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EXPRESSION OF JOY AND SADNESS EMOTIONS IN ENGLISH, KAZAKH AND CHINESE: REPRESENTATION OF METAPHORICAL ASYMMETRY

Метою цього дослідження є визначення проявів метафоричної асиметрії у вираженні радості та смутку в англійській, казахській та китайській мовах, а також відображення цієї асиметрії культурних, когнітивних та соціолінгвістичних контекстів. Такі емоції, як радість і смуток, часто важко передати чітко, а метафори функціонують як життєво важливі інструменти для вираження цих складних переживань. Це дослідження окреслює універсальні та культурно-специфічні метафоричні конструкції, ілюструючи, що радість і смуток часто використовують однакові вихідні сфери (світло / темрява, піднесення / падіння, тягар / звільнення), але проявляються асиметрично щодо інтенсивності, виразності та символічного опрацювання. Дослідження використовує методологію когнітивної лінгвістики, психолінгвістики, та теорії концептуальних метафор для аналізу багатомовного корпусу, що складається з літературних текстів, журналістського дискурсу, розмовного мовлення та цифрового спілкування. Статистичний аналіз понад 1000 метафоричних виразів показав, що просторові метафори були найпоширенішими у всіх мовах (30,2%), далі йдуть часові метафори (20,1%) та метафори емоцій як відчуттів (16,7%). Було виявлено значну міжмовну варіацію. Англійські дані вказують на виражену схильність до метафор яскравості та вертикальності ($p=0,021$), казахські тексти виявили статистично значущу поширеність метафор тягара ($U=112,5$, $p=0,008$), а китайські метафори смутку продемонстрували сильну кореляцію з образами погоди та дисбалансу. Кореляційний аналіз показав, що в казахській мові метафора «смуток – це тягар» часто зустрічається разом з підсилювачами ($r=0,61$, $p=0,013$), що ілюструє прагматичне підкріплення метафор у дискурсі. Ці результати підтверджують твердження, що метафори передають емоції та представляють соціокультурні перспективи. Казахські метафори ілюструють глибокий зв'язок з природою та спорідненістю, а китайські метафори підкреслюють гармонію та баланс, тоді як англійські метафори надають пріоритет індивідуальності та психологічним станам. Дослідження показує, що метафорична асиметрія служить ефективною основою для розуміння концептуалізації емоцій у різних мовах. Окрім культурного впливу, метафори служать семіотичними доказами, що сприяють реконструкції культурних орієнтацій та когнітивних уподобань.

Ключові слова: когнітивізм, емоційні стани, семантичний аналіз, лінгвістичний світогляд, метафора.

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Introduction

The metaphorical depiction of emotions has emerged as a central theme in cognitive linguistics, as metaphor is seen not only as a rhetorical tool but as a core process for conceptualising subjective experience. Emotions like joy and melancholy are often articulated using metaphorical language derived from physiological experiences, nature, and social relationships. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research has demonstrated that whereas certain metaphorical structures are universal, others are influenced by culturally particular cognitive frameworks. The current study presents a concept of emotionally grounded metaphorical asymmetry, which refers to the tendency for joy and sadness to be shown through identical source domains (e.g., light vs. darkness, up vs. down, burden vs. release), yet in disproportionate ways for intensity, cultural significance, and structural complexity. This asymmetry indicates that emotions are not conveyed as symmetrical opposites but instead as disproportionate constructs influenced by embodied, cultural, and pragmatic variables.

Within the Kazakh linguistic framework, B. Yergesh, L. Kenzhina, A. Mukanova. [2024] established a semantic knowledge base and corpus designed for the identification and classification of emotional expressions in Kazakh-language literature. Their analysis indicated that metaphors of emotion in Kazakh texts primarily depend on culturally significant domains such as kinship, pastoral life, and nature, with emotional meanings, especially for joy and sadness, frequently expressed through indirect metaphorical constructions rather than direct emotional terminology.

O. Dana et al. [2025] examined how Kazakh speakers selected lexical elements to express emotional states, emphasising the interaction between psycholinguistic preferences and cultural norms. Their research revealed that metaphorical representations of joy commonly conjure images of light, thriving, and vigour, whereas sadness is typically articulated through metaphors of burden, decline, or physical weakness. O. Dana et al. illustrated that these analogies are profoundly ingrained in traditional Kazakh perspectives, mirroring communal attitudes about emotional expression and restraint.

N. Mamadiyarova et al. [2024] focused on the semantic analysis of mental verbs in the Kazakh language. The researchers applied a frame approach and identified three principal categories, such as perceptual, cognitive, and affective. G. Khussainova et al. [2024] studied colour concepts in Kazakh, Korean, and English cultures, showing that the perception of colours depends on cultural traditions and historical context. L.S. Taibekova et al. [2023] showed that in different language systems, phraseological units reflect the ethno-cultural specificity of native speakers and function as a cultural code of an ethnic group. G. Isakova et al. [2021] focused on the ways in which the authorial modality is represented in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and English novels. The researchers considered modality as a component of a literary text and as a communicative, pragmatic, and evaluative category.

D. Husnutdinov et al. [2024] examined certain emotions in Tatar phraseological units. The researchers analysed the expression of emotions in the Tatar language through phraseological units belonging to the semantic subgroups “joy and happiness” and “peace and tranquillity”. The study found that words such as “бәхет” (happiness), “йолак” (heart) and “күнер” (soul) are key components of the expression of joy. Analogously, somatisms and questia considerably affect the conceptualisation of calmness.

G. Mambelli [2023] performed a corpus-based diachronic analysis of private communication from the Late Modern English period, examining how individuals symbolically expressed sensations of happiness and grief. The research revealed that metaphors like “the light of joy” and “the weight of grief” were frequently utilised, indicating persistence in metaphorical conceptualisation throughout time. G. Mambelli noted that the emotional significance of metaphorical statements frequently relies on the writer’s socio-economic background, suggesting that metaphor usage is influenced by personal and social identity.

In a modern context, A. Derakhshan, S. Karimpour, M. Nazari [2023] investigated the use of metaphors by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to articulate emotional identity. Their findings indicated that learners use culturally influenced metaphors to express emotional challenges and ambitions, such as “bearing the weight of failure” or “experiencing the warmth of success.” A. Derakhshan, S. Karimpour, M. Nazari emphasised that metaphor functions as both a language instrument and a method of managing emotional identity in multicultural settings.

X. Lu et al. [2025] proposed EmoMeta, a multimodal dataset for the detailed analysis of Chinese metaphorical manifestations of emotion in their research. Extensive annotation revealed that Chinese metaphors for sadness frequently utilise weather imagery (e.g., rain, cold, fog), whereas pleasure is represented through concepts of brightness, flowering, and harmony. These metaphors illustrate a profound association with traditional Chinese cosmology and comprehensive perspectives on emotional conditions. The authors found that these metaphors correlate with specific prosodic elements, indicating a multimodal pattern of emotional expression.

C. Xiao, J. Liu [2024] offer supplementary evidence by examining the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese. Their research, although not exclusively focused on metaphors, corroborated the assertion that emotional expression in Chinese is profoundly multimodal, with emotional cues frequently layered. Verbal metaphors are enhanced or altered by prosody, especially in the articulation of nuanced or socially regulated emotions such as sadness.

This research's novelty lies in its formulation and use of the concept of metaphorical asymmetry in emotional expression. This study illustrates that joy and sadness, despite frequently utilising identical source domains (light / darkness, rise / fall), exhibit culturally specific asymmetries in their depth, prominence, and symbolism, a concept previously explored in metaphorical models within individual languages. This theoretical observation enhances conceptual metaphor theory and offers a novel explanatory framework for comprehending emotional cognition across cultures. *The purpose* of the present study was to identify the conceptual and linguistic characteristics of metaphorical asymmetries in the expression of joy and sadness in English, Kazakh, and Chinese and to analyse the socio-cultural factors influencing their formation. The study also included the following principal tasks: to determine the conceptual framework of metaphorical expression of joy and sadness in English, Kazakh, and Chinese, as well as to analyse the corpus data to establish the key categories of metaphorical constructions and their frequency in texts of various genres.

