

Cognitive semantic study of concepts of life and death in Ghani Khan's poetry

Khan Sardaraz

University of Science & Technology, Bannu

Aasia Nusrat

COMSATS University Lahore Campus, Lahore,

Previous literature either penned down the philosophical and mystic attributes of Ghani Khan's poetry, or the literary qualities of his poetry, but perhaps no study has undertaken cognitive linguistic analysis of his poetry. The present paper attempts to carry out cognitive semantic study of the concepts of life and death in Ghani Khan's poetry from cognitive linguistic perspective. Conceptual metaphor theory will be used to analyze the poetic language of Ghani Khan's Kulyat in order to find out the conceptual schemas, which are used in description of life and death in his poetry. This theory holds that everyday language as well as poetic language is generated, processed and comprehended by the conceptual metaphors in human conceptual system. The analysis shows that Ghani Khan has used ten (10) key conceptual metaphors in description of life and death with slight cultural deviations in nine poems on the titles of life and death. This paper has also found that since Ghani Khan has used the key conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A DAY, he has also used LIFE IS TWO DAYS drawing upon the conceptualization of life in Pukhtun culture. This paper finds that the figurative language in Ghani Khan's poetry is based on the conceptual metaphors, and it recommends further research on Pashto everyday language and poetry from cognitive-linguistic and cognitive-semantic perspectives in order to validate the various tenets of conceptual metaphor theory through cross-cultural research.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, metaphor, experiential gestalt, life, death

Life and Death are elusive concepts, which have evaded any definition (Lukács, 1978), but they are universal aspects of life (Heidegger, 1962). They have permeated the whole human verbal discourse, but due to their abstract and vague nature, they are often described in metaphorical and figurative terms. However, the traditional rhetoricians and linguists either treat the concepts of life and death literally, or in metaphoric and novel terms in literature, and thus, they miss the conceptual nature of these metaphoric concepts in literature (Sardaraz & Ali, 2016). This has been due to the established Aristotelian approaches to the figurative language in Pashto literature (Khan & Ahmad, 2017). Conceptual metaphor approach has recently been introduced to both Pashto everyday language (Khan & Ahmad, 2017) and poetry (Pischurnikova, 2017). However, the cognitive semantic

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Khan, Sardaraz¹, Director ORIC, University of Science & Technology, Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, email. sardarazsorani@gmail.com

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1. Dr. Khan Sardaraz initiated the idea, analyzed the data and completed the first write-up of the paper.
2. Dr. Aasia Nusrat reviewed the article, contributed to the literature review, methodology and discussions.

approach to metaphor in Pashto language and literature is quite scanty. This paper is an attempt to investigate the concepts of life and death in Ghani Khan poetry '*Da Ghani Khan Kulyat*' (Ghani, 1985), using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hereafter CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989). This theory holds that the concepts of life and death are abstract and metaphoric terms, which are learned and processed in language through various experiential gestalts employing cross domain mappings. These cross domain mappings in human thought and language are termed as conceptual metaphors. They are grounded in human conceptual system, and they both generate language and meaning construction. This paper has used CMT to analyze nine (09) poems on the titles of *Life* (ژوند *zhund*) and *Death* (مرگ *murg*) in Ghani Khan's *Kulyat* (Ghani, 1985). The study has found that concepts of life and death in Ghani Khan's poetry are structured through the experiential gestalts of journey, growth, food, and departure, autumn, personified beings and awful beings. In other words, the poetic language of Ghani Khan's poetry has used the cultural everyday experiential concepts to explain the abstract concepts of life and death. This paper suggests further studies on investigating the conceptual metaphors in Pashto everyday language and poetry.

Literature Review

Previous literature is replete with literary and philosophical discussion on Ghani Khan's poetry. Various studies have investigated Ghani Khan's poetry from various angles, such as modernism (Shaheen, 2005), romanticism (Babar, 2005), modern and romanticism (Iqbal, Awan, Ullah, & Ali, 2014), love and beauty (Bacha & Sheema, 2010), pantheism (Rehman & Ahmad, 2016), pictorial quality (Khan & Sher, 2013), and style (Takor, 2014). Philosophically, life and death are overwhelming concepts for Ghani Khan, and Jahani (2014) holds that Ghani Khan tried his best to look for solutions to the vague concepts of life and death, which he never found till his own death. Ghani Khan was never afraid of death, but he distasted empty life and useless and futile death, as Ghani Khan expressed in his own words,

