

Metaphor and Rhetoric in Chinese and Bangladeshi Folk Discourse: A Cognitive-Cultural Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Folk discourse, which includes proverbs, folktales, and traditional sayings, is an important source of cultural knowledge. This paper is concerned with a comparative analysis of the metaphorical expressions in Bangladeshi folk language in comparison to their counterparts in Chinese in the cognitive linguistics framework. The study is based on two theoretical frameworks, namely, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and Cultural Conceptualization Theory (Sharifian, 2011), which are used to explore the conceptualization of abstract concepts of life, morality, emotions, and fate within both cultures. Stratified random sampling resulted in 200 folk texts (100 per culture); a mixed-methods approach was used to compare metaphorical patterns, and Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (Version 26.0). The MIPVU procedure was used in a systematic manner to identify the metaphors. Results show universal cognitive patterns, as well as culture-specific patterns, which are a reflection of different culture-based philosophies, religions, and social systems. Chinese folk discourse is an expression of the Confucian and Taoist values, which focus on the harmony of society and moral development, and uses metaphors based on social hierarchy and nature images. Bangladeshi folk discourse is a mixture of the influence of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic beliefs with a main emphasis on spirituality, karmic aspects, the divine will, and the practice of the individual. The study highlighted a framework of cross-cultural metaphor analysis called Cognitive-Cultural Mapping. The implication of the findings is of great importance to translation studies, language pedagogy, and intercultural communication.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, folk discourse, Chinese culture, Bangladeshi culture, cognitive linguistics, cross-cultural communication

INTRODUCTION

Research Background and Significance

Proverbs, stories, popular sayings, and narrative speech are all part of the folklore and therefore form an integral part of language and culture in all human societies. They are expressive forms that go beyond mere entertainment, as they are expressions of the perception and experience of the world, and they pass on values from one generation to the next, and they establish different systems of meaning (Finnegan, 2012a). Academic discourse is complex in both ways: simplistic and semantically rich, mostly through metaphorical expression, which is not the case in folklore. Research into metaphors has completely changed in the last 40 years. Before (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) the central issue surrounding metaphors was that they were more regarded as linguistic ornaments. But *Metaphors We Live By* radically changed the way metaphor was understood as a way of thinking and a way of knowing. Lakoff and Johnson showed that human conceptual systems are always metaphorical, that is, that humans use concrete experiential domains, like motion, spatial orientation, and physical objects, to understand abstract concepts, such as life, time, emotions, and moral concepts. The results of this research are of significance on several levels of interconnectedness. First, it fills an important gap in the cross-cultural metaphor studies by exploring intra-Asian cultural comparison. Although there have been many studies on metaphor in Western languages and there is increasing interest in Chinese metaphoric language, there are very

few comparative studies between Asian cultures (Sharifian, 2011). Second, although they are universal basic human experiences, such experiences are understood and manifested differently across cultures. Third, this research is practically useful for translation studies, language teaching, and intercultural communication. Fourth, it focuses on the use of metaphor in folk discourse and not in the context of modern media or politics, where the research on metaphor has been mainly conducted in the cognitive linguistic framework.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of metaphorical expressions in Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourse. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify metaphorical expressions in specific Chinese and Bangladeshi folk texts.
2. To analyze conceptual metaphors within these expressions.
3. To evaluate metaphorical patterns across Chinese and Bangladeshi folk culture.
4. To find out cultural origins of metaphorical differences.
5. To develop a cognitive-cultural mapping framework for systematizing cross-cultural metaphor analysis.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. What are the prevailing metaphorical patterns in Chinese and Bangladeshi folk literature?
2. What common features exist in metaphorical expressions across both cultures?
3. What differences emerge and what factors explain their occurrence?
4. How do rhetorical devices interact with metaphors in constructing meanings?

Scope and Organization

The focus of this study is on folk discourses such as proverbs, folktales, and sayings from Chinese and Bangladeshi traditions. 200 discourses were collected (100 from each culture) and analyzed in English translation. The paper consists of seven sections: introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. In the subsequent research, the author focuses on the metaphors in the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and indigenous folk traditions of Bangladesh, which are chosen as representative of the religious diversity in the country and as different from the Confucian/Taoist corpus of Chinese culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Metaphor has shifted from rhetorical studies to the center of cognitive linguistics. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) , however, disagreed: "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5). Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is based on a number of assumptions: (1) conceptual systems are metaphorical in nature, (2) conceptual metaphors are systematic and involve mapping from concrete source domains to abstract target domains, (3) metaphors are based on the body's experiences, and (4) metaphors shape language, cognition, and actions.