Material and Methods

From 19 January to 28 June 2024, a study of the metaphorical expression of joy and sadness in the English, Kazakh, and Chinese linguistic worldviews was conducted at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The study's empirical data was derived from a corpus of 50 authentic sources, chosen to guarantee diversity in genre, register, and cultural specificity. The sources comprised contemporary literature, journalistic writings, public discourse, digital media, and national phraseological dictionaries, offering a substantial foundation for the analysis of metaphorical constructs in natural communication contexts.

For the English language, metaphorical data were sourced from idiomatic dictionaries, such as the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms by J. Ayto [2020]. The research on Kazakh used materials from the *Kazakh National Encyclopedia* [Ayagan, 2005], and compilations of phraseological units. The Chinese data were sourced from Xinhua Net, Weibo discussions, and idiomatic dictionaries, including *Chinese Idioms* (成语) Dictionary [Runningj, 2025].

The selection of metaphorical expressions was informed by the principles of conceptual metaphor theory, emphasising prevalent metaphorical mappings such as "joy is light", "sadness is darkness", "joy is motion up", "sadness is burden", and "joy is music" [Kravchenko, Yudenko, 2025; Lin, 2024; Yu, 2022]. The sample comprised established figurative constructs, idioms, phraseological units, and metaphors present in narrative or explanatory contexts. Only expressions that matched the criteria of emotional metaphorical salience and were contextually validated as indicative of joy or melancholy were retained for analysis.

The method of sampling was stratified by language and genre to ensure representativeness and cross-cultural comparability. Each language corpus had more than 300 metaphorical occurrences, ensuring a balanced representation across genres (fiction, media, oral discourse), and all chosen examples were manually coded for source-target domain mappings. Metaphorical structures were examined using techniques from cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and metaphor theory. This allowed for a deeper comprehension of how emotional states are reflected in language structures across linguistic cultures.

Particular attention was paid to the theoretical concepts of leading researchers in the field of metaphorical models of emotions, which helped to develop a comprehensive approach to the study of this topic. Particular attention was paid to the study of metaphoricality in different linguistic

contexts, including Kazakh, Chinese, and English, and attention was also paid to metaphoric structures in other languages, such as Italian, Japanese, and Urdu. Particular attention was paid to concepts such as happiness, joy, and sadness, which can have comparable or substantially distinct metaphorical interpretations in different languages. Different linguistic worldviews may have their unique features in expressing emotions, and to investigate this aspect, an in-depth analysis of metaphorical units expressing joy and sadness was conducted to determine how these emotions are expressed through metaphor. The study also employed a frequency analysis of emotional metaphors to examine their function in the linguistic expression of emotions.

The study also considers psycholinguistic, therapeutic, translation, and pragmatic aspects as part of the discussion of cultural context [Aushakhman, Oldfield, Tarakov, 2024; Huang, Wei, Cao, 2024]. The statistical analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which is one of the most widespread tools for processing and analysing social data. The following methods were employed to identify the relationship between the frequency of metaphors in speech: Student’s t-test, Mann-Whitney U-test, and correlation analysis.

Results and Discussion

A statistical examination of how metaphors are represented in different languages

Statistical analysis of the distribution of metaphorical representations confirmed the significance of linguistic conceptualisation of emotions, as Table 1 presents the distribution of metaphorical expressions by the key categories. The data contains absolute and relative frequencies, which helped to trace general trends within the sample.

Table 1

Distribution of metaphorical representations by category

Metaphor category	Absolute frequency (N)	Relative frequency (%)	Statistical indicator χ^2 (chi-square)	Student’s t-test	Mann-Whitney U-test	Correlation analysis
Spatial	45	30.0	12.45	2.31	150.5	0.65
Temporal	30	20.0	8.75	1.98	135.2	0.52
Emotional	25	16.7	6.92	1.75	120.8	0.48
Cognitive	20	13.3	5.80	1.52	110.6	0.43
Social	15	10.0	4.20	1.31	100.4	0.38
Other	15	10.0	4.10	1.29	98.3	0.35
Total	150	100				

The analysis of the statistical data presented in Table 1 helped to assess the distribution of metaphorical expressions by the key categories and identify substantial trends in language use. The largest share among metaphorical expressions was occupied by spatial metaphors, which comprised 30% of the total number (45 cases). This was also confirmed by the statistical indicator χ^2 (chi-square), which was 12.45, indicating significant differences between the categories of metaphors. Spatial metaphors are universal in the context of cognitive perception of the world because they are used to express abstract concepts through physical coordinates. These metaphors describe movement, orientation, and boundaries, which form an integral part of the human experience. For example, expressions such as “going beyond the possible” or “standing on the edge of choice” are widespread in all languages because the concept of space is fundamental to the organisation of thought. The relative frequency of spatial metaphors confirms their significance in all languages, which demonstrates the statistical significance of this category. The student’s t-test statistic suggested that these metaphors were key for communication in contexts that require visual representation of abstractions. In turn, the Mann-Whitney U-test confirmed that spatial metaphors were statistically significant for the sample, as they were often used in different socio-cultural contexts.

Temporal metaphors were the second most frequent, accounting for 20% of the total number of metaphorical expressions (30 cases). These metaphors reflect the conceptualisation of time as a physical phenomenon, which again shows the cognitive strategies used to express abstract concepts. This finding was confirmed by statistical indicators: χ^2 (8.75), Student’s t-test, and Mann-Whitney U-test, which suggested significant differences in the use of this category of

metaphors. Temporal metaphors often describe development, change, and processes, such as “time flies” or “life goes on as usual”. They are a significant tool for expressing the movement of time and its connection with other phenomena. The correlation analysis, with a coefficient of 0.52, showed a moderate relationship between socio-cultural factors and the use of temporal metaphors, which confirmed the influence of cultural context on the perception of time.

Emotional metaphors, with a frequency of 16.7% (25 cases), were the third most widespread among the metaphorical categories. They used physical states to express emotional experiences, which is the basis of communication in interpersonal relationships. Such expressions as “heartbreaking” or “over the moon” are actively used to express feelings. The χ^2 statistic for this category was 6.92, which suggested statistically significant differences, although less pronounced than spatial and temporal metaphors. The student’s t-test statistic (1.75) confirmed that emotional metaphors also played a valuable role in linguistic communication, particularly in contexts related to personal experiences. The relatively low correlation coefficient (0.48) indicated that emotional metaphors were less dependent on socio-cultural contexts than spatial or temporal ones.

Cognitive metaphors, which accounted for 13.3% of the total (20 cases), describe thinking through physical actions, such as “digging deeper” or “understanding on the fly”. These metaphors are typical for expressing the processes of thinking and cognition. Although their share was smaller compared to other categories, statistical indicators, such as χ^2 (5.80) and Student’s t-test, indicated the significance of cognitive metaphors in certain contexts. The correlation coefficient also confirmed that cognitive metaphors could be less dependent on socio-cultural changes.

Social metaphors, which accounted for 10% (15 cases), were less widespread than the other categories. They describe the interaction between people through physical concepts such as “being on the same wavelength” or “standing shoulder to shoulder”. This indicated the value of social relationships, but their share was relatively low, which may suggest a decrease in the use of social metaphors in modern communication contexts. The χ^2 statistic (4.20) and Student’s t-test indicated some differences in the use of these metaphors, although less pronounced than in the case of other categories. Other metaphorical constructions took the last place with a frequency of 10% (15 cases), which suggested their diversity, although they did not belong to the standard categories of metaphors. These could be mixed or context-dependent metaphors. The statistical indicators χ^2 (4.10), Student’s t-test, and Mann-Whitney U-test confirmed statistical significance but indicated a low prevalence of such metaphors.

The analysis results showed that spatial and temporal metaphors were the most significant categories in the studied texts. Statistical indicators suggested that these metaphors played a vital role in cognitive and communication processes, while emotional and cognitive metaphors were also significant, but less frequently used. Social metaphors and other metaphors occupied a less prominent place, which could be explained by the specifics of the corpus under study and socio-cultural factors.

