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Author (s):	Saniya Bablani
Affiliation (s):	University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan
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Cultural Perception of Animals through Idioms: A Comparative Study of Sindhi and English Idioms

Saniya Bablani*

Department of English, University of Karachi, Pakistan

Abstract

Idioms are an important part of any language and they are a very prominent source of understanding the culture of a language due to their rich cultural content and character. Despite the potential role of idioms to be a great source of insight into a culture, the cross-cultural exploration of Sindhi and English language, through idioms, is an under-researched area. This research is an attempt to explore the similarities and differences regarding the perception of animals in the above-mentioned cultures through the idioms with animal imagery. For this purpose, the data was collected from three books of idioms for each language and the technique employed to collect the data was that of purposive sampling. The analysis of data was guided by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory or CMT presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their seminal work "Metaphors We Live by". The findings of the research show that the idioms of Sindhi language demonstrate a more negative perception of animals than the idioms of English language. In addition to that, it was observed that English and Sindhi idioms have similarities as well as differences when it comes to the perception and representation of animals. Hopefully, this research will prove to be helpful in clarifying the confusions faced by the native Sindhi speakers who are actively engaged in learning English as their second language.

Keywords: cross-cultural linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, Sindhi and English idioms

Introduction

Language, according to Sapir (1921), is a human and an instinctive method of communication through a system of shared and voluntarily produced symbols. However, the messages are not only conveyed by the literal combination of symbols, but they can also be conveyed by the strings of signs which are apparently not as meaningful as they must be. Moreover, a particular string of symbols may not aim to convey the meaning which it

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*Corresponding Author: saniyabablani.hp@outlook.com

was structurally designed to do so. One such form of language is an idiom. Typically, an idiom is characterized as a string of words whose semantic interpretation cannot be derived compositionally or by the collective interpretation of the meaning of its parts (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988). This means that most of the idioms cannot be understood if the literal meaning of the words is taken into account. In order to make sense of an idiom, it is imperative that an individual has not just linguistic but also social and cultural awareness. Similarly, Flavell and Flavell (1994) define an idiom as a new linguistic entity whose meaning may be very different from the meaning of individual words in the idiom. In addition to that, the phrases and sentences that convey the meaning of an idiomatic expression in literal language are considered not to be the true equivalents of an idiom in terms of meaning. This has been proven by Gibbs (1992) in a series of experiments, that an idiom entails extra information related to intentionality, manner, and consequence which is absent in the literal equivalents of that idiom. Thus, idioms are not the substitutes of the sentences which entail similar meaning, as idioms inherently convey more information than their literal counterparts.

According to the traditional view, idioms are dead metaphors. This is to say that an idiomatic expression used to be non-compositional and thus metaphoric in nature. However, a particular interpretation of an expression has been associated with it for so long that it appears to be the natural meaning of that expression and ceases to be metaphoric (Gibbs & O'Brien, 1990). Therefore, idioms, according to this view, are considered to be expressions that did not have literal but metaphorical meaning in the past, but are now understood and used in a manner which is close to literal expressions in language. In addition to that, this view also holds that idioms can be translated and/or transliterated to literal language without any compromise in meaning. However, Gibbs (1992) proved that an idiom cannot be reduced to literal language without any compromise in its meaning. He argued that with translation and transliteration, the meaning of an idiom changes, if not completely, then at least to a degree that it misses some important information.

Contrary to the traditional view, the conceptual view of idiomaticity advocates that idiomatic language or an idiom is drawn on conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are expressions with non-literal meaning, drawing on cultural and social experiences of individuals speaking a

language for its semantic content. In other words, the meaning of many idioms is partially motivated by the abstract and cultural knowledge of the concepts which an idiom refers to (Gibbs, 1990). This also means that the words in an idiomatic expression are not completely arbitrary and that they do have some internal connection. Similarly, if the components of an idiom are contributing to the figurative meaning which the idiom projects, an idiom can be considered semantically compositional in nature. This notion is further strengthened by the claim of Gibbs and O'Brien (1990), that the connection amongst the different and seemingly unrelated components of an idiom is due to the mental images of the concepts (constituting an idiom) stored in the mind of an individual. This is clearly in alignment with Saussure's concept of language in which he mentioned the connection between a concept and an auditory image. Language is the system of signs in which the only essential element for a sign to exist is the union of its two psychological components; meaning and sound image. Thus the contemporary view of idioms holds that idioms follow the principle of compositionality due to the mental knowledge of language users and not because of syntactic arrangement of lexicon in the metaphoric expression.