ستا د مرگه نه بیریرمه پښتون یم

Stha da margah nuh yaregumah paShhthun yum

I am not afraid of your Death (because) I am Pakhtun

خو می تش ژوندون او خوشی مرگ ته قار شی

kho me thush zhundun aw khushi murg thah qaar shi

But, I do hate empty life and futile death

However, Ghani Khan does not consider death as the end of life, rather he yearns like other poets for eternal life (Abbas, 2014). Ghani Khan regards death in various philosophical ways, such as God's love and mercy for man, a covenant between the lover and the beloved, a covenant between the being and non-being, and continuity of life after death, as in his own words, "death harbours the hidden port of life's ocean". This shows that Ghani Khan has made use of metaphorical language to explain these abstract concepts. But, the traditional rhetoricians regard metaphor as the use of a lexical expression or noun for a meaning other than its original meaning. Thus, the traditional critics missed a bulk of conventional metaphors which Ghani Khan has used for abstract concepts. For example, in the above two verses, مرگه (from Death) and تش ژوندون (empty life) are metaphors, but they are processed literally. These metaphors can be explained through CMT. CMT holds that metaphor is asymmetrical mapping between the source domain and target domain in the human mind. In other words, metaphor is not a linguistic phenomenon, but it is conceptual in nature, and is expressed pervasively in language. Metaphor helps in language processing, inference and categorization. In the above examples, مرگه (from Death) is generated by the conceptual metaphor

GREAT CHAIN OF BEING, while *ئش ژوندون* (empty life) is generated by the conceptual metaphor *LIFE IS A CONTAINER*.

The concepts of life and death have also been investigated from CMT perspective in previous literature in English language by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Grady (1997) and Kövecses (2002) and in English literature by Lakoff and Turner (1989), in Turkish by Özçalışkan (2003) and in Arabic by Sardaraz and Ali (2016, 2019). These studies reveal various source domains for mapping the concepts of life and death. Özçalışkan (2003) and Sardaraz and Ali (2016) found similarities in life and death metaphors across different languages. Khan and Ahmad (2017) have also found similarity in source domains for the target domain of life between English and Pashto languages during their investigation of source domains for life in Pashto everyday language. The present paper will focus poetic metaphors in Ghani Khan’s poetry to find out the basic conceptual schemas behind the figurative language in his poetry, and will analyze them on the model of Lakoff and Turner (1989). According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), poetic metaphors are based on common conceptual metaphors, but the poets consciously extend and elaborate them in novel ways. Investigation of the common experiential gestalts structuring the abstract concepts of life and death will be the focus of this paper. Thus, this study may not only extend the cognitive linguistic approaches to languages across cultures, but will be instrumental in changing the Aristotelian concept of metaphor in Pashto language. Moreover, this paper will open new venues for investigating the poetic metaphors from cognitive linguistic perspective.

Method

This paper will use (CMT) approach on the model of Lakoff and Turner (1989) to study the concepts of life and death in Ghani Khan’s poetry. According to CMT, metaphors are unconsciously processed because of the metaphorical nature of human conceptual system. Even the poetic metaphors are based on the mundane everyday conceptual metaphors, but they extend and elaborate the conventional metaphors in unusual ways through conscious effort. The poets often make use of the general conceptual metaphors in using novel metaphors because of their cultural experiences (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). In a conceptual metaphor, the source domain maps the target domain in asymmetrical fashion to generate linguistic metaphoric expressions and make them comprehensible, as is the case with *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor below.

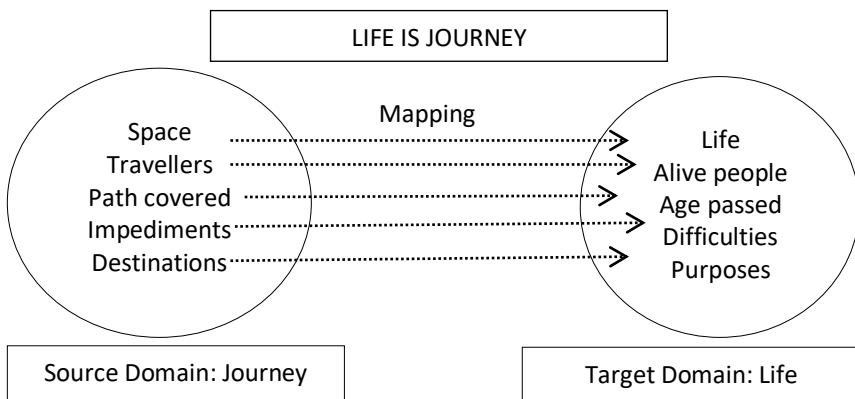


Figure 1. Diagrammatical representation of *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*

CMT holds that life and death cannot be comprehended by a single conceptual metaphor because of their complex nature, so myriad of conceptual metaphors are often used to process and comprehend life and death (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). In other words, many experiential gestalts are used as source domains to process the abstract concepts of life and death.