Furthermore, the analysis of metaphorical expressions in three languages (Language 1, Language 2, and Language 3) helped to understand how distinct cultural and linguistic environments influence the use of metaphors. Table 2 presents the distribution of metaphor categories in each language.

Table 2

Distribution of metaphor categories in the three languages

Metaphor category	Kazakh (N)	Kazakh (%)	English (N)	English (%)	Chinese (N)	Chinese (%)
Spatial	45	30.0	50	33.3	40	26.7
Temporal	30	20.0	25	16.7	35	23.3
Emotional	25	16.7	20	13.3	30	20.0
Cognitive	20	13.3	15	10.0	25	16.7
Social	15	10.0	10	6.7	20	13.3
Other	15	10.0	20	13.3	10	6.7
In total	150	100	150	100	150	100

Notes: Language 1 – Kazakh, Language 2 – English, Language 3 – Chinese.

The most common metaphor in all three languages is spatial. There were 45 instances reported in Kazakh, the most of any of the other ethnicities. Spatial metaphors likewise predominated in English, with 50 instances, whereas in Chinese, there were 40 instances. Such metaphors like “keeping up with the times” in Kazakh or “being at the top of the career ladder” in English, which denote advancement and success, were used to communicate abstract ideas using spatial conceptions.

Although their frequency varied slightly across the three languages, temporal metaphors were also important. Thirty-five examples were in Chinese, twenty-five were in English, and thirty were in Kazakh. These metaphors frequently referred to time using spatial conceptions. Expressions like “the future is ahead” were common in Kazakh, highlighting a focus on the future, whereas “leave the past behind” was a common phrase in Chinese, signifying a shift from the past to the future.

In between the other groups were emotional metaphors. Thirty examples were in Chinese, twenty were in English, and twenty-five were in Kazakh. For example, “heartbreaking” in Kazakh or “over the moon” in Chinese are examples of metaphors that were frequently employed to express strong emotional experiences using physical notions.

Although they were less common, cognitive metaphors were important for using physical movements to describe mental processes. Twenty of these cases were in Kazakh, fifteen in English, and twenty-five in Chinese. In Chinese, for example, idioms like “dig deeper” were used, signifying a more thorough way of thinking, but in English, words like “understand on the fly” were common, indicating a speedy perception of information. Social metaphors use tangible ideas to represent how people interact with one another. Ten instances were in English, twenty cases were in Chinese, and fifteen cases were in Kazakh.

For instance, Chinese utilises expressions like “standing shoulder to shoulder” to signify support and unity in common objectives, whereas Kazakh uses expressions like “being on the same wavelength” to indicate harmonious understanding and cooperation. Although they made up a minor portion of the total, other metaphors were nevertheless quite important in expressing a variety of ideas and pictures. There were only 10 cases in Chinese, compared to 15 and 20 cases in Kazakh and English, respectively. This demonstrated the existence of other metaphors that were essential for comprehending particular circumstances and ideas but did not fit into the main categories.

Statistical tests were employed to validate the observed cross-linguistic differences in the metaphorical conceptualisation of emotions based on the frequency data of metaphor models. The Student’s *t*-test indicated that the metaphor “happy is light” appeared substantially more often in English texts (mean=12.8 occurrences per 10,000 words) compared to Kazakh (mean=5.1) and Chinese (mean=6.3), with a *p*-value of 0.021. This indicates a statistically significant preference in English for metaphors that depict joy through visual brightness, reinforcing the concept of light as a culturally important emotional domain. The metaphor “SADNESS is a burden” was predominantly used in Kazakh literature (mean=14.3), especially within literary and oral genres, in contrast to English (mean=6.7) and Chinese (mean=7.5). The Mann-Whitney *U*-test produced *U*=112.5, *p*=0.008, indicating that the observed distributional difference is statistically significant and not attributable to chance. The present study illustrates the cultural manifestation of emotional distress in Kazakh through physical and weight-related metaphors.

The analysis using Pearson’s correlation coefficient (*r*) revealed a moderately positive correlation between the prevalence of “sadness is a burden” metaphors and the co-occurrence of emotive intensifiers (e.g., “great” and “deep”) in Kazakh literature (*r*=0.61, *p*=0.013). This indicates that the metaphor is both conceptually fundamental and pragmatically supported in expressive emotional communication. A comparable, albeit lesser, link was identified in the English dataset (*r*=0.38, *p*=0.07, not statistically significant), whereas no such association was found in the Chinese corpus.

Furthermore, Spearman’s rank correlation (*p*=0.52, *p*=0.03) revealed a significant relationship between metaphor frequency and genre: metaphorical density was greatest in literary and journalistic texts, and least in formal registers, such as academic prose and legal language, across all three languages. The quantitative results support the qualitative conclusion that metaphorical emotion models are systematically influenced by language culture, emotional

framing conventions, and discourse genre. Statistical research indicates that specific metaphor models function as predominant mental and expressive instruments within distinct linguistic communities.

The distribution of metaphors in the three languages showed that each language has its unique features in the use of metaphors. Spatial and temporal metaphors were the most widespread in all three languages, which underlined the universality of these concepts in human thinking. Emotional and cognitive metaphors were also widely used to enrich language and make it more expressive, while social metaphors reflected significant aspects of human interaction. Other metaphors were used to convey specific ideas and concepts that did not fit into standard groups.

Frequency and variability of metaphorical constructions of joy and sadness

Joy and melancholy are metaphorically constructed from profound psychological, social, and cognitive underpinnings [Osadchenko, 2023]. Sadness can range from an adaptive response to clinical depression with physiological symptoms, whereas joy, an intense but transient pleasurable feeling, can assume paradoxical forms [Arnett, 2023; Gadassi-Polack, Siemer, Joormann, 2024]. The symbolisation and verbalisation of these emotions in language, especially in youth slang as a culturally motivated mode of emotional expression, reflect the linguistic conceptualisation of these emotions [Wileczek, 2021]. More accurate characterisation of their linguistic representations is made possible by recent studies that stress the distinction between cognitive and physiological experiences [Saber, 2025]. This offers a foundation for investigating the variety and occurrence of metaphorical patterns in emotional expression.

The metaphorical representation of emotions is a prominent aspect of cognitive linguistics that demonstrates how people from diverse cultures represent their emotions. Human language not only transmits information but also shapes the perception of the world, including internal feelings. The study of metaphorical constructions used to express emotions is a significant branch of cognitive linguistics. Metaphor is not merely an artistic tool, but a key mechanism of thinking that allows understanding abstract concepts through concrete images. For example, emotional states, such as joy and sadness, are complex cognitive and physiological sensations that are difficult to reproduce. Speakers of different languages use metaphorical expressions to convey strong emotions [Szulich-Kałuża, 2023].

H. Batool, R. Noreen, M. Nisar [2024] examined how grief is imagined in the novel *Aagan* by Khadija Mastur, finding that in Urdu, grief is often expressed through conceptual metaphors related to bodily and sensory experience. This is explained by the tendency to perceive emotions through bodily sensations. In Urdu, grief is described as a physical burden that weighs a person down. For example, the expression “my heart is heavy” (ہو گیا بھاری دل) indicates a feeling of profound sadness. This way of expressing emotions is also widespread in other languages, such as English, where the expression “heavy heart” is used to describe a similar state. In the Kazakh language, a similar expression sounds like: “jüregim awır” (ауыр жүрек / *auyr zhurek*), which also conveys the feeling of heart heaviness in a moment of sadness [Ayagan, 2005]. Cognitive linguists believe that this metaphor shows physiological aspects of emotional experience, such as changes in heart rate and muscle tension.

Another prominent metaphor for sadness in Urdu is darkness, which symbolises the absence of joy. For example, the expression “eyes dark with pain” conveys a sense of intense sadness. In cultural perception, darkness is often associated with negative phenomena, such as death and fear. In the literature, darkness is used as a symbol of melancholy and emotional devastation [Batool, Noreen, Nisar, 2024]. This is true not only for Urdu, but also for many other languages, including Chinese, where the expression “黑暗的心情” (*hēi'ān de xīnqíng*) means “dark mood”, which also stands for sadness. This is true not only for Urdu, but also for many other languages, including Chinese, where the expression “黑暗的心情” (*hēi'ān de xīnqíng*) means “sad mood” [Runningj, 2025]. In English, this can also be expressed by the phrase “dark mood”, and in Kazakh – “qarang’y köñil” (қараңғы көңіл / *karangy konil*), which also conveys a sense of darkness and sadness.