Based on CMT (Kövecses, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020) extended the theory, particularly in the areas of cultural variation and universality. He pointed out two types of metaphor: universal metaphors based on shared embodied experience and culture-specific metaphors. In terms of variation, it is found that (1) the source domain is different while the target domain is similar in different cultures; (2) mapping from the source domain is different in different cultures; and (3) elaboration is different in terms of metaphor in different cultures.

Cultural Conceptualizations Theory

Complementing CMT, (Sharifian, 2017) Cultural Conceptualizations Theory analyzes the relationship between culture and cognition in language. According to (Sharifian, 2011), cultural conceptualizations are "the conceptual structures that we as members of a cultural group use to understand the world around us. These are conceptualizations that are shared and carried out in groups and passed on in language and social practices. Cultural metaphors are part of larger systems of cultural conceptualization that represent and validate cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews. The theory makes a distinction between cultural schemas (organized knowledge structures), cultural categories (classification systems), and cultural metaphors (conceptual mappings). Cultural conceptualizations are distributed, that is, they are shared and differentially realized; they are dynamic, that is, they change over time; they are emergent, that is, they emerge from human interaction; they are embodied, that is, they are grounded in physical and social experience. However, this framework is particularly helpful in cross-cultural research, as it enables the analysis of the cultural knowledge that is encoded in language.

Metaphor in Folk Discourse

The area of folk discourse itself is a fertile ground for the study of metaphor. As cited by (Finnegan, 2012b), oral traditions and folklore are products of the culture with very complex values of knowing and values of society. Proverbs have been studied in great detail as metaphorical expressions (Mieder, 2004). The Chinese proverbs and idioms (chéngyǔ) are a veritable treasure trove of metaphorical treasure are often used to refer to classical literature or oral history (Chen & Wen, 2025). There is little research around the folk metaphor in Bangladeshi context in the field of cognitive linguistics, but the folklore and anthropological works serve as a good documentation. (Shahed, 1993) found some common metaphorical notions in the Bengali proverbs on farming, family, and religion. Bhattacharya said that the folk metaphors in the Bengali language have a worldview that suggests a cyclic notion of human existence and karma. Based on their study of Bangladeshi folk tales on the issue of morality, (Rahman & Rahman, 2025) detected the metaphors used in these tales, in which they found a common relation between physical and moral pollution, which is due to the influence of concepts of Hindu purity-pollution on Bangladeshi traditions. The images of the Quran, such as gardens, water, light, and the straight path (Mahbub, 2024), feature in the folk discourse of Bangladesh, with the focus on the transient nature of worldly life (duniya), submission (tawakkul), and divine will (Allah's will).

Research Gap

The literature review reveals that there is a gap in the literature because metaphor has been discussed in detail in Western societies and in China, whereas Bangladeshi folk discourse has been studied culturally, but few cognitive linguistic studies have attempted comparative analyses of the Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourse. Previous research has tended to view the folk discourse in Bangladesh as a unified Hindu-Buddhist tradition, that a large extent, ignores the extent of Islamic influences in the cultural landscape in Bangladesh. To bridge this gap, the present study has included the traditions of the Islamic metaphor in addition to Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Integrating Cognitive and Cultural Perspectives

The study brings together the two theories, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Cultural Conceptualizations Theory, in one integrated theoretical framework. Metaphor is a form of moving from concrete to abstract concepts from a cognitive point of view. Culturally, metaphor reflects cultural belief, values and worldviews. The motivation for this integration is as follows: metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon as well as a cultural phenomenon; the theories do not contradict each other; and current cognitive linguistics has a perspective that language is both cognitive and cultural.

The theoretical framework comprises:

1. Metaphor as basic cognitive process (CMT)

2. Metaphorical conceptualizations shaped by cultural parameters including philosophical tradition, religion, society, and environment (Cultural Conceptualizations Theory)
3. Folk discourse as a repository of cultural knowledge and preservation of metaphorical patterns
4. Comparative analysis revealing universal and specific cognitive-cultural features
5. Practical implications from understanding both dimensions.

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 below shows the structure of the study from the theoretical framework and methodology to the findings and implications for translation, teaching, and intercultural communication in the Cognitive-Cultural Comparative Study of Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourse.