This paper searched “*Da Ghani Kulyat*” for poems bearing the title of “*life*” (ژوند/ ژوندون) and “*death*” (مرگ / مرگي) and found nine (09) poems. These nine (09) poems were selected for analysis because Ghani Khan discussed the ideas of life and death at length in these poems. The poems were read, and metaphor identification procedure (MIP)(Group, 2007) was adopted for retrieving the linguistic metaphoric expressions. A lexical unit used for a meaning which has a large semantic distance from its basic meaning, was marked as metaphor. For example, in the verse (مرگ د راشي) “*Murg de rashi, let the death come*”, the lexical unit “*murg-death*” is not a physical being which can literally come. As it deviates from its basic meaning of segregation of soul, this is marked as metaphor. The event of death takes the form of personified being, which can arrive. This procedure helped in identification of fifty eight (58) linguistic metaphors in the nine (09) poems. These metaphors were then categorized on the basis of source or target domain following Kövecses (2002), and the coding process revealed ten (10) conceptual metaphors in the data. Each metaphoric expression was then analyzed on the basis of CMT. The analysis is detailed below.

Results

The analysis reveals complexity of conceptual metaphors, which are used by Ghani Khan in his poetry. The most prevalent conceptual metaphors in his poetry are LIFE IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS MUSIC, LIFE IS A DREAM, LIFE IS A YEAR, LIFE IS A DAY, LIFE IS TWO DAYS, LIFE IS FOOD, DEATH IS DEPARTURE, DEATH IS PERSON/AWFUL BEING and DEATH IS AUTUMN. These metaphors are analyzed and discussed below.

Life is a Journey

The study found that the conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A JOURNEY has been used in the poetry of Ghani Khan to answer the vague question of what is life. The following verses reflect the use of this conceptual metaphor behind the linguistic metaphoric expressions.

1. ژوند خو تله دي يو په مخه
Zhund kho thluh di yo puh mukhah
Life is but a journey on a way
2. غورزیدل او پاسیدل دي
Ghurzedul aw paasedul di
It is stumbling and rising
3. تکی سوز دي تکی ساز دي
Tuke soz de tuke saaz de
A speck of it is grief, a speck of it is happiness
4. څه خندل دي څه ژاړل دي
Tsu khandul di tsu zharhul di
A speck of it is smiling, a speck of it is weeping
5. ژوند په سترگو د عاشق کي
Zhund pu sthurgo da Aashiq k
In the eyes of lover, life is but
پلوشه ده د خمار
Palwashah da khumaar

A gleam of thrill

6. په صحرا کي لتول دي

Puh sehra ke latawul di

It is but a search in the desert

د آشنا د کوڅي لار

Da Aashna da koTse laar

For the path of beloved's home

In these verses, life (ژوند *zhund*, life) is conceptualized as journey through the lexical unit “*thluh di yo puh mukhah*” (journey on a way). The lexical units “*Ghurzedul*” (stumbling) maps the failures and “*paasedul*” (rising) structures the success after failures in life. In (3-4), the lexical units “*Tuke soz*” (burning), and “*tuke saaz*” (music), and in (4) “*khandul*” (smiling) “*zharhul*” (weeping) serve as source domains the grief and happiness in passing of life. In (5) to (6), life is conceptualized as the search for the path of beloved's home by lover. All these verses reflect that LIFE IS JOURNEY metaphor is behind the generation of these linguistic expressions.

Life is a River

Ghani Khan also conceptualizes life as river in his poetry. This schema draws on more basic schema of LIFE IS JOURNEY. This schema is found at work in the following verses.

7. ژوندون څه دي يو سيند دي روان دي

Zhunun Tsu de yo sind de rawaan de

Life is but a river flowing

8. اول لوی لوی موجونه گتونه

Awal loy loy mojuna gatuna

First giant rock-like waves

9. بیا تنش شر شي چپي بي وړي شي

Bia tush shar shi chape ye ware shi

Then it becomes empty waste, its waves grow small

10. غلي لگي شي ډير شي ډبونه

Ghule luge shi der shi dabunah

Becomes a silent fog and many pools

11. ژوند م ډوب درياب دي رورو خور شو سمندر کي

Zhund me dub daryaab de roro khor sho samandar ke

My life is a silent river, spread into an ocean

12. ځانځکي روک درياب کي شو په طمعو د ساحل

TsaTske ruk daryaab ke shop uh thama'o da sahel

A drop got lost in the ocean at the hope of coast

In the above verses at (7), the life as river is conveyed through the lexical units of “*yo sind de rawaan de*” (a river flowing), at (8), the emotional youth of life is mapped through “*loy loy mojuna gatuna*” (giant rock-like waves), at (9) and (10) the stagnancy of old age is explained through “*tush shar shi chape ye ware shi*” (becomes empty waste, its waves grows small) and “*Ghule luge shi der shi dabunah*” (Becomes a silent fog and many pools). The poet's life is charted as silent river through the lexical units of “*dub daryaab*” (silent river), which spreads into the ocean of life, while thinking over the life in example (11). In linguistic expression at (12), life is conveyed as drop, lost in river, at the hope of reaching the coast, conceptualizing the purpose of life as the coast of an ocean, drawing on

the PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS. The underlying key conceptual metaphor behind the verses is PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS JOURNEY, because of the inherent similarity between source domain of journey conceptualizing life and the flowing river conceptualizing life.

Life is a Dream

The linguistic expressions in the verses below manifest the conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A DREAM in the poetry of Ghani Khan. This metaphor draws on the experiential gestalt of dreams to map the failure of human to carve out their own way for themselves due to the society. The metaphoric linguistic expressions are analyzed below.

13. ژوندون څه دي يو خوب دي ليدې شي
Zhundun Tsu de yo khob de lide shi
Life is but a reverie, can be seen
14. دځندا او ژړا واک د بل دي
Da khanda aw zharā waak da bul de
Laughing and weeping in another's man authority
15. يو رنگين شان محل د هوا دي
Yo raNgin shaan mahal da hawa de
It is one coloured dome of air
16. د هر گوټ د هوا واک د بل دي
Da har gut da hawa waak da bul de
The air of every corner is in another man's authority
17. که وي تريخ که وي خور تيريدې شي
Kah wi thrikh kah wi khog therede shi
Whether it is bitter or sweet, it can passed on
18. ژوندون څه دي يو خوب دي ليدې شي
Zhundun Tsu de yo khob de lide shi
Life is but a reverie, which is dreamed

In the above verses, at (13) life “*Zhund*” is conceptualized as a reverie through the lexical units of “*yo khob de*” (is a reverie). The sense is continued to verses at (11) to (16), depicting life as a reverie, where man has no authority to decide his happiness and miseries through the lexical concepts of “*khanda aw zharā waak da bul de*” (Laughing and weeping in another's man authority) at (14), “*mahal da hawa*” (dome of air) and “*da hawa waak da bul de*” (the air is in another man's authority). As in dream, man's life, his happiness, miseries and hopes, is another man's authority. At (17), the lexical units “*da hawa waak da bul de*” instantiates the conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS FOOD, but the lexical unit “*therede shi*” (it can be passed) joins it to (18), where life is conceptualized as a reverie, which can be passed and dreamt off. All these examples show the conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A DREAM, and the poet is drawing on the psychological experiential gestalts of dreams

Life is Music

Ghani Khan draws on the experiential gestalt of music as a source domain for life. This schema of LIFE IS MUSIC, the poetry of Ghani Khan depicts, draws on the more key metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY. This conceptual schema has been found in the following verses.

19. ژوندون څه دي يو ساز دي غږيري
Zhundun Tsu de yo saaz de ghagegi

- Life? It is such a music, being played
20. کله پوست کله زیر کله بم
Kulah posth kulah zir kulah bam
Sometimes, soft, sometimes high tone, sometime low
21. کله اورسویزده شور غوغا شي
Kulah or-swazedah shor ghawgha shi
Sometimes it becomes burning ruckus in a row
22. کله علي قلاار شومه دم
Kulah ghule qalaar shumadam
Sometimes low and deadly calm
23. کله شرنګ د ګونګرو شي خمار
Kulah shraᅅg da guᅅgro shi khumaar
Sometimes, it becomes intoxication of ringing silver handbells
24. کله یخ اسویلي او ماتم
Kulah yakh asweli aw matham
Sometimes cold sighs and mourning
25. کله تال مستانه د خیام شي
Kulah thaal masthaana da Khayyam shi
Sometimes it becomes flushed basin of Khayym
26. کله سپور ماښامونه د غم
Kulah spor maShaamunah da gham
Sometimes the coarse evenings of grief

The verse at (19) reveals that life is mapped by music which is conveyed through the lexical units “*yo saaz de ghagegi*” (a music, being played). The same sense is extended in the succeeding lines through the lexical units “*posth*” (soft), “*zir*” (high tone) and “*bam*” (low tone) at (20) conceptualizing the easy and happy life of child, hard and emotional life of youth and calm and serene life of old age. In (21) and (22), the same sense is further extended in the lexical units of “*or-swazedah shor ghawgha*” (burning ruckus and row) and “*ghule qalaar shumadam*” “Sometimes low and deadly calm” of life are encoded in the music of sorrow and music of low tone. The verses at (23) and (24) say the expression of thrill and sighs of grief in life is sung in the ringing of silver handbells. Similarly, the music either expresses the thrill of Khayyam or the grief at evenings at (25) and (26). The music is used as experiential gestalt to express the states of life, which change as rapidly as change in the music. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS MUSIC and STATES OF LIFE ARE THE TONES OF MUSIC are used consistently in the above lines.