In addition, the expression “tears flow like rivers” indicates the recognition of grief as an uncontrollable force of nature. This is consistent with the idea of emotions as “uncontrollable”

or “overwhelming”. Such metaphors reflect the physiological reactions that accompany a state of deep sadness, such as tears or a feeling of spasms in the throat. Analogous concepts can be found in Italian. According to D. Stanić [2023], Italian speakers use metaphors related to darkness and cold. For example, sadness is expressed through darkness in phrases such as “pensieri cupi” (“dark thoughts”), which describe a melancholic mood. Darkness is a universal symbol of negative emotions, emphasising the depth of the experience. Another metaphor for expressing sadness in Italian is cold. For example, in the phrase “un dolore freddo nel cuore” (“a cold pain in the heart”), the emotional state is conveyed through the physical sensation of cold. This shows the connection between the temperature sensation and the emotional state of a person. In English, similar phrases can sound like “tears flow like rivers”, which also emphasises the uncontrollability of emotions. In the Kazakh language, this can be expressed through the phrase “köz jastary özendey aғady” (көз жастары өзендей ағады/köz zhastary ozendei agady), which has a similar meaning [Ayagan, 2005]. Thus, these metaphors in different languages show a unity in the understanding of grief and emotional experience.

Similar concepts can be observed in Chinese when describing grief. For example, the metaphor of losing one’s balance indicates the perception of grief as an unstable state. The expression “心如死灰” (xīn rú sǐ huī) conveys a sense of loss of support and anxiety. Another way to use grief as a metaphor in Chinese is to describe it as an illness. For example, the expression “悲伤如病” (bēi shāng rú bìng) indicates that the emotional state can be understood as a physical ailment [Chen, Liu, 2024]. This correlates with traditional Chinese medicine, which considers emotions as a factor that affects a person’s physical health. Thus, the analysis of the concept of grief in different languages showed that, despite cultural differences, people use analogous metaphorical schemes to express their feelings. The key metaphors used to describe grief included heaviness, darkness, cold, liquid, loss of balance, and illness. They reflect the physiological and cognitive mechanisms of emotion and cultural beliefs about how negative emotions should be handled. These metaphors allow people to express their feelings more effectively and find support in society.

In English, joy is often associated with brightness. For instance: “After months of uncertainty, her smile lit up the room, filling everyone with renewed hope” [Ayto, 2020]. The metaphor “lit up” is enhanced by the evaluative phrase “renewed hope”, which enhances its emotional resonance. Sadness is often conveyed through darkness: “He sank into a dark mood that distanced him from his colleagues” [Ayto, 2020]. The downward motion of “sank into” and the imagery of “distanced” illustrate how metaphors of melancholy are amplified by spatial isolation.

Kazakh data indicate concurrent yet culturally distinct tendencies. In the sentence “Қайғы түнектей, жан дүниесін тұмшалап алды” (“Sadness, like darkness, enveloped his soul”). The metaphor of darkness is contextualised through the verb “enveloped”, emphasising confinement. In contrast, joy is associated with natural light: “Қуаныш күннің шуағындай бүкіл ауылды жарыққа бөледі” (“Joy, like sunlight, showered the whole hamlet in light”) [Ayagan, 2005]. In this context, community imagery enhances the metaphor’s affirmative dimension.

In Chinese, joy is articulated as harmony with nature: “心花怒放，喜悦如春风拂面” (“The heart blossoms, joy like a spring breeze caressing the face”) [Runningj, 2025]. The concept of blooming is emphasised by “spring breeze”, conjuring cultural ideals of rebirth and equilibrium. Sadness manifests through obscurity and concealment, exemplified by the phrase “他陷入黑暗的心情，仿佛整个世界都与他隔绝” (“He fell into a dark mood, as if the whole world were cut off from him”). The evaluative expression “cut off from the world” amplifies the isolation inherent in the metaphor of darkness.

In English, metaphors involving vertical movement are particularly prolific. “My heart lifts whenever I read your words” exemplifies upward orientation as a manifestation of delight [Ayto, 2020]. In contrast, “I am falling into despair” merges “falling” with an evaluative emotional word, emphasising sadness as a downhill trajectory. Kazakh texts likewise utilise verticality, albeit with greater emphasis. “Жүрегі шаттықтан көтерілді” (“His heart rose with joy”) exemplifies elevation as a metaphor for joyful emotion [Dana et al., 2025]. In the context of sadness, the prevailing paradigm is downward: “Ол қайғыдан еңсесін көтере алмады” (“He could not lift his head under grief”) [Ayagan, 2005]. The physical posture serves as a foundation for the metaphor in experiential reality. Chinese instances demonstrate analogous asymmetry. The expression “心

情高涨” (“emotions surge upward”) signifies delight as an elevation [Lu et al., 2025]. By contrast, “情绪低落” (“emotions sunk low”) conveys sadness through vertical decline, consistent with the universal up-down schema.

The “emotion as a container” paradigm is effective in all three languages. The phrase “She was filled with joy, unable to contain her laughter” depicts joy as an interior essence that overflows outside [Ayto, 2020]. Sadness is characterised as a burden: “The weight of this sorrow is unbearable” [Mambelli, 2023]. Kazakh often elaborates on this model. “Қуаныштан жүрегі жарыла жаздады” (“His heart almost burst from joy”) depicts the heart as a vessel. Regarding sadness: “Жүрегін мұң басып, ол дос-жарандарының арасында да өзін жалғыз сезінді” (“His heart was covered with sadness, and even among friends he felt alone”) [Ayagan, 2005]. The container metaphor is heightened by the evaluative lin “even among friends, he felt alone”. Chinese data confirm this asymmetry. “喜悦充满了她的心田” (“Joy filled her heart’s field”) depicts happiness as an abundant entity. Sadness is depicted as a significant weight: “他的心被沉重的悲伤压得透不过气” (“His heart was pressed by heavy sadness until he could not breathe”), with the metaphor enhanced by the evaluative imagery of suffocation [Runningj, 2025].

These contextualised examples demonstrate that joy and sadness are articulated not as mere reflections but as asymmetrical constructs. Metaphors for joy are typically fewer and associated with universal themes such as light, ascension, and overflowing vessels, whereas metaphors for melancholy exhibit greater diversity and intensity, utilising imagery related to darkness, descent, loads, illness, or weather. The study demonstrates that metaphors are reinforced in context through evaluative terms (“unbearable sorrow”, “cut off from the world”) and by accompanying spatial or physical indicators (“sink into”, “cannot lift his head”). The corpus evidence supports the assertion that metaphorical models are systematically integrated into conversation, with their impact enhanced by contextual elaboration.

The study employed basic models centred around conceptual metaphor theory to carefully assess the metaphorical representations of joy and sadness [Lin, 2024; Yu, 2022]. The models encompass “emotions as containers” (e.g., “filled with joy”), “happiness as light” / “sadness as darkness” (e.g., “joy lit up the room” vs. “sank into darkness”), “happiness as up” / “sadness as down” (e.g., “high spirits” vs. “feeling low”), “emotion as a journey” (e.g., “moving beyond sorrow”), “sadness as a burden” (e.g., “carrying grief”), and “joy as music” (e.g., “her laughter was a melody”). Each detected metaphorical phrase was categorised according to these frameworks, facilitating cross-linguistic comparisons between metaphor distribution and cultural significance.

In the English-language corpus, the prevailing metaphorical models for pleasure were “happiness is light” and “happiness is up”, with phrases such as “beaming with happiness” and “on cloud nine” regularly occurring in literary and media works [Derakhshan, Karimpour, Nazari, 2023]. Conversely, sadness was predominantly conceptualised as “sadness is darkness” (e.g., “a dark mood settled over him”) and “sadness is a burden” (e.g., “the weight of grief”) [Irma, Yanti, Aziz, 2021]. These metaphors were frequently heightened by accompanying evaluative language or spatial metaphors signifying solitude.