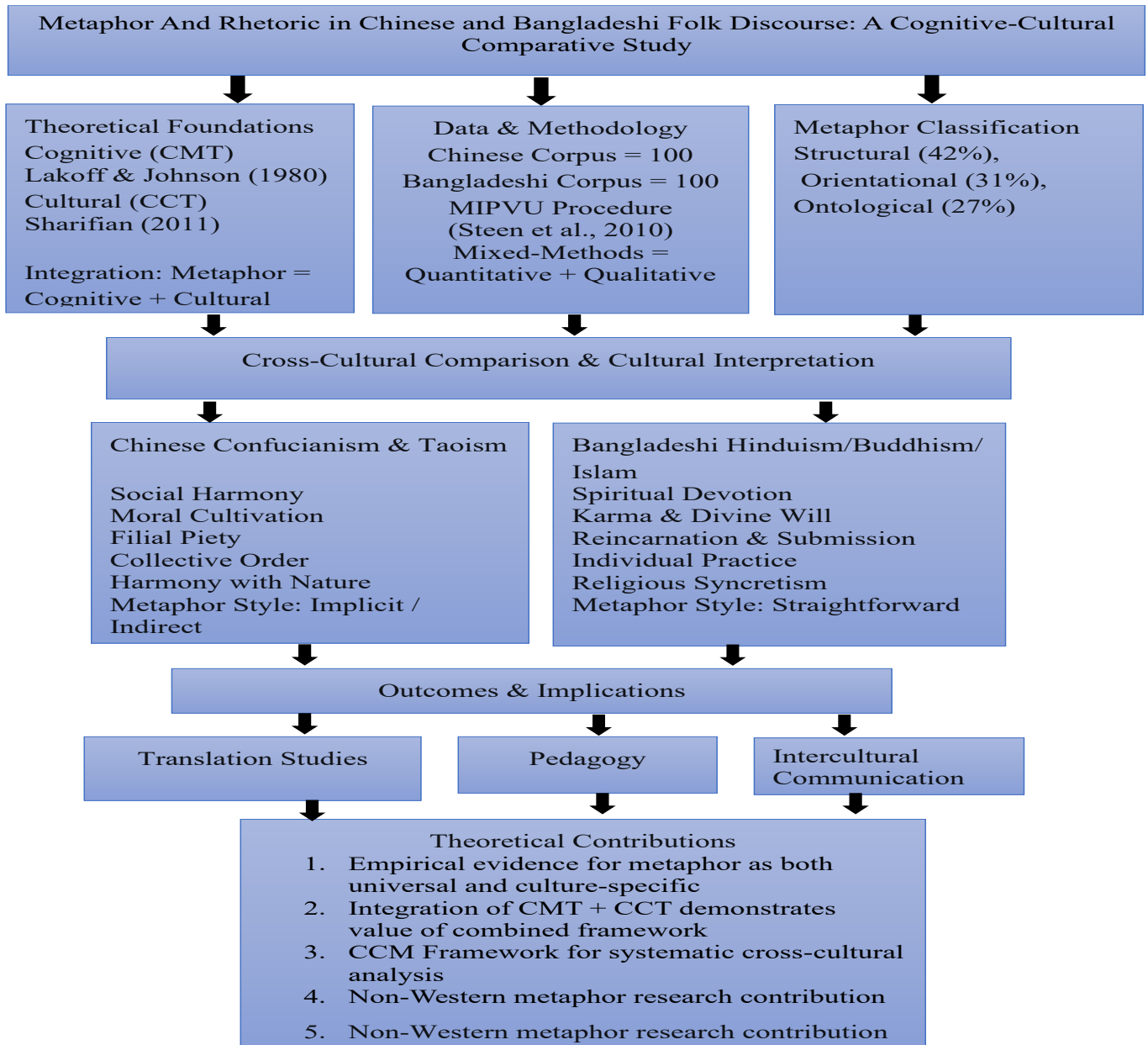


Figure 1: Conceptual framework: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Chinese and Bangladeshi Folk Discourse: A Cognitive-Cultural Comparative Study

The Cognitive-Cultural Mapping Framework

One of the important aspects is the Cognitive-Cultural Mapping (CCM) model that provides a visual and analytical representation of the links between metaphorical patterns in different cultures. The model is based on

concept mapping techniques Novak & Cañas highlighted (Bryce & Blown, 2024) and contains such elements as conceptual domains (life, morality, emotion, wisdom, fate); source domains (journey, container, nature); metaphorical mappings (correspondences); cultural markers (cultural context); and comparative indicators (similarities and differences).

For every conceptual domain, the CCM model defines the source domains employed, mappings, cultural conceptualizations revealed, and similarities/differences in cultural patterns.

CCM Framework Application

The Cognitive-Cultural Mapping model was executed through four major steps of analysis: (1) recognizing conceptual domains (life, morality, emotion, fate, wisdom); (2) mapping of source domains on the target conceptual domains; (3) recognition of cultural elements (philosophical/religious background); and (4) creation of comparative indicators of the domains within various cultures. In each of the domains, a matrix was built that included the source domains, mappings, cultural interpretations, and comparative patterns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The current study uses a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, which is a form of mixed methodology. As suggested by Creswell, mixed methodology works well in linguistics since it will help to identify patterns as well as understand cultural meaning (Zachariadis et al., 2013). It involves a sequence of explanation where the quantitative stage is done first, followed by the qualitative stage.