Life is a Year, Life is a Day

The conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A YEAR and LIFE IS A DAY have also been found during the analysis. Duration of time has been used as experiential gestalt to map the temporariness of life. It reflects that abstractness is a graded phenomenon (Sardaraz & Ali, 2017), and one abstract concept can serve as experiential gestalt for a more abstract concept. This is found in the following verses.

27. لکه کال کي سپرلي او خزان
Lukah kaal ke sparli aw khazan
As in a year, spring and autumn
28. لکه روح کي سبا او ماښام

- Lukah rooh ke sabaa aw maaŠhaam*
As in a spirit, morning and evening
29. یو دوران د سخار او ماښام دي
Yo dawraan da sakhaar aw maŠhaam de
(life) is a duration of morning and evening
د ماښام او سبا واک د بل دي
Da maaŠhaam aw sabaa waak da bul de
Evening and morning are in another man's authority
30. هر څه د رب او همه د رب
Har Tsu da Rab aw hama da Rab
Everything is for the Lord, all belong to the Lord
زه یو ماښام له راغلي يم
Zuh yo maaŠhaam lah raghule yum
I have come just for one evening
31. باغ او انگور میخانه د یار
Baagh da angur maihanah da yaar
Garden of grapes, bar of beloved
زه یو جام له راغلي يم
Zuh yo jaam lah raghule yum
I have come just for one cup
32. د ژوند دي دوه ورځي
Da zhund de dwa wraze
This life is comprised of two days
خلاص به شي تیر به شي
Khlaas bah shi ther bas hi
It will end up, it will pass away

In verse (27), the lexical units “*kaal ke sparli aw khazan*” (spring and autumn in year) conceptualizes the transitoriness of this temporal life. The transitoriness and temporariness of life is conceptualized through the lexical units “*sabaa aw maaŠhaam*” (morning and evening) in (28), “*dawraan da sakhaar aw maŠhaam*” (duration of morning and evening) in (29), “*yo maaŠhaam*” (one evening) in (30) and “*Da zhund de dwa wraze*” (This life is of two days) in (32). All these lexical units reflect conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A DAY. LIFE IS TWO DAYS in metaphoric expression at (34) draws on the cultural conceptualization of life as one day of birth and one day of death. Thus, all the examples reflect the conceptual schema of TEMPORARY LIFE IS DURATION OF TIME. This shows that abstractedness is a graded phenomenon and the less abstract concept serves as a source domain for the more abstract concept. The same temporary nature of life at (31) is conceptualized as “*Zuh yo jaam lah raghule yum*” (I have come just for one cup) giving the conceptual schema of LIFE ON EARTH IS DRINKING OF ONE CUP.

Life is Food

LIFE IS FOOD metaphor has also been found in the Ghani Khan's poetry. The analysis found the following linguistic instantiation of this conceptual metaphor in the data.

33. چه په ژوند کې سخته نه وی
Che pu zhund ke sakhtah nu v
When there is no difficulty in life

لکه بی مالگی طعام
Lukah be-maalge thghaam
 (it is) like a nonsaline food

This verse shows the linguistic instantiation of conceptual metaphor LIFE IS FOOD. In traditional rhetoric, this linguistic instantiation is a simile, but in cognitive linguistic, it is an example of conceptual metaphor where the source domain “*be-maalge thghaam*” (nonsaline food) scaffolds the target domain of easy life.

Life is Person

Analysis also revealed the presence of LIFE IS PERSON metaphor in Ghani Khan’s poetry. This conceptual metaphor is based on GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor which involves the attribution of human nature and attributes to inanimate phenomena. This conceptual metaphor is found in the following verse.

34. ژوند یو څاڅکي مینه ده د مینې ننداره کړي
Zhund yo TsaTske meenah da nandaarah krhi
 Life is a drop of love, admiring the love
 توري ختي واخلې ترې نه جوړه میناره کړي
Thore khate wakhli thre na jorha minarah krhi
 Take the grey clay and build a minaret from it

In the above verses, life is mapped by the person who can enjoy and admire the sight of love, and can take clay and make a minaret from it. It is evident from the lexical units “*da nandaarah krhi*” (admiring the love), conceptualizing life as a person, having a physical and social being with attributes of watching and admiring the love.