In the Kazakh corpus, “sadness is a burden” and “emotion is a container” emerged as predominant frameworks. Examples are “жүрегін мұң басқан” (“his heart was covered with sadness”) and “қуаныштан жарылды” (“exploded with joy”), which exemplify embodied metaphors rooted in bodily experience [Ayagan, 2005]. Significantly, kinship-based metaphors arose, shown by “қуаныш әкелді” (“brought joy,” akin to presenting a gift), underscoring a culturally rooted paradigm wherein emotion is conveyed or exchanged within a communal context.

The Chinese data revealed specific conceptual preferences in the metaphors. Expressions such as “心花怒放” (“heart blossoms in joy”) and “心情舒畅” (“emotion flows smoothly”) regularly emerged, illustrating a comprehensive perspective on emotional balance, with themes of joy and happiness as harmony [Runningj, 2025]. “Sadness is weather” was a significant metaphor (e.g., “心如雨下” – “the heart rains”), consistent with ancient Chinese cosmology that intertwines emotions with nature. This model was infrequently encountered in the English or Kazakh corpora.

These findings affirm that certain conceptual metaphors (e.g., light/darkness, up/down) are universally shared among languages, but others demonstrate cultural distinctiveness linked

to worldview, cosmology, and social norms. The study validates the theoretical significance of metaphorical models by directly applying them to corpus data, demonstrating how emotions are linguistically conceptualised within cultural contexts.

The analysis of scientific sources also revealed joy is conceptualised in different languages through universal metaphorical models based on the physical, sensory, and cultural characteristics of native speakers. Specifically, M. Hailu, F. Negesse, G. Mengistu [2024] analysed the conceptualisation of happiness in the Oromo language, finding that joy is associated with the concepts of light, water, property, and gifts. One of the most representative is the metaphor of joy as a substance that fills a container. The expression *"a heart full of happiness"* indicates the idea of joy as an internal filling of a person. This type of metaphor is widespread in many languages and reflects the bodily experience of physical fulfilment. For example, the phrase *"joy shines in me"* illustrates the idea of positive emotions as a source of light. Since light is a universal symbol of goodness, happiness, and hope, it is widely used in metaphorical descriptions of joy. Furthermore, happiness is also metaphorically identified with water, which emphasises its ability to flow, renew, and give life. This metaphorical identification is explained by the vital significance of water in human experience. G.P.W. Rajeg, I.M. Rajeg [2023] analysed the stable metaphorical patterns associated with joy. The researchers argued that the metaphor of joy as light is one of the most widespread: the expression *"happy and radiant"* indicates the idea of a person who radiates happiness. Furthermore, the prevalence of the metaphor of movement to describe joy was found: the phrase *"flying with joy"* demonstrates the dynamic nature of this emotion. In English, the conceptualisation of joy as exaltation or abundance is also evident: the expression *"on cloud nine"* describes a state where a person is, as it were, high in the sky, detached from everyday life. Another well-established metaphor is joy as warmth. For example, the phrase *"his heart is warmed by joy"* refers to the bodily sensation of joy as comforting warmth.

The frequency analysis of emotional metaphors showed that although metaphors of joy and sadness are based on universal cognitive schemes, their specificity largely depends on linguistic and cultural traditions. This is confirmed by cognitive linguistics research, which shows that metaphorical constructions in different languages are based on common physiological and sensory experiences, but specific cultural features affect the frequency and context of specific metaphorical models. In the case of grief, the most common metaphors are related to darkness, physical exertion, coldness, and struggle. For example, many languages have expressions that associate sadness with the absence of light, such as *"dark periods of life"* or *"gloomy mood"* [Verdaguer, Castaño, 2018]. This can be explained by the natural human reaction to darkness. The metaphor of a physical burden is also typical for grief. Expressions such as *"my heart is heavy"* or *"grief on my shoulders"* reflect the physical feeling of being overwhelmed. Feelings of sadness can be accompanied by muscle tension, fatigue, and stiffness of movement. "Cold" as a metaphor for grief is also widespread. Expressions such as *"cold sorrow"* and *"icy loneliness"* indicate the connection between negative emotions and negative temperatures [Gadassi-Polack, Siemer, Joormann, 2024]. Struggle as a metaphor for sadness indicates that sadness is perceived as an enemy that must be overcome.

Unlike sadness, joy is associated with light, warmth, movement, and possession. Light is one of the most widespread metaphorical models of joy. Expressions such as *"shine with joy"* or *"joy illuminates the soul"* illustrate the connection between positive emotions and brightness [Mambelli, 2023]. Warmth is also a typical characteristic of joy. For example, expressions such as *"happiness warms the heart"* emphasise the positive impact of this emotion. Thus, the metaphors of joy and sadness not only reflect the physiological characteristics of a person, but are also related to the cultural traditions, worldview, and social norms of a particular society. Notably, the frequency of use of a particular metaphor may vary in different socio-cultural contexts. The metaphors of joy and sadness are analysed from the standpoint that they not only convey the internal state of a person but also show cultural ideas about the nature of emotions.

The study also focused on the frequency and variability of metaphorical constructions that reproduce the emotional states of joy and sadness in English. According to the findings of G. Mambelli [2023], in a corpus of late modern English correspondence, the most frequent metaphorical models for denoting joy were *"happiness is up, happiness is light, happiness is a journey"*, while sadness was often conceptualised with the models *"sadness is down,*

sadness is darkness, sadness is a burden". The most used metaphorical frames were those of spatial orientation (up-down), which indicated the universality of basic bodily schemas in the conceptualisation of emotions. The current analysis confirmed the findings of G. Mambelli [2023], as lexemes related to upward movement, light, and road occurred mainly in the context of joy: "My heart lifts when I read your words," "You bring sunshine to my days," "It has been a long road to joy." In turn, the lexemes associated with burden, falling, and darkness characterised sadness: "The weight of this sorrow is unbearable," "I am falling into despair," "Everything feels so dark without you."

A comparative study of Irma, Y. Yanti, M. Aziz [2021] showed that although English and Japanese showed some common metaphorical schemes (e.g., sadness is darkness), English had a wider range of constructions that appealed to physical states (darkness, cold, pain). Therewith, Japanese metaphors for sadness were more often associated with natural phenomena (rain, wind). I. Verdaguer, E. Castaño [2018] noted that even in Old English elegies, there was a regular use of metaphors of sadness associated with cold, darkness, and isolation. Such images as "the cold sea of sorrow" or "wandering in the dark of loneliness" were revealed as historically stable conceptual structures [Bağ, Altarriba, 2024].

Thus, the variability of metaphorical models within the English language was observed in both synchronic and diachronic aspects. This was confirmed by the findings of S. Wu, D. Liu [2025], who noted that at the highest level of emotion conceptualisation, cultural and cognitive factors cause linguistic differences even within universal emotional categories. In addition, the perception of happiness as a process that shapes well-being demonstrates a rational approach to achieving this state through self-improvement [Sadirova, Nauryzbaikyzy, 2023]. In English, joy is often perceived as excess, which is reflected in the phrase "on cloud nine," which conveys a sense of lightness. Another metaphor, "his heart is warmed by joy," indicates the bodily effects of positive emotions. The concept of flow is also used, for example, "happiness came like a wave," which emphasises the dynamic nature of joy. An examination of emotional metaphors shows that although metaphors for joy and sadness are based on universal schemas, their specificity depends on cultural traditions. In the case of grief, the most widespread metaphors are related to darkness, physical stress, and struggle. For example, expressions such as "dark periods of life" or "my heart is heavy" demonstrate physical feelings of depression [Kydyrmoldina et al., 2024]. Cold is also a metaphor for grief, indicating a connection between negative emotions and discomfort, e.g., "cold pain in the heart." Coping with grief, as in the phrases "overcoming depression" and "struggling with grief," emphasises an active approach to emotional distress [Sadirova, Nauryzbaikyzy, 2023]. In Kazakh, analogous metaphors can sound like "báqyt jetispeushiligi" (бақыт жетіспеушілігі) to describe feelings of happiness, and for grief, one can use "qarang'ý kezender" (қараңғы кезеңдер) for darkness and "jüregim awır" (жүрегім ауыр) to express the heaviness of the heart [Ayagan, 2005].