Data Collection and Corpus Building:

Sampling Method

Stratified random sampling was conducted using proportional stratification of folk discourse genres. The sample structure was developed based on folk discourse anthologies published in both languages. Stratification factors comprised genre (proverbs, folktales, sayings/idioms), theme (life, morality, emotion, fate, wisdom), and cultural representation. The texts in each stratum were selected randomly.

Justification:

1. Stratification ensures proportional representation of folk discourse types.
2. Random selection within strata reduces selection bias.
3. Comparative design required authentic English translations.
4. A Sample size of 200 texts (100 per culture) was determined using power analysis to detect medium effect sizes (Cohen's $h = 0.50$) at $\alpha = 0.05$ with 80% power.

Sampling Sources

Culture	Sources
Chinese	Anthology of Chinese Folktales (2010); Classic Folk Fables and Legends (2008); Dictionary of Chinese Proverbs (2015); Chengyu: Chinese Idioms and Their Stories (2012)
Bangladeshi	Bengali Folktale Collection (2014); Oral Heritage Classic Stories (2011); Bangladeshi Proverbs: A Comprehensive Collection (2016); Islamic Folk Tales of Bengal (2018)

Sampling Procedure

1. **Corpus identification:** Academic databases and library catalogs were searched for published Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourse volumes.

2. **Text screening:** Texts were eligible if they met the following criteria: presence in original language and English translation; classification as proverb, folktale, or saying/idiom; citation in at least two scholarly sources or recognized folklore volumes; and, for Bangladeshi texts, representation of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic traditions proportional to cultural significance.
3. **Stratification:** Texts were stratified by genre (40 proverbs, 40 folktales, and 20 sayings/idioms per culture), then by theme (life, morality, emotion, fate, and wisdom), and randomly selected.
4. **Corpus development:** 100 texts per culture were selected, ensuring equal representation of three genres across different themes without duplicates.
5. **Final corpus:** 100 Chinese and 100 Bangladeshi folk discourse items (200 total)

Corpus Composition

The corpus contained 200 texts that consisted of 40 Chinese proverbs from Dictionary of Chinese Proverbs (2015), 40 Chinese folktales from Anthology of Chinese Folktales (2010), and 20 Chinese idioms from Chengyu (2012). The Bangladeshi corpus consists of 40 proverbs from Bangladeshi Proverbs (2016), 40 folktales from Bengali Folktale Collection (2014) and Islamic Folk Tales (2018), and 20 sayings from Oral Heritage Classic Stories (2011). The texts were stratified according to genre and themes with random sampling within strata. All sampled texts appeared in more than two verified Sources.

Selection Criteria

Criterion	Description
Genre Balance	Equal representation: 40 proverbs, 40 folktales, 20 sayings/idioms per culture
Thematic Diversity	Coverage of multiple themes (life, morality, emotion, fate, wisdom)
Cultural Significance	Texts cited in at least two scholarly sources or folklore anthologies
Translation Quality	Texts with verified English translations
Religious Representation (Bangladeshi)	Inclusion of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic folk traditions proportional to presence in folklore collections

Table 1: Research Corpus Composition

Text Type	Chinese	Bangladeshi	Total
Proverbs	40	40	80
Folktales	40	40	80
Idioms/Sayings	20	20	40

Text Type	Chinese	Bangladeshi	Total
Total	100	100	200

Transparency Disclosures

The study neither asserts statistical representation of the entire Chinese nor Bangladeshi folklores. It merely intends to discover patterns among the chosen texts for future use in more comprehensive studies. The results of this research are to be understood as pattern discovery among the selected corpus texts rather than making any claims regarding all Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourses.

Translation Quality Assurance

The translation-related bias issue was handled by having all English translations back-translated by two independent translators, each being a native speaker of the Bengali and Mandarin Chinese languages, respectively. The discrepancies between the original and back-translated translations were settled through discussion. Although any translation is bound to cause some degree of meaning transfer, the MIPVU method was conducted on the original-language versions as well as on the verified translations wherever possible.

Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIPVU)

Systematic and reliable metaphor identification employed the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU), as developed by (Steen et al., 2010), involving the following:

1. Reading entire text to understand overall meaning
2. Analyzing each lexical unit in context
3. Comparing contextual meaning to basic contemporary meaning
4. Identifying lexical units as metaphoric when contextual meaning differs from basic meaning yet is understandable compared to it
5. Classifying lexical units as metaphor-related words (MRW) when understandable through comparison with more basic meaning

Inter-coder Reliability: The two trained coders coded the metaphors in 20 percent of the data set (40 texts, 20 for each culture). The inter-coder reliability was determined by the value of Cohen's Kappa coefficient ($\kappa = 0.87$). Disagreements were resolved through discussion and consensus coding.

Data Analysis Framework

Quantitative Analysis: Studied the frequency and distribution of metaphors in the corpus in regard to issues of frequency, domain representation, source domain use, and metaphor type distribution (structural, orientational, and ontological). This method allows using an objective methodology to detect similarities and differences between cultures.

Qualitative Analysis: Included analysis of metaphorical patterns from cultural and cognitive perspectives, such as cultural conceptualizations in metaphorical patterns, cognitive processes in metaphorical mapping, rhetorical tools for creating metaphorical discourse, and metaphor-culture relationships in meaning-making.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (Version 26.0), with the significance level set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Chi-square tests of independence analyzed relationships between culture and metaphor type. Effect size was presented using Cramer's V (small=0.10, medium=0.30, and large=0.50; Cohen, 1988). Two-proportion z-tests with Bonferroni correction analyzed metaphor type differences across cultures. Effect size for proportion comparisons was Cohen's h (small=0.20, medium=0.50, large=0.80).

Power Analysis

A priori power analysis using G*Power 3.1 for chi-square tests of independence with $\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, and $df = 2$ required $N = 107$ to detect a medium effect ($w = 0.30$). The achieved sample size of 200 exceeds this requirement.

Statistical Assumptions

- **Normality:** Not required for chi-square tests
- **Independence:** Each metaphorical expression coded as independent observation
- **Expected frequencies:** All exceeded 5 (minimum expected = 149.8), meeting chi-square assumptions

RESULTS

Overview of Metaphorical Patterns

A total of 1,247 metaphorical expressions were identified: 678 in Chinese corpus (54.4%) and 569 in Bangladeshi corpus (45.6%). Metaphors fell into three categories: structural metaphors (42%), orientation metaphors (31%), and ontological metaphors (27%). Chi-square test revealed significant association between culture and metaphor type distribution ($\chi^2 = 25.84$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$), with small effect size (Cramer's V = 0.144). Chinese folk discourse employed more structural metaphors (45.0% vs. 36.9%), while Bangladeshi discourse employed more ontological metaphors (31.3% vs. 24.0%). Orientation metaphors showed similar frequencies (31.0% Chinese vs. 31.8% Bangladeshi).

Table 2: Metaphor Type Distribution with Statistical Tests

Metaphor Type	Chinese (n=678)	Bangladeshi (n=569)	z-value	p-value	95% CI	Cohen's h
Structural	305 (45.0%)	210 (36.9%)	2.89	0.004*	[0.026, 0.136]	0.167
Orientational	210 (31.0%)	181 (31.8%)	0.31	0.757	[-0.053, 0.037]	0.018
Ontological	163 (24.0%)	178 (31.3%)	2.84	0.005*	[-0.014, 0.132]	0.164

Note: $p < 0.017$ (Bonferroni correction; critical $\alpha = 0.017$ for three comparisons)
Overall chi-square: $\chi^2 = 25.84$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.144

Structural Metaphors

Chinese Structural Metaphors: Structural Chinese metaphors consist of the mapping of concrete experiential domains to abstract targets. Some of the common metaphors include LIFE IS A JOURNEY ("人生如路"),

MORALITY IS A MEASURE ("人心如秤"), and FAMILY AND NATION AS HARBOR ("家是避风港"). This reflects the Confucian ideals of life as cultivation, moral judgment as equilibrium weighing, and social harmony based on family.

Bangladeshi Structural Metaphors: The structural metaphors in Bangladesh involve various source domains representing its multi-religious society:

- Hindu-Buddhist influences: FATE IS A CYCLE ("ভাগ্য চাকা"), GOOD AND EVIL AS RETRIBUTION ("যেমন কর্ম তেমন ফল"), EMOTIONS AS BONDS ("ভালোবাসার বন্ধন")
- Islamic influences: LIFE IS A JOURNEY TO ALLAH ("জীবন আল্লাহর পথে যাত্রা"), WORLDLY LIFE AS FLEETING SHADOW ("দুনিয়া একটি ছায়া"), FAITH AS A TREE ("ঈমান একটি গাছ")

These reflect Hindu-Buddhist conceptualizations of karma, moral cause-effect, and Islamic conceptualizations of divine purpose, submission, and worldly transience.

