor is structurally connected to the metaphors “*emotions are fluids*” and “*the body is the container for emotions*.” In the source domain, the “lake of tears” represents a physical space, while in the target domain it is mapped onto a spiritual state or emotional background. In Wardrop’s translation, “down to write my woes! For ink I give thee a lake of tears, for pen”, the image schema, as well as the images of ink and the lake of tears, are preserved. In Coffin’s translation, “For ink, I have a lake of tears. Write of my woes, that all may learn”, syntactic modifications are employed, yet the main images, image schema, and the underlying conceptual metaphor are maintained.

According to Schaffner’s translation procedures, Wardrop’s translation corresponds to the first category, in which the images are rendered identically. Coffin’s translation corresponds to Schaffner’s second procedure, in which the metaphor is translated more explicitly, while the conceptual structure is preserved.

Changes occur in the translation of the following conceptual metaphor:

ვარდსა წყლითა ცხელითა | რწყვენ ტევრთა საგუბარითა

the English interpretation: “the rose is soaked by the hot water, from the pond of jungle forest”

The text describes the emotional state of Fridon and Avtandil; in the source domain, the concept of a rose is projected onto the image of the face in the target domain, while the “ტევრთა საგუბარი” – that is, the pool of tears, is projected onto a strong emotion that has “*flowed out of the container*.”

This metaphor is also structurally based on the conceptual metaphors “*emotions are fluids*” and it is projected through the container image schema. In Wardrop’s translation, “there the roses were sprinkled by the water of tears dammed up in the jungle”, the concept of watering the roses with tears is preserved, although the notion of warmth is lost. In Coffin’s translation, “The roses of their cheeks were sprinkled by tears in the morning light”, the concept of the roses as presented in the source text is rendered more explicitly. Notably, this explicitation occurs several times in Coffin’s translation. It is important to note that the concept of the “*pool of the eyelids*” is not preserved in the translation. Likewise, the concept of “*hot tears*” is absent, while the translator adds the concept of morning light, which is not present in the source text. Both translations correspond to Schaffner’s second translation procedure.

7. CONCLUSION

Based on our analysis of the translations of the discussed ontological conceptual metaphors, it can be concluded that the most dominant image schema is the *container* schema, in which the human body is represented as a container in which emotions accumulate and subsequently flow outward. The results from the corpus analyser of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University show that in Shota Rustaveli’s *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, there are 118 conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through the concept of “tear.” In Wardrop’s translation, this number is 104, while in Coffin’s translation, 88 conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through the concept of a “tear” are preserved.

In the translations, the image schemas are maintained at the conceptual level, although they differ in poetic, aesthetic, and emotional expressiveness. Coffin’s translation includes additions, modifications, and some losses introduced by the translator. Ontological conceptual metaphors expressing emotion through tears in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* are

projected through the *container* image schema and are structurally linked to the conceptual metaphors: “*the body is the container for emotions*,” “*emotions are fluids*,” and “*emotions are hot*.”

For the analysis of translation, we applied Schaffner’s procedures and recommendations for conceptual metaphors. In Wardrop’s translation, the most frequent strategy is the preservation of concepts and image schemas, i.e., an equivalent translation, corresponding to Schaffner’s first procedure. In Coffin’s translation, the most frequent strategy corresponds to Schaffner’s second procedure, in which the structural components of the basic conceptual schema in the source text are modified in the target text through phrases that render the metaphor more explicit.

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Abstract

This study explores the conceptual metaphor of emotion through the concept of a "tear" in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its two English translations by Wardrop and Coffin. The research is grounded in Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), focusing on the Container schema as the central image schema structuring emotion metaphors. Tears are conceptualised as the overflow of emotional intensity – representing the metaphors "The body is a container for emotion" and "Emotions are fluids." The study analyses ontological conceptual metaphors based on the Container image schema and their translations. Using a parallel corpus analysis based on BSU's digital corpus and the AntConc corpus analyser, 118 conceptual metaphors were identified in the Georgian original, 104 in Wardrop's translation, and 88 in Coffin's. While

Wardrop's translation retains conceptual and image schemas at both macro and micro levels, Coffin often expands or explicates metaphorical expressions, resulting in expressive and cultural shifts.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, translation studies, corpus linguistics, embodiment, image schema, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*