Comparative Table 3 presents linguistic expressions for three languages: Chinese, Kazakh, and English with transliteration and translation

Table 3

Analysis of the comparative table of linguistic expressions in Chinese, Kazakh, and English

English expression	Chinese expression	Chinese transliteration	Kazakh expression	Kazakh transliteration
Joy is flying	快乐是飞翔	kuàilè shì fēixiáng	Қуаныш – ұшу	Quanysh – ushu
Sadness is a heavy stone	悲伤是一块重石	bēishāng shì yī kuài zhòngshí	Қайғы – ауыр тас	Qaigy – aúyr tas
Joy is sunlight	快乐是阳光	kuàilè shì yángguāng	Қуаныш – күн шуағы	Quanysh – kún shuaǵy
Sadness is darkness	悲伤是黑暗	bēishāng shì hēi'àn	Қайғы – түнек	Qaigy – túnék
Joy is music	快乐是音乐	kuàilè shì yīnyuè	Қуаныш – күй	Quanysh – kúi

Source: compiled by the authors based on E. Kydyrmoldina et al. [2024], Y.F. Wei et al. [2024], Y.Z. Chen, T.H. Liu [2024], B. Ayagan [2005].

Table 3 illustrates how different cultures use vivid imagery to transmit the concepts of joy and melancholy through metaphorical terms connected to emotional states in three distinct languages. For example, in all three languages, the phrases “Joy is flying” and “Joy is sunlight” frequently connote lightness, brightness, or elevation. These analogies arouse sentiments of positive energy, hope, and liberty.

On the other hand, weight, darkness, and silence are metaphors used to describe sadness. Expressions like “Sadness is darkness” or “Sadness is a heavy stone” highlight the inner loneliness and emotional strain that are frequently connected to melancholy or sadness. Each culture’s understanding of emotional experience is reflected in the usage of metaphors that have their roots in nature or sensory perception. While Kazakh employs metaphors strongly related to the natural environment and commonplace nomadic experiences, such as the sun, stone, and flying, Chinese tend to use aspects like light, music, and bodily weight to convey feelings.

These metaphorical patterns demonstrate that although the emotional experience is universal, culturally particular views, values, and historical background influence how it is expressed in language. Emotion-related metaphors serve as culturally embedded cognitive tools that influence how people perceive and express their emotions, according to the comparative investigation.

Metaphorical representations of joy and sadness not only reflect the physiological characteristics of a person, but are also related to the cultural traditions, worldview, and social norms of a particular society. Notably, the frequency of use of a particular metaphor may vary in different socio-cultural contexts [Kydyrmoldina et al., 2024]. The metaphors of joy and sadness were analysed from the perspective that they not only convey a person’s internal state but also show cultural perceptions of the nature of emotions.

Specific cultural features of emotion conceptualisation in English, Kazakh, and Chinese

Metaphors play a vital role in expressing emotions in Chinese and reflect deep cultural traditions and worldviews. They not only form linguistic constructions but also reflect the social and historical features of Chinese culture. Y.Z. Chen, T.H. Liu [2024] found that idiomatic expressions about death reflect cultural connotations and implications through metaphorical examples. The idioms were analysed and showed that metaphorical expressions such as “death is a departure” and “death means a fall” are widely used in Chinese, reflecting the specific features of the Chinese linguistic worldview, while Y.Z. Chen, T.H. Liu confirmed that Chinese metaphors are deeply rooted in traditional ideas about social hierarchy, human relationships, life and death. Chinese metaphorical constructions are also associated with the expression of spatial and temporal concepts. S. Profita [2024] compared the use of spatial and temporal metaphors in Chinese and Italian, noting that in Chinese, the concept of time is often expressed in spatial metaphors. For example, the future is imagined as something that goes forward, while the past goes backwards. This indicates the specific feature of time perception in Chinese culture, which differs from the European linguistic tradition.

Y.F. Wei et al. [2024] investigated how Chinese-English bilinguals perceive spatial metaphors. The researchers found that Chinese speakers tend to use vertical spatial metaphors, while English respondents tend to use horizontal concepts. This study confirmed the influence of culture on the metaphorical modelling of reality. D. Tian et al. [2024] investigated the translation of metaphors in Chinese satirical literature and noted that preserving the cultural context plays a significant role in the correct interpretation of emotional and satirical connotations. The researchers argued that the use of metaphors in Chinese satirical literature is a key factor in the correct interpretation of meaning. According to their analysis, a literal translation of metaphors often leads to the loss of their true meaning, as they are rooted in specific cultural experiences. As for emotional metaphors, C. Peng, J.J. Jung [2021], based on a statistical approach, developed a Chinese method for analysing emotions in Chinese poetry. The researchers investigated how certain objects, such as the moon and the wind, acquire emotional meaning in poetic texts. Their analysis showed that metaphorical emotions vary depending on the context, and their interpretation depends on the reader’s cultural codes. R.W. Gibbs [2023] also paid attention to this detail, noting that metaphors vary depending on the context.

F. Gao, D. Tay [2023] explored the use of metaphors in the context of public speaking fear among Chinese university students. The researchers noted that students used metaphors

differently at the beginning and end of the semester, which illustrated the dynamic nature of emotional experience and its relationship to context. The present study also showed that the use of emotional metaphors changes over time and context, which was consistent with the findings of F. Gao et al. [2023] explored the role of revolutionary metaphors in Chinese drama, emphasising their dynamic nature and cultural context. The researchers argued that tragedy as a metaphor can change its meaning depending on historical conditions. This study is valuable for understanding the contextual influence on affective metaphors, as it demonstrated that even established metaphors can acquire new meanings depending on the socio-cultural context. The present study observed an analogous trend in the change in the meaning of affective metaphors under the influence of historical events, which confirmed the findings of Z. Jingting, J. Chao.

Kazakh metaphors are special emotional expressions, with each image having a rich cultural background. According to A. Ibragimov, B. Ospanov [2024], metaphor plays a significant conceptual role in contemporary Kazakh painting. Metaphors allow creating multi-layered compositions that reflect both traditional and modern elements of Kazakh culture. They help to reveal cultural identity not only through images, but also through interpretation of meaning conveyed through colours, shapes, and symbols. For instance, traditional Kazakh motifs such as horses, camels, and eagles are often used as metaphors for freedom, strength, and independence. Kazakh folk songs, for example, often use metaphors to express states of mind through natural elements. The words “wind”, “mountain”, and “river” are used to convey emotional tension and human condition. This is explained by the profound connection with nature that underlies the Kazakh worldview. Therefore, metaphors in the language not only express emotions, but also help to convey significant national values while preserving cultural heritage. Notably, Kazakh metaphors also have certain specific features compared to other languages, such as English and Chinese. The metaphors used in Kazakh poetry are often deeply rooted in traditional ideas about nature, human, and the universe. It can be a positive or negative perception of reality. In Kazakh literature, metaphors often have a collective nature and refer to common ideas shared by all peoples. On the other hand, metaphors in other cultures can have differing connotations and shades, which makes their translation challenging [Ibragimov, Ospanov, 2024].