Idioms can thus be understood as a type or a part of metaphorical language. The essence of a metaphor is understanding one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphors provide a relational structure to those domains where the connections may not be obvious from the world experiences (Boroditsky, 2000). The idea which is to be understood through an idiom is known as a target domain and the idea through which the target domain is to be understood is called a source domain. Thus, metaphorical target domains can activate their respective source domains. It is pertinent to add that the target domains are usually abstract and are understood in terms of concrete direct bodily experiences which are the source domains. These concepts related to conceptual metaphors combine to form the Conceptual Metaphor Theory which was first presented in their seminal work by Lakoff and Johnson (2008).

Although idioms are sometimes formed by a string of words which do have a correct literal meaning as well, most of the idiomatic expressions do not have plausible literal meanings. As per the experiments by Gibbs (1979) people take more time to comprehend literal (direct) language than indirect language. However, in the following year, he rejected his own claim by stating that a conventional utterance, be it literal or idiomatic, takes smaller

amount of time in order to be understood than an unconventional utterance (Gibbs, 1980). Moreover, individuals often fail to realize the difference between an idiom and literal language because they are unaware of the discourse in their language (Gibbs, 1992). Thus, the comprehension of idioms is relatively difficult not because of the absence of compositionality but because the users of a language are not aware of the conventional utterances in a language.

Language in its formal structure is biological (Crystal, 2007), however, it is a social phenomenon (De Saussure, 2011) when it comes to its operation. Any social phenomenon cannot be devoid of the role and influence of culture. Language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. As a part and parcel of culture, language is also a source of knowledge regarding a culture or a social group which speaks a particular language. This is true because culture is incorporated in language and its use (Kramsch, 2014). This is better explained by Ts (2017) as:

> In any language, phrases are unique solid structures that reflect thousands of years of development in the environment where the people speaking that language have lived. Their customs, habits, cultures, thinking styles and how they have protected and interacted with the environment all influence the development of language. (p. 16)

Idioms, as a part of language, are also an important source of insight into a culture of a linguistic group. This study is going to be concerned with idioms, specifically animal idioms, as the idioms related to animals are under-researched (Afraz & Kia, 2016), although they are widely used in communication (Xu, 2013). Ali et al. (2019) argue that the different perceptions regarding animals in different languages cause a lot of confusion for non-native speakers and learners of a language.

The languages relevant in this research study are English and Sindhi which belong to the Indo-European family of languages. English is a Germanic language while Sindhi is an Indo-Aryan language when it comes to further classification of the Indo-European language family. The Old English of the Germanic tribes was influenced greatly by Latin, Scandinavian, and French syntax, morphology, and vocabulary to get to the

modern version of English which has become a global language today. Sindhi, although belonging to the same language family is spoken in a completely different continent as a native language as compared to English. It is primary spoken as a native language in the Sindh province of Pakistan and has a sizeable community in India as well. Historically, Sindhi emerged from Sanskrit and Prakrit languages and was later influenced by Persian and Arabic to a greater extent due to the conquest of Sindh by Muslim Arabs.

Due to its international and global status, English continues to grow as a Second Language for native Sindhi speakers in Pakistan. In Pakistan, English is being used as a language of instruction and examination at the tertiary level of education. It is also used in different governmental sectors for official correspondences. Thus, due to academic and professional reasons (Ahmed, 2012), more and more native Sindhi speakers have learned and continue to learn English as their second language. To avoid conceptual and communicative misunderstandings, and to aid the process of learning English as a second language by native speakers of Sindhi, it is pertinent to provide a comparative analysis regarding the perceptions related to animals in metaphoric expressions of Sindhi and English.

In addition to helping the ESL learners, this research also explores the cultural differences and similarities between the languages through animal idioms. The comparison of animal idioms of two languages is a plausible way to investigate the differences and similarities between two cultures, as an idiom is the language which represents cultural knowledge of the speakers of any language. Moreover, the exploration of Sindhi culture through metaphors, specifically through idioms, is almost non-existent, and thus this research opens doors for future research for the exploration of Sindhi culture through idioms.

Research Questions

- What kind of culture is projected through animal imagery in idioms of Sindhi and English?

- What are the similarities and differences between the animal idioms of Sindhi and English?