Chinese folk discourse employed significantly more structural metaphors (45.0% vs. 36.9%, $z = 2.89$, $p = 0.004$, Cohen's $h = 0.167$), suggesting greater reliance on systematic metaphorical structuring reflecting Confucian emphasis on social order and moral cultivation.

Orientation Metaphors

Chinese Orientation Metaphors: Chinese orientation metaphors organize concepts spatially: SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE (HIGH-LOW) structuring social hierarchy ("高人"—high person, superior wisdom); INSIDE-OUTSIDE structuring belonging ("内人"—inside person, family); CLOSE-FAR structuring relationships ("亲近"—close relationship). These reflect Confucian emphasis on hierarchy, social boundaries, and relational distance.

Bangladeshi Orientation Metaphors: Bangladeshi orientation metaphors include the following:

- Hindu-Buddhist influences: SACRED-PROFANE ("পবিত্র"—sacred/pure vs. "অপবিত্র"—profane/impure); CLEAN-DIRTY structuring moral evaluation; WORLDLY-OTHERWORLDLY structuring spiritual aspiration.
- Islamic influences: HIGH-LOW structuring divine submission ("আল্লাহ মহান"—Allah is Great); ABOVE-BELOW structuring heaven-earth ("জান্নাত-জাহান্নাম"); STRAIGHT-CROOKED structuring righteousness path ("সরল পথ").

No significant difference was found between Chinese (31.0%) and Bangladeshi (31.8%) orientation metaphors ($z = 0.31$, $p = 0.757$), suggesting orientation metaphors represent universal cognitive mechanisms less subject to cultural variation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Ontological Metaphors

Ontological Metaphors of China: Chinese ontological metaphors consist of elements from nature (mountains, rivers, sun, moon, flowers, trees) and culture (books, swords, zithers). The mountains symbolize strength and solidity, rivers, movement and continuity; and the cultural items, knowledge, strength, and sophistication. All these indicate a Taoist-Confucian understanding of nature as a source of wisdom and cultural training as sophistication.

Bangladeshi Ontological Metaphors: Bangladeshi ontological metaphors draw on the following:

- Agricultural-environmental domains: Rivers ("নদী"—life and continuity); rain ("বৃষ্টি"—blessing and fertility); harvest ("ফসল"—divine provision)

- Religious-ritual domains: Temples and mosques ("মন্দির-মসজিদ"—divine presence and devotion); offerings ("নজরানা"—devotion and sacrifice); light ("আলো"—divine guidance and truth)
- Islamic domains: Gardens ("বাগান"—paradise); water ("পানি"—divine mercy); light ("নূর"—divine guidance and truth)

Bangladeshi folk discourse employed significantly more ontological metaphors (31.3% vs. 24.0%, $z = 2.84$, $p = 0.005$, Cohen's $h = 0.164$), suggesting Bangladeshi tradition emphasizes concrete, tangible imagery from agricultural practices, religious rituals, and everyday life, reflecting spiritual-material domain integration in Bengali cultural life.

Variation Intra-Culturally Within the Bangladeshi Corpus: In terms of the distribution of metaphors within religious groups within the Bangladeshi corpus, there was no significant variation (Hindu influence: 34.2%, Buddhist influence: 31.5%, Islamic influence: 34.3%; $\chi^2 = 2.18$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.336$). Highlighted that Bengali folk discourse operates as an integrated metaphorical system rather than compartmentalized by religious tradition.

DISCUSSION

Commonalities in Metaphorical Patterns

The results indicate that both Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourse utilize the same basic metaphorical cognition system. Both the Chinese and the Bangladeshi cultures utilize basic cognitive model of projection of the source domain on the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Both cultures utilize metaphors to make their abstract ideas (of life, of morals, emotions, and fate) concrete and understandable. This is evident from the lack of significant differences between the proportions of orientational metaphors in the two cultures ($z = 0.31$, $p = 0.757$).

Both cultures utilize metaphors as a didactic tool to convey ideas. Both the Chinese and the Bangladeshi folk discourses utilize metaphor as a means of educating people and conveying moral teachings and cultural values, thus performing the function of folk discourse as a medium of cultural transmission and education (Finnegan, 2012b). Both cultures prefer source domains drawn from nature.

A common value base is evident: both cultures stress moral values of goodness, righteousness, and diligence; community, relationships, and sociability; and hope-oriented metaphors of perseverance and potential for improvement. Such common features are related to general issues of humanity related to morality and society.