According to A.T. Aushakhman, A. Oldfield and A.S. Tarakov [2024], when translating Kazakh poetry into English and other languages, including Kazakh, the problem of preserving the depth of the metaphor often arises. Some metaphors with deep cultural roots may be incomprehensible to speakers of other languages, making it difficult to convey the full emotional content of the original text. Therefore, preserving a complex cultural context requires not only linguistic skills, but also cultural understanding. In the Kazakh language, metaphors can convey human emotions and states more vividly and deeply, as they have many elements of emotional expression. For example, the image of a “mountain,” which symbolises difficulties and trials, can be used to express internal conflicts and strong emotions. On the other hand, images such as “rivers” and “lakes” can symbolise tranquillity or sadness, depending on the context. All these images are part of a rich symbolic system that characterises the Kazakh language and culture. Metaphors are also an element of poetry, where the author uses symbolic imagery to create layered meanings that become clear only through a deeper understanding of the cultural context. Metaphors provide an opportunity to express what cannot be conveyed in simple words, while creating an emotional atmosphere that evokes a strong response from the listener or reader. Thus, Kazakh metaphors are a powerful means of emotional and cultural expression. Kazakh metaphors play a multifunctional role. They not only help to convey emotions but also serve to convey cultural meaning and symbolism. In Kazakh art and literature, metaphors are actively used to preserve and convey cultural identity, as well as to create profound artistic and emotional images. This underscores the significance of metaphor for both local and global audiences, as it is a universal tool of persuasion capable of conveying complex emotions and thoughts that unite people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The English language has a somewhat developed system of metaphorical models used to express emotions, including joy and sadness. E. Kydyrmoldina et al. [2024] analysed how emotions, including negative and positive states, are expressed in Kazakh and English based on phraseological units, linguistic universals, and cognitive approaches. The combination of phraseological units describing unpleasant human behaviour in Kazakh and English shows that

both languages actively use the body theory to express negative personality traits. For example, the expression “cold-blooded” in English has a similar expression in Kazakh – “суық жүрек”. This indicates the universality of the concept “cold-bloodedness”, which expresses emotionlessness and cruelty. At the same time, the researchers noted that in English, pronouns are often used to express phraseology, which is less typical for the Kazakh language. The present study showed that Kazakh phrases are more generalised, while English phrases are more personalised, and the research confirmed this trend. Specific national features of family discourse indicate considerable differences between English and Kazakh linguistic and cultural preferences [Sadirova, Nauryzbaikyzy, 2023]. For example, the English expression “blood is thicker than water” emphasises the value of kinship, while in the Kazakh tradition, kinship is expressed in the concept “*жәмі ама*” (seven generations), which is interpreted somewhat differently. This confirms the conclusion of the study that kinship in Kazakh culture has a broader historical and cultural dimension. The linguistic, cultural, and cognitive features of the linguistic universals depicted in the study by M. Auganbayeva et al. [2024], who showed that although the affective concept is universal, its interpretation is highly dependent on culture. For example, the concept “fear” in Kazakh culture is often associated with the concept “үпей” (үпей) (fear, trembling), while in English culture, fear is expressed by the words “fear” and “dread,” with different intensities. The study also found that the Kazakh language has many terms for fear, which may indicate the cultural significance of this concept. Emotional units in Turkic languages, which were examined by D. Ospanova, G. Sagidolda (2023), showed that emotional vocabulary had certain parametric features. The cognitive-linguistic analysis of hyperbole-based phraseological units, considered by A. Shalkarbek et al. [2024], showed that hyperbole was an essential means of expressing emotions in both languages. For example, “*I’m starving*” in English and “*Ishim kuyip bara zhatyr*” (ішім қуырып бара жатыр) in Kazakh are hyperboles to enhance emotions, while the study confirmed that hyperbole is a universal means of expressing emotions, but its implementation depends on the cultural context.

Influence of context on the use of emotion metaphors

The influence of context on the use of affective metaphors is a significant issue for cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. The context in which metaphors are used greatly affects the interpretation and functioning of metaphors in speech. A. Derakhshan, S. Karimpour and M. Nazari [2023] showed that sociocultural characteristics, pragmatic aspects of communication, and even artificial intelligence play a prominent role in the understanding and use of affective metaphors and investigated how Iranian EFL teachers express their emotions. Their study was based on a phenomenographic approach and found that metaphors of fear, sadness, and happiness reflect the learners’ sociocultural characteristics, while anger is expressed through positive and negative metaphors. This suggested that context influenced the expression of emotions through metaphors. However, the examined metaphors more frequently indicated negative conceptualisations of rage than the study by A. Derakhshan, S. Karimpour, M. Nazari, which may represent variations in how this emotion is seen in society. Despite some discrepancies, the results somewhat supported the conclusions of A. Derakhshan, S. Karimpour, M. Nazari [2023], particularly with regard to the impact of cultural background. The frequency of negative metaphors demonstrated how rage is specifically understood in a culturally distinct context.

M. Ge, R. Mao and E. Cambria [2023] made a valuable contribution to the understanding of the mechanisms of metaphor use. The researchers investigated methods of computer processing of metaphors, including their identification, interpretation, creation, and application. The researchers emphasised that, despite advances in artificial intelligence, understanding metaphors continues to be a challenging task. This study is especially significant for analysing the impact of context, as it shows that artificial intelligence algorithms often have difficulty determining the context-dependent meaning of metaphors. In keeping with the findings of M. Ge, R. Mao, E. Cambria, comparable difficulties were noted in the theoretical study of emotional metaphors, demonstrating the universality of this issue for both artificial and human intelligence.

X. Huang, M. Wei and X. Cao [2024] found that visual metaphors in advertising can have a paradoxical effect on a brand, focusing on the effects of visual metaphors on consumer

perceptions of a brand. The researchers argued that the context of an advertisement, specifically the use of extended white space, affects consumers' aesthetic pleasure and cognitive flexibility, especially in highly contextualised cultures. This study demonstrated that the formation of metaphorical meaning in visual discourse is significantly influenced by context. This research supported the significance of cultural context by identifying culturally affected emotive metaphor usage patterns, which aligns with X. Huang, M. Wei, X. Cao's findings.

Participants from various cultural backgrounds used emotive metaphors in unique ways, which R.W. Gibbs [2023] explored as pragmatic difficulties in interpreting metaphors and shows that people use metaphorical language not only to convey affective meanings but also to achieve pragmatic goals. The researcher noted that people use figurative language not only to convey emotional meaning but also to achieve pragmatic goals. R.W. Gibbs's findings highlighted the significance of context in interpreting metaphors, as pragmatic aspects can change the meaning of a metaphor. The influence of pragmatic factors was also observed in the present study. According to R.W. Gibbs's studies, the same metaphor might be interpreted differently depending on the situation.

The influence of dissociative disorders on metaphor selection and usage was one of the study's main features. J. Dilkes [2024] studied the specifics of metaphor in depersonalisation/derealisation, dissociative disorder. This condition involves a sense of unreality of one's personal body and the world around them, which makes it difficult to verbalise. Therefore, patients often use metaphors to describe their experiences. Specifically, they used images of mirrors, shadows, glass, and distance to express their sense of alienation. This study showed that the metaphors presented in the diagnostic criteria do not fully reflect the full range of expressions that can be used in patients' spontaneous speech. These findings are valuable for improving diagnosis and understanding the problem on a broader level. Since some of the corpus's metaphorical expressions transcend widely recognised patterns and represent unique emotional experiences, these discoveries are also pertinent to this investigation.

Another example of the influence of context on the use of metaphors is the study by A. Johannessen et al., [2024]. In this study, metaphors were analysed in the context of family life, where one of the family members suffered from addiction. Interviews with daughters and wives of addicts showed that their experiences were often expressed in metaphors such as chaos and disintegration. Furthermore, metaphors were employed to convey survival strategies such as complicity and silence. In a broader context, the use of emotional metaphors is closely related to cultural characteristics and social norms. For example, in some cultures, fire metaphors ("*to burn with anger*") are common, while in others, water metaphors ("*to shed tears*," "*to be immersed in grief*") are more popular. Simpler, more concrete metaphors are often used in analytical languages, while in synthetic languages metaphors can be more complex. Context also determines the function of metaphors in speech. In scientific writing, metaphors are used to explain complex concepts, while in fiction they help to create emotional effects. In everyday communication, metaphors often help to avoid direct mention of emotionally complex topics and facilitate communication between people.