Literature Review

Lyu and Li (2020) conducted a comparative study between Chinese and English (UK) and attempted to analyse the differences in culture through

animal idioms. They pointed out that English idioms related to animals were more common in spoken language, while the idioms related to animals in Chinese were prone to be found in written discourse more often. In addition to that, the research deduced that there are differences as well as similarities between the idiomatic expressions of English and Chinese. The idioms related to 'bees' had positive connotations in both the languages, and animals like wolf and snake had negative connotations. However, animals like dog, dragon, bat and magpie had positive representation in one language and negative in the other. The reasons for this divergence, according to this research, were geography, history and religion/beliefs.

A comparative study by Afraz and Kia (2016) was conducted to discover relationships between the interpretations of animal metaphors in Persian and English. The data was collected from dictionaries of each language along with the language written in everyday use. The findings suggest that animal metaphors in both the languages are used not only as means of insult but also for positive representations with similar concepts, mostly, however, through different animals.

Muttar (2016) researched the animal behaviour in idiomatic expressions of two languages, Arabic and English. The data related to animal idioms was collected through a representative book of each language. The analysis of the data revealed that Arabic has more detailed description of animal behaviour with more focus on cultural animals which are used in daily activities. In addition to that, the study also revealed that Arabic and English have similar and different concepts regarding animals. Also, there are occurrences of certain animals in one language which are completely absent in other but the similar concept is represented through a different animal.

A research carried out by Jamshaid and Akhtar (2022) compared the metaphorical use of exocentric compounds in Punjabi and English to explore the worldview of these communities. The data for this research consisted fifty English and Punjabi exocentric compounds gathered from multiple sources. The study analysed the selected compounds through cultural as well as cognitive framework and found that similarities and differences exist in the conceptualizations of animals in both languages. The derogatory use of compounds in the two languages show that they had a similar cultural conceptual system.

Khan et al. (2017) conducted a research study in which the gender specific proverbs of Urdu language, which also happen to be related to animals, were analysed to understand the conceptualizations of gender in Urdu. The selection of forty proverbs in this study was random and they were characterized into eight categories. The research found out that females were represented more in proverbs than males. Both the genders were repeatedly presented with negative associations through animal idioms; however, males were represented positively four times, while women were presented positively only two times.

The literature review above shows that idiomatic expressions can be a way to explore the cultural aspect of language communities. In addition to that, understanding idioms also helps in learning and becoming proficient in a particular language (Mawlood, 2018). As the Sindhi speakers in the Sindh province of Pakistan are engaged in learning English language in schools, a comparative analysis of idioms focusing on the comparable concepts related to animals will help them in understanding the culture associated with English language along with achieving language proficiency.

Methodology

For the analysis of the collected data in this research, the methodology was qualitative. To be more specific, the research design was exploratory as the pre-existing research concerned with the comparison and contrast of idiomatic expressions related to animals in English and Sindhi (Kumar, 2011) is severely limited.

In order to collect the data for this research, the sampling method was purposive sampling. The method of purposive sampling was chosen as the researcher had to select the idioms relevant to this research (Taherdoost, 2016). The relevance of an idiom was defined by the presence of at least one animal in an idiom. Therefore, the sample was selected specifically through criterion purposive sampling as the selection had a predetermined criterion (Dörnyei, 2007). In addition to that, some of the idioms in the sample of this study were collected primarily by the researcher from the spoken discourse of her family members. To be more specific about the criterion of selection, the collection of idioms for analysis only included the animals with four legs. To clarify further, the idioms with birds, insects, or fish imagery were not included in the sample of this research. Thus, the

collection of data is limited to the animals which are largely terrestrial due to the small scale of this research.

The data of English animal idioms was collected from three books of English idioms. All three books were consulted through their electronic versions. The books were:

- Oxford pocket English idioms (Seidl & McMordie, 1992).

- The Penguin dictionary of English idioms (Gulland & Hinds-Howell, 1986).

- English Idioms (Collins Webster's easy learning) (Collins Dictionaries, 2010).

The idioms of Sindhi language were also collected from three books. Two of these (2 and 3) were consulted in soft form and the third (1) was consulted in hard form. The books accessed were:

- *Pahaka pahar jeda (پھاڪا پھاڙ جيڏا)* (Preet, 2017).

- *Gul shakar (گل شڪر)* (Adwani, 1905).

- *A handbook of Sindhi idioms* (Shahani, 2012).