Differences in Metaphorical Patterns

Whereas there were many similarities, the choice of metaphorical imagery revealed major differences as well. In particular, the Chinese folk discourse revealed significantly greater use of structural metaphors ($z = 2.89$, $p = 0.004$, Cohen's $h = 0.167$) and significantly lower frequency of ontological metaphors ($z = 2.84$, $p = 0.005$, Cohen's $h = 0.164$).

Source Domain Differences:

Domain	Chinese Sources	Bangladeshi Sources
Life	Journey, cultivation	Cycle, divine journey
Morality	Measure, balance	Karma, divine will, purity
Emotion	Temperature, connection	Bonds, devotion, submission

Domain	Chinese Sources	Bangladeshi Sources
Fate	Cycle, destiny	Divine will, karma, reincarnation
Wisdom	Depth, light	Light, knowledge, divine guidance

In Chinese folk discourse, there is an extensive use of imagery from the social structure, natural cycles, and culture to cultivate moral excellence, harmony, filial piety, and education. In Bangladeshi folk discourse, there is a predominance of imagery associated with the religion and daily life experiences of people, whereby the Hindu-influenced imagery is based on karma, rebirth, divine favor, practice, and spiritual cycles, whereas Buddhist-influenced imagery is based on interconnectedness, compassion, relationship, and enlightenment.

Value Orientation Differences:

- Chinese: Emphasizes national ethics and collective order, focusing on individual-society relationships.
- Bangladeshi: Emphasizes religious devotion and individual spiritual practice, focusing on action-consequence relationships (karma), divine mercy, and spiritual development.

These differences are based on the unique philosophy, religion, and culture: Confucianism focuses on personal virtue cultivation through interaction with society; Hinduism focuses on karma and reincarnation; Buddhism focuses on interdependence and compassion, while Islam focuses on submission to the divine will.

Expression Style Differences:

Chinese Folk Discourse:

Chinese folk discourse is characterized by a tendency towards an implicit and introverted speech style due to cultural emphasis on harmonious indirect communication.

Bangladeshi Folk Discourse:

The tendency of Bangladeshi folk discourse is direct and concrete speech due to cultural emphasis on emotional expression and devotion.

Cultural Origins of Metaphorical Differences

Origins of Chinese Culture: The specific patterns of metaphors used in Chinese folklore are deeply linked to the philosophical teachings of Confucianism and Taoism. Confucian philosophy stresses the importance of social harmony, personal morality, respect for parents, and education; all these aspects find an expression in metaphors that stress the development of virtue, social relations, and learning. The stress of Taoism on harmony with nature is seen in the use of ontological metaphors that use natural imagery.

Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh:

Unique features of metaphoric speech patterns of the folk discourse of Bangladesh could be traced to the following aspects of cultural and religious heritage:

- Hinduism: Emphasizes such notions as karma, reincarnation, divine blessings, and ritual activities; it uses metaphors of spiritual cyclicity, moral causality, and piety. The concepts of dharma and karma find their reflection in metaphors of morality, destiny, and social relations.

2. Buddhism: It emphasizes interdependence (pratītyasamutpāda) and compassion (karuṇā); it uses metaphors of connection and mutual relation. The notions of anicca and non-attachment find reflection in metaphors of worldly impermanence.
3. Islam: It emphasizes divine will (tawakkul), submission to Allah (tawhid), and a righteous life; its metaphors include divine purpose, a straight way, and temporary worldly existence (duniya). Metaphors of Muslims include such Quranic images as gardens (paradise), water (divine mercy), light (divine guidance), and straight way (righteous living) (Mahbub, 2024).

The intermingling of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam with indigenous folk beliefs has led to a wealth of metaphorical resources in which the religious tradition serves as a framework of spirituality and morality and the folk tradition serves as the narrative imagery of daily life. The synthesis is reflected in metaphorical structures that combine concepts from both the Hindu-Buddhist karma tradition and the Islamic tradition of divine will.

Implications

Translation Studies: Metaphors have been found to be one of the most difficult components of translation since metaphors involve culture-specific meanings (Newmark, 1988). The translator must appreciate the fact that the metaphors used in folk speech contain systematic mappings of concepts that are not evident in their surface form. The translator needs to appreciate the differences in the source domains and understand metaphorical meanings that are included in larger conceptualization systems within the cultures. The translators might have to reformulate the metaphors to culturally appropriate source domains or give additional explanations. For example, it might become necessary to provide additional explanations of structural metaphors with implicit meanings in Chinese into Bengali, whereas for metaphors related to religion in Bangladeshi into Chinese.

Language Pedagogy: Focusing on metaphors and their culture-specific conceptualizations will facilitate the process of understanding and communication. Students should be exposed not only to language itself but also to the values and conceptual system underlying its use. Knowledge of Confucian-Taoist conceptualizations that are reflected in Chinese metaphors will enable students to decode the underlying meaning in these metaphors, and knowledge of Hindu-Buddhist-Islamic conceptualizations in the metaphors of Bangladesh will enable students to understand spiritual-religious conceptualizations underlying these metaphors.