Death is Person

Death is one of those abstract concepts which get representation through multiple experiential gestalts. Ghani Khan looks at death sometimes as physical entity or awful being. This metaphor is also based on GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor. This conceptual metaphor is found in the following verses.

35. مرگ گواه در رب د مینې رحم د انسان سره
Murg gawaah da Rab da mine raham da insaan sarah
 Death is witness of the Lord’s mercy with humans
 36. مرگ بس یو گواه زما د ژوند ستا د جلال
Murg bs yo gawaah zumah da zhund stha da jalaal
 Death is one witness of my life and of Your Greatness
 37. خو مرگ د پرده پوش کړي د آدم زوال له هوشه ورک
Kho murg de pardah-posh krhi da Aadam zawaal lah hoshah work
 Death veils you and carries you away from thoughts of humans decline
 38. که دې ډیر په لیلی مست شي
Kah de der puh laila masth shi
 If one becomes very excited because of his or her beloved

- خو آخر به د مرگ یار شي
Kho akher bah da murg yaar shi
 He will encounter his death
39. نه په تلي مرگ ستومان یم
Nuh puh thuli murg sthomaan yum
 I do not feel fatigued because of the death which had passed away
 نه راتلونکي نه یریرم
Nu rathlunki na yaregum
 I am not afraid of the one which is coming
40. مرگ د راشي
Murg de rashi
 Let the death comes
 چه کله یی وس وي
Che kulah ye was wi
 Whatever time he has the power
41. زور د مرگي زیات دي که دي زیات د ميني زور سپورمی
Zor da murgi zyat de kah de zyat da mine zoor spogmai
 Either the death or the love has more power, Spogmai
42. د مرگ یریدل داسي چه ژوند و ورته اور
Da murg yaredul dase che zhund wu wurthah or
 Fear of death was such that life was fire for them
43. چه زه شوم وربنکاره یو یار م بل یار ته لگیا و
Che zu shum wurShakaarah yo yaar bul yaar ta lagyaa wu
 When I arrived there, one friend was talking to another
 لاله د یري مر شم چه د مرگ مخ رابنکاره شي
Lalah da yare murh shum che da murg much raShkaarah shi
 O' brother! I die of fear when the face of death appears
44. تول حسن د جمدون د مرگ د تورو سترگو نور دي
Tol husun da jamdun da murg da thoro sturgo thor de
 The beauty of life is embedded in the light of the dark eyes of death
45. وي وايه لیوانیه وي خلق ته مرگ ته خاندې
We wayah lewaniyah wai khulq thu murg ta khande
 Say, O' mad man! The people say, you welcome the death
 دا دي كي د خندلو څه خبره ده آشنا
Da de ke da khandulo Tsu khaburah dah Aashna
 O' friend! What is the point of laughing at death?
46. راڅه گلابه، ژوند او مرگ دواړو ته خاندې
Razah gulabah, zhund aw murg dwaarho thah khandah
 Come dear, smile for both life and death
 په دواړو كي یو هم نه دي لایق ستا د ژړه
Puh dwarho key yo ham nuh de layeq stha da zharhah
 In each of the two, none deserves your wail
47. هغه وي که مرگي نو ژوند به هم داغسي ورک و
Haghuh we kah murge nu wu zhund bah ham daghase work wu
 He said, if there had been no death, life would have strayed
48. که مرگ نه و، دنیا کی څوک به څه پوهیده په سا؟
Kah murg nu wu, dnyaa ke Tsok bah Tsu poheduh puh saa
 If there was no death, who would have known life

49. که مرگ نه و جمدون به و، د روکو روک جهان
Kah murg nuh wu jamdun ba wu da ruko ruk jahaan
 If there was no death, the life would have a lost world
50. که مرگ نه و، ژوند به نه و
Kah murg nu wu zhundun bah nu wu
 If there was no death, life would not have an existence
51. د ژوند کې چه څه خوند دي مرگ جوړ کړي دي په ځان
dah zhun ke che Tsu khwand de murg jorh kurhe de puh zaan
 Whatever taste the life has, death has made it itself