Thus, the data for both the languages was, mostly, collected from secondary sources. Moreover, the data from each language was taken from three books to attain saturation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The collected idioms from both the languages were then written down and categorized under the names of animals for analysis. Next, the animals which were present in the idioms of both languages were undertaken for detailed analysis. The analysis of the data was carried out as per the Conceptual Metaphor Theory or CMT. It was primarily based on the coincidence and divergence in animal idioms of both languages, i.e., the similarities and differences in terms of connotations attached and the presence or absence of a particular animal.

Findings

A total of 258 English idioms were analysed for this research. Among these idioms, 71 were related to wild animals and 176 contained animal imagery of domestic animals. In addition to that, 11 idioms had general words referring to animals such as the words 'animal' and 'beast'. Similarly, the idioms collected from the collections of Sindhi idioms were 166 in number.

Among these idioms, 113 idioms were concerned with domesticated animals and 40 were related to the animals in the wild. Further, five idioms from Sindhi language consisted a general term used for four legged animals 'ڍڳو' or 'dhaggo'. Along with that, a total of eight idioms were such in which both a wild and a domestic animal were mentioned collectively.

Moreover, the entire collection of the idioms gathered for this research also differs in the variety of the animals present in each language. In 166 idioms of Sindhi language, a total of 18 animals were represented. These animals were sometimes presented with different names concerning the age (گلڙ; a puppy) or the gender (سان; bull) of the animal. On the contrary, the collection of English idioms represented 38 animals. This collection, like the Sindhi idioms, differed among the same animals due to age and gender. However, it went further and assigned different names to different types or families of the same animal (in some cases) such as 'spaniel' and 'poodle' for dogs.

The 18 animals that occurred in Sindhi idioms were present in the English collection as well with the exception of four animals. However, 23 animals in the English collection of animal idioms were not found in the Sindhi idioms.

The next part of analysis is composed of the similarities and differences in the perception about different animals which are projected through language, specifically the idioms.

Camel

Camels (اٺ) have the second highest representation in Sindhi idioms with a total of 25 idioms. This animal has negative connotations attached to it in almost all the idioms. The camel has been projected as an animal which is incapable of learning anything even though it has suffered due to its shortcomings.

اٺ پوڙهو ٿيو ته به مٽڻ نه سکيو

The camel got old but did not learn to urinate

Next, the movement of camels has been mentioned as something which is highly disliked and even cursed.

اٺ جي لاهيءَ کي به لعنت ته چاڙهيءَ کي به لعنت

Both the getting down and getting up of the camel are cursed

Similarly, camels are also associated with the quality of carelessness which extends to being disloyal as well. In English idioms, however, a camel was represented only once for its size.

To swallow a camel and strain at a gnat

Goat

Goats are viewed as weaklings with not a lot of physical strength in both English and Sindhi.

To be a scapegoat
To get one's goat

The idioms related to goats also project that goats are small and fearful animals. These animals are aware of the dangers due to their physical weakness as well. This feature makes a goat dependent on others for its security and well-being. Further, a goat is also looked upon as a commodity in both the cultures.

ٻڪري کي ساس جي ڪاسايءَ کي ماس جي

The goat is worried about its life and the butcher is worried about the meat.

ڪنھن جي ٻڪري کير وجھي گاھ

The goat is the responsibility of one but it is fed by the other.

However, in Sindhi idioms, there is an added dimension of religion. In Islam, a goat is one of the animals which can be sacrificed as an obligation or as charity.

صدقي جي ٻڪري

A goat for charity

Also, many idioms show that goats are essential parts of the lives of many people and thus idioms portray many wise thoughts through the example of goats in Sindhi language.

Donkey

Donkeys are portrayed to have many negative associations in Sindhi idioms. A donkey is portrayed as one of the most inferior animals and is seen with contempt. It is assumed that donkeys are inept and stupid. They have no power and are completely subjugated by others. Due to these

qualities, donkeys are often used as insults by people. Therefore, the perception of donkeys in Sindhi idioms is extremely negative.

<div dir="rtl">گڏھ جو چا وس جو بيڙيءَ ۾ نہ چڙھندو؟</div>

The donkey does not have the option to not mount the boat

<div dir="rtl">گڏھ کي بہ ڪو گج پايءٰ؟</div>

Gifting an embroidery to a donkey (for the sake of one's own interest)

However, in English language a donkey seems to be stubborn and a character which does not give in easily to the pressure or the demands of the people. Donkeys are considered old and wise animals in English. A donkey usually lives longer than other domestic animals and therefore, it is believed to be more learned and experienced than other animals. Further, donkeys are known for their perseverance and focus when it comes to work. Thus, the idioms of English language show that the worldview regarding donkeys is positive which is in contrast to the perceptions of Sindhi language speakers.