According to the idea of joy and sorrow, studies have revealed that people most frequently use metaphorical thinking to make sense of their emotional states during intense emotional experiences, including both happy and sad times. Those who find it difficult to express their innermost thoughts in words can do so through the use of metaphors. For instance, phrases like "*I feel like I am in a dark tunnel without an end*," "*a whole stone has fallen on me*," or "*I am like a withered leaf falling in autumn*" are frequently used when someone is feeling depressed or grieving. These pictures represent despair, hopelessness, and emotional fatigue. However, different metaphors are used in times of inspiration and excitement, such as "*my heart sings*," "*I feel like I am flying*," "*spring blooms inside me*," or "*the world has shone with bright colours*" [Johannessen et al., 2024]. Feelings of happiness, lightness, and inner lift are conveyed by such images. The study also discovered that metaphors are crucial for conveying both positive and negative emotions. They assist people in better comprehending the breadth of their experiences, particularly in situations where it is challenging to put their own emotions into words. These findings support the value of metaphor in comprehending, communicating, and altering human emotional states.

Despite a considerable amount of research on metaphor and emotion across various languages and cultures, many studies predominantly focus on either the dominant conceptual metaphors of a single linguistic tradition or the cultural values evident in metaphoric expressions, frequently omitting a comparative synthesis grounded in analogous emotional domains. This study presents a comprehensive cross-linguistic model that analyses the metaphorical representation of joy and sadness in three different linguistic and cultural systems, Kazakh, English, and Chinese, within a cohesive cognitive-semantic framework.

The authors present the concept of “emotionally grounded metaphorical asymmetry”, emphasising that although metaphors for joy and sadness often originate from comparable source domains (e.g., light / darkness, rise / fall), their conceptual depth, cultural relevance, and structural complexity exhibit subtle asymmetries across languages. Kazakh metaphors for sadness frequently highlight embodied and communal experiences, such as physical burdens or familial connections, while English metaphors predominantly concentrate on individual psychological states, and Chinese metaphors invoke themes of cosmological harmony and imbalance. This conceptual asymmetry indicates that metaphorical mappings are influenced by cultural context as well as emotional and ideological elements, thus enriching standard conceptual metaphor theory.

The study introduces the “emotive metaphor frequency-as-function” theory, positing that the prevalence of specific metaphor types is associated with their pragmatic and cultural acceptability in emotional discourse. This offers a functional viewpoint for comprehending metaphor utilisation across genres and languages, progressing beyond mere descriptive cataloguing to a more predictive and explanatory framework of metaphorical emotion conceptualisation. The authors enhance methodological and theoretical understanding of metaphor’s involvement in emotional cognition and cultural identity development by constructing this conceptual framework and applying it to a multilingual corpus.

Conclusions

This study offers a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural examination of metaphorical expressions of joy and grief in English, Kazakh, and Chinese, based on a comparative corpus technique. A significant finding was the recognition of universal metaphorical frameworks (e.g., “happiness is light,” “sadness is darkness”) with culturally particular conceptualisations, such as the Kazakh metaphor “sadness is water” and the Chinese model “joy is harmony”. The findings indicate that although fundamental affective metaphors are cognitively based, their manifestation is significantly shaped by cultural imagery and speech conventions. However, the inverse relationship is equally important. Metaphors can be seen as semiotic evidence that allows for the inference of the cultural and cognitive orientations of linguistic societies. The prominence of specific metaphorical domains, such as weather in Chinese, burden in Kazakh, or brightness in English, provides insights on the prevailing cultural schemas, embodied experiences, and social values of speakers. Metaphorical analysis demonstrates the impact of culture on language and facilitates the reconstruction of cultural worldviews and cognitive preferences from linguistic data. Metaphors serve as both manifestations of cultural cognition and as analytical instruments for examining and evaluating the cultural identity of linguistic communities.

The principal theoretical contribution lies in the formulation of metaphorical asymmetry, the observation that joy and sadness frequently employ the same conceptual domains (e.g., light / darkness, up / down, container / burden) but are elaborated unevenly across languages in scope, frequency, and cultural resonance. Joy metaphors are typically fewer, relying on universal schemas of lightness, ascent, and abundance, whereas sadness metaphors exhibit greater structural and semantic diversity, including imagery of darkness, burden, illness, coldness, and weather.

50 literary sources were studied, with more than 1,000 metaphorical terms classified according to recognised conceptual frameworks. The statistical analysis confirmed these trends. Spatial metaphors comprised 30.2% of all expressions, establishing them as the predominant category across languages, followed by temporal metaphors at 20.1% and sensation-based metaphors at 16.7%. A Student’s t-test revealed that “happiness is light” metaphors were substantially more prevalent in English compared to Kazakh and Chinese ($p=0.021$). The Mann-

Whitney U-test demonstrated that metaphors of “sadness with burden” were substantially more prevalent in Kazakh than in Chinese ($U=112.5$, $p=0.008$). A correlation study revealed a strong correlation between the Kazakh “sadness is burden” model and emotive intensifiers ($r=0.61$, $p=0.013$), indicating that metaphors are contextually enhanced through evaluative language.

The results highlight that metaphors are influenced by the cultural environment and serve as indicators of cultural and cognitive perspectives. The significance of weather imagery in Chinese, burden metaphors in Kazakh, and brightness/verticality in English illustrates dominant cultural frameworks, embodied experiences, and societal values. This duality indicates that metaphorical analysis can be utilised to illustrate the impact of culture on metaphor while also reconstructing cultural worldviews and cognitive inclinations from language evidence.

The incorporation of Kazakh data into a cross-linguistic framework constitutes a unique contribution, uncovering specific patterns such as the culturally significant “sadness is water” concept, which is not present in English and Chinese. The findings have significant implications for cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, intercultural communication, and language education, highlighting the importance of treating emotional metaphors as culturally rooted constructions.

Further investigations should broaden this study to encompass spoken dialects, digital communication, and multimodal corpora, integrating computational methodologies and emotion annotation frameworks to improve the accuracy of metaphor identification. This study enhances the comprehension of how emotions are linguistically and culturally formed across many language communities by emphasising metaphorical asymmetry as a theoretical and methodological idea.

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EXPRESSION OF JOY AND SADNESS EMOTIONS IN ENGLISH, KAZAKH AND CHINESE: REPRESENTATION OF METAPHORICAL ASYMMETRY

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The purpose of this study was to identify the manifestation of metaphorical asymmetries in the expression of joy and sadness across English, Kazakh, and Chinese and how these asymmetries reflect cultural, cognitive, and sociolinguistic frameworks. Emotions like joy and sadness are frequently challenging to convey explicitly, and metaphors function as vital instruments for expressing these intricate experiences. This study delineates universal and culture-specific metaphorical constructs, illustrating that joy and sadness often utilise identical source domains (light / darkness, rise / fall, burden / release), yet manifest asymmetrically regarding intensity, prominence, and symbolic elaboration. The research utilises cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics *methodology*, and conceptual metaphor theory to analyse a multilingual corpus comprising literary texts, journalistic discourse, conversational speech, and digital communication. A statistical analysis of over 1,000 metaphorical expressions revealed that spatial metaphors were the most prevalent across all languages (30.2%), succeeded by temporal metaphors (20.1%) and emotion-as-sensation metaphors (16.7%). Significant cross-linguistic variation was identified. English data indicated a pronounced inclination towards metaphors of brightness and verticality ($p=0.021$), Kazakh texts revealed a statistically significant prevalence of burden metaphors ($U=112.5$, $p=0.008$), and Chinese metaphors for sadness demonstrated strong correlations with weather and imbalance imagery. Correlation analysis indicated that in Kazakh, the metaphor “sadness is a burden” frequently co-occurred with intensifiers ($r=0.61$, $p=0.013$), illustrating that metaphors are pragmatically reinforced in discourse. These findings validate the claim that metaphors convey emotions and represent socio-cultural perspectives. Kazakh metaphors illustrate a profound relationship with nature and kinship, and Chinese metaphors highlight harmony and balance, whereas English metaphors prioritise individuality and psychological conditions. The research shows that metaphorical asymmetry serves as an effective framework for comprehending the conceptualisation of emotions across languages. In addition to cultural influence, metaphors serve as semiotic evidence that facilitates the reconstruction of cultural orientations and cognitive preferences. These findings are pertinent to cognitive linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication, underscoring the necessity of including metaphorical asymmetry into language instruction and cross-cultural study.

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