In the above verses, the key conceptual metaphor is GREAT CHAIN OF BEING. Human attributes are given to inanimate phenomenon of death. Death is mapped as a personified being. It is mapped as a witness in (35) and (36), which is evident from the lexical unit of “*gawaah*” (witness), a person who gives testimony of something. In verse at (37), death is personified as one who veils someone from something, encoded in the lexical units “*murg de pardah-posh krhi*” (death veils you). Death attains a human character in (38) to (41), which can be befriended “*da murg yaar shi*” (meets death or becomes friend of death) at (38), can come or go “*thuli murg*” (passed death), “*rathlunki*” (coming) or “*Murg de rashi*” (let the death come) at (39) and (40), or can have power or force “*Che kulah ye was wi*” (Whatever time he has power), “*Zor da murgi zyot de*” (The death has more power) at (40) and (41). Death is also presented as awful being at (42) to (44) through lexical units “*Da murg yaredul dase*” (Fear of death was such), “*da yare murh shum che da murg much raShkaarash shi*” (I die of fear when the face of death appears) and “*da murg da thoro sturgo*” (the dark eyes of death) respectively. At (45) and (46) death is personified as being with which one can feel happy and welcome it “*murg ta khande*” (you say welcome to death) and “*thah khandah*” (say welcome) respectively. In verses at (47) to (50) death is structured as a being which can have existence “*murg/murge nu wu*” (if death was not there), as if death was a physical being to be present somewhere. In verse at (51) death is mapped as a person which can make life tasty by his presence. So all the lines reflect Ghani Khan maps death as person or awful being in his poetry.

Death is Departure

Death is also mapped in Ghani Khan’s poetry as departure. The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS DEPARTURE is found in the following verses.

52. مرگ بوه وعده د سپرلي شوي د خزان سره
Murg yawa waa’dah da sparli shuwi da khazan sarah
 Death is a promise agreed upon by Spring with the autumn
53. مرگ هغه نيټه چه جانان کينبوه د جانان سره
Murg haghah netah che janan keShwa da janan sarah
 Death is the date appointed by the lover to the beloved
54. مرگ پټه نگاه د مکان د لامکان سره
Murg putah nikah da makaan da laamakaan sarah
 Death is the secret engagement of the temporal with the eternal
55. مرگ کينې د ژوندون د درياب پټه کناره ده
Murg ke da zhundun da daryab putah kinarah dah
 The veiled bank of the sea of life is in death

56. خو لکها به نور اوده وي
Tsu lakh aba nor oduh wi
 Millions of others would be asleep
 چه روان د مرگ په لار شي
Che rawaan da murg puh laar shi
 That are going on the way of death
57. سيال يې د خان ولي کړم چه زه د خاورو سيال ومه
Syal ye da zaan wale krhum che zuh da khawro syaal wuma
 Why I was made of one of his own, since I belonged to the dust

In the above verses, DEATH IS DEPARTURE schema has been used. On close analysis, the promise between spring and autumn at (52) reflects death (autumn) as the point of departure from life, and in (53), the point of departure is reflected in “*Murg haghah netah*” (death is the appointed time). In (54), death is considered as secret engagement “*Murg putah nikah*” between the being and the eternity, showing death is doorway to the eternity. Similarly, in verse (55), death is mapped as the concealed bank of the river of life through the lexical units “*putah kinarah*” (concealed bank). In verse at (56), the lexical units “*da murg puh laar*” (on the way of death) show the same schema of DEATH IS DEPARTURE is at work, the way that leads to hereafter. In (57), the lexical units “*zuh da khawro syaal wuma*” (I was belonging to dust) draws on the theological experiential gestalt of birth from and return to the clay. Hence, all the above examples show the use of the conceptual metaphor of DEATH IS DEPARTURE/DEATH IS DEPARTURE TO HOME.

Death is Autumn

Ghani Khan also looks at death as autumn. The experiential concept of autumn has been used to explain death. This conceptual metaphor is found in the line below.

58. مرگ هغه خزان دی چه گل کړي د گل فروشه ورک
Murg haghah khazan de che gul krhi de gulferoshah work
 Death is that autumn which perishes flowers from the flowers-seller

In this line, the lexical units “*Murg haghah khazan de*” (death is that autumn) directly maps death as autumn. The experiential gestalt of autumn withering the flowers and plants directly maps the withering of lives by death. The metaphoric linguistic expression is generated by the conceptual schema of DEATH IS AUTUMN.

Discussions

The analysis reveals that Ghani Khan, like all other philosophers and poets, is preoccupied with the phenomenal questions of life and death. His preoccupation with these questions lead him to use his experiences with the outside world to find an answer, but every answer, he finds insufficient to explain life and death, and this insufficient reply leads him to make use of another source domain for reply (reference examples 1 to 58). No doubt, from literary perspective, seeking an answer to these vague concepts make him a mystic philosopher poet gleaning his overflowing mind for a possible answer as Jahani (2014) claimed, but from cognitive linguistic perspective, he makes use of his own experiential physical world to structure the abstract concepts. The use of experiential gestalts to explain the abstract concepts in Pashto poetry demonstrate the use of conceptual metaphors in Pashto poetry supports the tenets of Lakoff and Turner (1989).