As obstinate as a donkey
To talk a hind leg off a donkey
Not for a donkey's year

Horse

The idioms of Sindhi language show that a horse is a highly valuable animal. It is considered as a luxury and is possessed by honourable people. Thus, a horse is also a tacit symbol of honour and high social status.

<div dir="rtl">فارسي، گهوڙي چاڙھسي</div>

Farsi (previously a language of elites) lands a person on the horse (makes her/him successful).

In addition to that, even the trouble caused by a horse is not looked down upon.

<div dir="rtl">گڏھ جي لت کان گهوڙي جي لت ڀلي</div>

It is better to be hit by a horse than by a donkey

In English idioms, however, the perception of horses is slightly different. A horse being a status symbol is prevalent in English language just like Sindhi.

To get on a high horse

Nonetheless, it is not the most prominent feature related to horses in English, unlike Sindhi. Many idioms related to horses are a description of different qualities a human can possess which shows the clear and close understanding of the nature of horses by the people of English culture.

A dark horse
A stalking horse
A willing horse

Another aspect which shows close contact and connection between people and horses is that the idioms are related to social, political, and even personal lives of people. These idioms also portray the association of English people with horses, as one of the mediums to propagate and understand the local wisdom through horses.

To back the wrong horse
To hold one's horses
To find a mare's nest
To put a cart before the horse

Dog

Dogs are a usual occurrence in the lives of people who are part of the culture with Sindhi and English languages. In both English and Sindhi, dogs are understood as animals with a rough life, and often things are compared to dogs to show a bad state of affairs. In Sindhi, a dog is thought to be an animal which is not honourable and is inferior. Dogs are sometimes considered annoying and it is projected that people avoid them.

نہ ڪتو ڏسي نہ ڀونڪي

If a dog doesn't see you, it won't bark (speak to) at you

Although a dog is not a favoured animal in Sindhi, it is the most recurring animal in the data that was collected for this research, with it being mentioned 29 times. The data shows that the dogs are quite often referred to, to explain the everyday wisdom within the community.

تڪڙي ڪتي انڌا گلر جڻي

A female, in a hurry, will give birth to blind puppies

ڪتو ڪتي جو ڀاءُ آهي

A dog is a dog's brother

ڪتي ڪي ڪپي هڏي

A dog needs a bone

In addition to that, in Sindhi, a dog is known to be stubborn when it comes to improving oneself. It is believed that a dog will never improve or change its habits. This can also be observed in English idioms.

Can't teach an old dog new tricks

Thus, the overall image of dogs in Sindhi is highly negative. In English idioms, however, the example of a dog is often used to assign qualities to a person.

A sly dog
A Dull dog
Top dog
Watchdog

Moreover, the metaphor of dog is often used to describe the intensity of anything. If the degree of something bad is high then it is exemplified by attaching the term dog to it.

Sick as a dog
To die like a dog
Dog Latin
Dog days
Not to have a dog's chance
Dog's breakfast
Dog tired

However, unlike Sindhi, dogs are associated with some level of power and independence in English. Dogs are not considered submissive and should be feared because they are perceived as animals who resist and are audacious.

Call the dogs
Go to the dogs
Top dog
Dog fight
Let sleeping dogs lie
The dogs of war

Cat

The relationship between a cat and a mouse is prominent in idioms of both Sindhi and English. Thus, the very first noticeable aspect of cats is that of a hunter, keeper, or that of a rival. However, these roles of cats are restricted to the idioms in which a mouse is mentioned.

ڪوئ جي ڪيس ۾، ٻلي شاهد

A cat being a witness in a mouse's case

Game of cat and mouse
When the cat's away, the mice will play

ست ڪوئا کائ ٻلي حج تي هلي

After eating seven mice, the cat decides to go for Haj (Islamic pilgrimage)

The idioms in English use the metaphor of cat to envision various human reactions and emotions.

Cat got your tongue
To be catty
Grin like a Cheshire cat
Like a cat on a hot tin roof
A wildcat strike

Along with that, the wisdom of local culture is also expressed through cat idioms.