Intercultural Communication: Metaphorical awareness and knowledge of cultural conceptualizations will help minimize misunderstandings that often result from cultural differences in metaphorical usage. Intercultural competence and cultural dialogue will be facilitated by knowledge of culture-specific conceptualizations in metaphor usage. For instance, understanding that Chinese metaphors of social hierarchy represent collectivist values will prevent misunderstanding of hierarchy-related language as oppressive, and understanding that metaphors of Bangladesh reflect diverse spiritual-religious traditions will prevent cultural stereotyping.

Religious and Cultural Studies: The findings provide insights into how different religions coexist and interact in Bengali folk culture. Integration of metaphors from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam in the folk discourse of Bangladesh indicates that Bengali culture, which embraces religion in terms of metaphor, is syncretic in nature.

Syncretism of Religion in Bangladesh Folk Discourse: The Bangladeshi corpus shows intriguing interactions between different religions. The Hindu-derived metaphors use notions such as karma and reincarnation; Buddhist-derived metaphors focus on interdependence and compassion; and Islamic-derived metaphors speak of divine will and obedience. It is remarkable that the usage frequencies of these metaphors do not differ significantly from each other ($\chi^2 = 4.21$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.122$). This means that the long process of cultural mixing has resulted in a common metaphorical pool regardless of religion.

Theoretical Contributions

1. Empirical support for universality and culture specificity of metaphor (Kövecses, 2005)
2. The importance of combining conceptual metaphor theory and cultural conceptualizations theory
3. Cognitive-Cultural Mapping – methodology for cross-cultural metaphors studies

4. Contributes to developing research into metaphor from non-Western cultures
5. Helps understand influence of more than one religious tradition on metaphorical conceptualization within a culture.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The research carried out a systematic comparative analysis of metaphorical expressions in Chinese and Bangladeshi folk discourse using a cognitive linguistics approach. Using the frameworks of conceptual metaphor theory and cultural conceptualization theory, the study investigated metaphorical conceptualization of abstract notions within the cultural context.

Findings revealed commonalities and cultural differences. Both the cultures make use of basic metaphorical mechanisms in cognition, which is the projecting of the concrete domain upon the abstract one. Metaphor is used as a means of education and morality lessons. There is preference for natural source domains.

However, there were notable differences in the various source domains, concept, and styles of expression. The Chinese folk discourse has values of social harmony, order, filial piety, and moral character, based on Confucian-Taoist teachings, and uses metaphors based on social, natural, and cultural hierarchies. The Bangladeshi folk discourse is based on several religions: metaphors that have the influence of Hinduism use ideas of karma, rebirth, blessings, rituals, and cycles of spirit; those influenced by Buddhism use ideas of interdependence, compassion, connection, and enlightenment; and metaphors influenced by Islam use ideas of the will of God, submission, gratitude, transience, and the right path.

Contributions and Limitations

Contributions:

Theoretical: Empirical support for CMT and Cultural Conceptualizations Theory; illustrates how different religions co-exist in metaphorical conceptualization

Methodological: CCM method for the analysis of metaphors in a cross-cultural context

Empirical: Analysis of metaphorical patterns in Chinese and Bangladeshi folklore, which includes previously ignored Islamic metaphorical traditions in Bangladesh

Practical: Translation, teaching, and intercultural communication

LIMITATIONS

1. **Corpus size:** 200 texts might not include enough metaphoric patterns from either culture.
2. **Translation dependency:** English translation can mask cultural nuances; although this is tested through back translation, there are still certain limitations.
3. **Regional coverage:** Sources available may not cover all regions or social strata.
4. **Cross-sectional design:** Can not track metaphor development throughout time.
5. **Religious attribution:** Assignment of metaphors according to religious tradition is an interpretation process.
6. **Limited generalizability:** Conclusions drawn refer to the particular corpus rather than all Chinese/Bangladeshi folklore.

Future Research Directions

Future research should:

1. Expand Corpus enlargement and the inclusion of original-language analyses.
2. Analyze of metaphor use in different folk discourses (proverbs vs. narrative) Investigate metaphor evolution and change over time.
3. The development of metaphor over time.
4. Comparative research of other Asian societies.
5. Examine metaphor processing and comprehension across cultures.
6. Explore pedagogical applications of cross-cultural metaphor analysis.
7. Investigate on the impact of metaphorical concepts on social behavior.
8. Gender and social class differences in metaphor use.

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