This analysis reveals fifty eight (58) linguistic institutions of ten (10) conceptual metaphors in Nine (09) poems on the concepts of life and death. The findings substantiate the view that conceptual metaphors not only mediate metaphors in everyday language but also in poetic figurative language across cultures. This paper defends most of the tenet of conceptual metaphor theory. CMT contends that life and death are all-encompassing matters, which require a wide variety of conceptual metaphor to explain it (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). This paper shows that a wide range of conceptual metaphors have been used in Ghani Khan's poetry for explaining life and death, such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, DEATH IS AUTUMN. CMT also contends that the poets often draw on the established conceptual schemas in their cultures in the use of figurative language in poetry. This paper augments this view, as Ghani Khan often draws on the established conceptual schema in conceptualizing life and death such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS RIVER, LIFE IS A DREAM, LIFE IS A DAY, LIFE IS A YEAR, LIFE IS A PERSON, DEATH IS PERSON and DEATH IS DEPARTURE. However, Ghani Khan uses one conceptual schema and uses its basic structure through a series of images as manifested in LIFE IS A JOURNEY (refer to examples 1 to 6), in LIFE IS A RIVER (refer to examples 7 to 12), in LIFE IS REVERIE (refer to examples 13 to 17) and in LIFE IS A MUSIC (refer to examples 19 to 26). In other words, a series of images have been used in the same poem, and all the images draw on one conceptual metaphor.

Ghani Khan also uses conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS MUSIC (refer to 13-18), based on his own experience of music, to explain the ups and downs of life. A series of images have been used, but all the images are based on the same conceptual schema, which in turn draws on more fundamental schema of LIFE IS JOURNEY. LIFE IS MUSIC metaphor has already been discussed by Górska (2010) as a novel metaphor from conceptual blending theory perspective, and regard it a multimodal metaphor. The present paper supports this view, and Ghani Khan views life through different pitches of music as instantiated in (13) to (18). Moreover, Ghani Khan also uses the cultural experiential gestalt of two days to conceptualize life. In Pashtun culture, life is also conceptualized as two days, the day of birth and the day of death (refer to example 32). This finding differs from (Lakoff & Turner, 1989), who argue that English speakers conceptualize life only as a day. This paper recommends further studies of Pashto poetry and language from conceptual metaphor approach to find out more conceptual schemas in order to contribute to the cross-cultural implications of CMT.

This paper extends the conceptual metaphor approach recently introduced to the study of Pashto poetry by Pischurnikova (2017). The author, Pischurnikova (2017) has investigated the conceptual metaphor of LOVE IS WAR in poetry of Abdul Hamid Baba (al-Hamīd 1983) and found that this metaphor has extensively been used in his poetry. The present paper augments this approach to the study of conceptual metaphor in Pashto language and literature. It shows that Pashto poets make use of experiential gestalts to conceptualize abstract concepts. Moreover, the analysis of LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor by Khan and Ahmad (2017) in Pashto everyday language has further been extended to its investigation in Pashto poetry. This paper also demonstrates that abstractedness is a graded phenomenon and corroborates the findings of Sardaraz and Ali (2017) that less abstract concept can serve as source domain for a more abstract domain, as is the case with conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A DAY, LIFE IS MUSIC and LIFE IS A YEAR. This paper recommends further cognitive semantic studies on Pashto language and literature to draw more conceptual schemas, or to compare conceptual schemas in Pashto poetry and language and other languages.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that Ghani Khan makes use of 10 conceptual metaphors to discuss philosophically the concepts of life and death. Most of the conceptual metaphors, the analysis reveals, are similar to those in English language, such as LIFE IS JOURNEY, LIFE IS RIVER, LIFE IS DREAM, LIFE IS MUSIC, DEATH IS AUTUMN AND LIFE/DEATH ARE PERSONS. These similarities support the view that conceptual metaphor has cross cultural implications, and that languages across cultures are equally generated by conceptual metaphor. However, the findings also suggest that there should be an in-depth investigation of languages across cultures, as conceptual metaphors may vary from culture to culture as is the case with conceptual metaphor LIFE IS TWO DAYS in Pashto language. This paper also supports the CMT view that even the poetic metaphors and images in Pashto poetry similar to English poetry are based on conceptual metaphor as is the case DEATH IS DEPARTURE and LIFE IS MUSIC. This shows that the experiential correlations between English and Pashto speaking communities are the same with slight cultural variations, which are manifested in their everyday language and poetry. This paper is minor contribution to the search of conceptual metaphors in Pashto poetry, and there is a need to further explore the Pashto poetry and language for cross cultural investigation of conceptual schemas. This paper may also prove instrumental in changing the Aristotelian concept of metaphor and figurative language in Pashto literary criticism, and will prove a way forward for studying Pashto poetry and everyday language from cognitive linguistic perspective.

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