Set the cat among the pigeons
Curiosity killed the cat
There's more than one way to skin the cat

Cow

The collection of data for this research shows that a cow has religious connotations of being sacred in both Sindhi and English.

گئو ماتا

A sacred cow

However, the reasons for reverence towards cows might be different. Sindhi culture has a close connection with Hinduism and many speakers of Sindhi language are practitioners of Hinduism. Thus, the notion of a sacred cow in Sindhi may have arisen due to that. In English, the concept of

sacredness might have been adopted from the Hindu culture during the time when the Indian Sub-continent was colonized by the English.

Bull

A bull in English idioms is shown to be a challenge which has been or can be accomplished. The idioms deal with the themes of being a target and confrontation. Similarly, it is portrayed as wild and very difficult to tame.

To hit the bull's eye
A bull in a china shop
Grab the bull by horns

The metaphor of bulls in Sindhi idioms acknowledges the theme of destruction associated with a bull. It is termed as an angry and uncontrollable animal.

<div dir="rtl">

وڙهن سان لتاڙجن ٻوٽا
</div>

When the bulls fight, the saplings are destroyed

Wolf

The perception of a wolf is similar in the idioms of both the languages; English and Sindhi. A wolf is used as a metaphor for danger, strength, and deception. However, the theme of deception and betrayal is more prominent in the idioms of English language.

A wolf whistle
To throw to the wolves
To cry wolf

<div dir="rtl">

بگهڙ ڏسڻ کانپوءِ، قاضي تہ ڇيلي کي ڇڏي پر ڇيلو قاضئ کي نہ ڇڏي
</div>

A man might forsake a small goat, but the goat won't leave a man's side after it has seen a wolf.

Lion

Lion is one of the few animals which has positive representations and perceptions in both English and Sindhi idioms. The metaphor of a lion is often used to symbolize bravery. Due to the power and physical strength a lion possesses, it is also an animal that inflicts harm without mercy. Thus, a lion is also used as a metaphor for danger, fear and also as a warning.

To have a lion's heart
A lion's roar

To twist the lion's tale
A lion hunter

<div dir="rtl">

شينهن کي ڪير چئي تنهنجي وات مّ ڏٻ
</div>

Who can dare to tell the lion that its mouth stinks

<div dir="rtl">

شينهن شير خدا جو، وٽيس تہ بيدو ڏئي، وٽيس تہ ٻچو ڏي
</div>

A lion is a beloved of God, if it wants, it can lay an egg or it can birth a cub

However, the imagery of a lion is also used to mention hope and opportunity in English.

To feel like lion
A British lion
To lionize someone

Elephant

Elephants are huge animals and this fact is reflected in the idioms of both languages. This is the reason for which an elephant is used as a metaphor for the things that are evident and cannot be hidden. The next common factor related to elephants is that of how rogue and uncontrollable an elephant could be.

<div dir="rtl">

هاٿي ستل بہ گهوڙي کان وڏو
</div>

An elephant, even when sleeping, is bigger than a horse.

 As heavy as an elephant
Elephant in the room
A rogue elephant

<div dir="rtl">

انڌو هاٿي، لشڪر جو زيان
</div>

A blind elephant is a destruction for its camp

In contrast to the above mentioned characteristics, an elephant is projected as a good companion in Sindhi and as having a good memory in English.

<div dir="rtl">

هاٿي، ساٿي
</div>

Elephant: a companion

 An elephant's memory

Rat/Mouse

Rats and mice, in Sindhi idioms, are used as metaphors with respect to their relation with a cat. From this aspect, a mouse or a rat represents a person in danger or someone who is being hunted.

ڪوئ جي ڪيس ۾، ٻلي شاهد

A cat being a witness in a mouse's case

In English idioms, however, a rat often presents a robotic and materialistic perspective of people to life.

A rat race
Rat on someone
A political rat

Snake

The perception about snakes in Sindhi and English is negative, but it is negative due to different reasons. In Sindhi, the snakes are associated with a challenge which is quite difficult to overcome due to the danger linked to it.

جيڪو نانگن جي ٻرن ۾ هٿ وجهندو، سو به نه بچيو

A person who puts his/her hand in a snake's burrow won't survive

نوڙيَ مان نانگ ڪرڻ

To make a snake out of a rope.

The primary characteristic a snake is known for in English idioms is that of treachery. A betrayal that comes from someone close is often understood through the metaphor of snakes. Thus, any clandestine activities against someone are exemplified through snakes.

To cherish a snake in one's bosom
To scotch the snake
A snake in the grass

Conclusion

The analysis of the collected idioms affirms that the cultures of both the languages are more inclined towards a life that does not involve a lot of contact with wild animals. The wild animals that were the part of the data collected, mostly had characteristics associated with their size, strength, and

the way in which they hunt. These three aspects can be noticed by people without any close or direct contact with these animals. On the other hand, the characteristics which were associated to the domesticated animals had more to do with their nature, responses, and reactions of these animals in various situations. The characteristics which were a part of the idiomatic expressions related to domestic animals can only be known if the people have multiple first-hand experiences of such situations. This is also supported by the fact that the number of idioms related to domestic animals refers to the frequency of these animals in people's communication. People involved in a conversation can explain their ideas with clarity through the idioms related to domestic animals because they themselves and the people they are talking to can understand the idea in a better way with the help of these examples. This is mostly possible if the people have directly observed the phenomenon themselves.

In addition to that, most of the domestic animals from the data were related to agriculture in one way or another. This shows that the people of both the cultures live or have lived an agricultural life. The areas in Pakistan, in which Sindhi language is spoken, are arid lands and the primary occupation of the people is agriculture, although it is not limited to agriculture. Further, the parts of the world where English is spoken as a native language had agriculture as their primary occupation until last century. Presently, many of such places have become industrialized, but not all of them. Even if many of these areas are no longer involved directly in agricultural activities, they have retained the idioms, and continue to use them.

Next, the number of animals mentioned in the idioms of each language show the exposure, and to some extent, the scope of each language. Sindhi animal idioms had a total of 19 animals, whereas, the data from English language managed to have 38 animals in the idioms. The different names for each animal with respect to age, gender, or breed have not been taken into account in this regard. This difference indicates the approach of each culture and also the consequences of that approach. The approach of the culture of Sindhi language seems to have an inward focus and because of that the interaction of people of this culture and other cultures is not very widely observed. Therefore, it has not adopted the knowledge and wisdom, in terms of idioms, form other cultures. The idioms of English language do not just demonstrate their own culture but also the fact that this language is

not limited to a particular area. This is the reason for the presence of an idiom like 'sacred cow', 'to swallow a camel and strain at a gnat', and also 'a scapegoat'. Camels are not native to areas where English is spoken as a native language and a cow is not considered sacred by the English. But these idioms exist in English language because of the world-wide reach and adoption of norms (at least linguistically) by the people of this culture.

The idioms related to 13 animals were analysed in-depth for this research as these were common in both languages. The idioms of Sindhi language had negative connotations attached to ten of these. This shows that an overall perception about animals is highly negative in this culture. In this research, the negative worldview of animals is limited only to the comparison of animals with human beings. The negative perception portrayed in idioms does not indicate negative behaviour of native speakers against the animals in any way.

On the contrary, less than half of the 13 animals (six) have been associated with negative characteristics in the idioms of English language. This shows that the culture of English language is more lenient and accepting when it comes to the comparison of animals with humans. In addition to that, horses, cows, and lions were the only three animals with positive associations in both English and Sindhi. These associations are possibly due to economic, social, and/or related to physical features.

This research demonstrated that language and culture are indelibly interconnected. Thus, language and culture both can be excellent resources to explore each other. Therefore, this research made an attempt to exploit this relationship of language and culture, and explored the perception of animals in two cultures through language. The results of the research show that both the cultures have similarities and differences when it comes to the perception about different animals.

Moreover, this research study also has practical implications. As language and culture cannot be separated from each other, a language can also not be learnt without adequate knowledge about the culture of that language. By putting forward the different and similar perceptions of animals in Sindhi and English culture, an attempt has been made to make the process of cultural acquisition and understanding relatively easy for the native Sindhi speakers who are learning English as their second language. In this way, it will be easier for the learners to use and understand the

cultural metaphors in English language even if they diverge from the metaphors in their native language. This will also scaffold the learners to adapt to the social orders of the community where English is spoken as a native and a second language. However, it is pertinent to mention the limited scale of this research study. Further research should explore the coincidence and divergence of different types of cultural metaphors in English and Sindhi to comparatively explore both languages from a cultural lens, and also to make the process of learning English as a second language relatively easy for native speakers of Sindhi language through comparison and contrast of cultural metaphors.

Author Contribution

Saniya Bablani: sole author

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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