



Embodied Conceptualisation of Emotion Metaphors: A Cognitive Semantic Analysis of English, Hindi, Khortha and Marwari

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Abstract: This study explores the embodied conceptualisation of emotion metaphors in English, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari, examining how abstract emotional experiences are conceptually mapped through concrete bodily source domains. Drawing on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory framework of embodiment-based cognitive semantics, the study identifies and analyses metaphorical expressions of anger, happiness, sadness, social emotions (pride, honour, shame), and Heart as an embodied source domain collected through elicitation from native speakers above 25 years of age and from secondary textual sources, including folk narratives, proverbs, and idioms. English is included as a comparison language because of its extensive documentation in cognitive linguistic research. However, besides Hindi and English, Khortha and Marwari are largely unexplored in a cognitive-semantic context. Findings show that all four languages conceptualise anger through heat, pressure, fluid containment, and explosive release; happiness through upward movement, brightness, and expansion; sadness through downward movement, darkness, and submersion; and social emotions through bodily posture and body-part symbolism involving the head, chest, eyes, and nose. These patterns cluster into recurring oppositional cognitive schemas — upwardness versus downwardness, brightness versus darkness, expansion versus contraction, and fullness versus emptiness — that organise emotional cognition across the languages, lending support to the embodiment hypothesis of shared physiological grounding. At the same time, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari display a wider range of body-part lexicalised metaphorical expressions, particularly involving blood, the heart, and the nose, along with culturally specific elaborations such as nose-based honour and heart-centred flourishing imagery that are comparatively less salient in English and are interpreted qualitatively. The study argues that emotion metaphors are simultaneously embodied and culturally mediated, and it contributes to cross-linguistic metaphor theory, Indo-Aryan cognitive semantics, and applications in translation studies, multilingual education, and computational modelling of emotion in low-resource regional languages.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Embodiment, Emotion Metaphors, Khortha, Marwari, Hindi, Cognitive Semantics

1. Introduction

Language is inherently linked to our human experience and perception. Language is both a communication device and a reflection of how the mind works. Cognitive Linguistics assumes that language is not an abstract concept but something that develops through interaction between human beings and the real world (Evans & Green, 2006). Previously, Metaphors were understood as a literary or stylistic device; now it is viewed as a conceptual mechanism through which people make sense of abstract experiences such as emotion, time, social relations, etc. (Gibbs, 1994; Gibbs, 2008). Among these abstractions, emotion is particularly productive to test the hypothesis of embodiment, as it has a universal physiological base despite being expressed linguistically across different cultures (Kövecses, 2000). Although emotional experience is grounded in shared bodily processes, its linguistic expression is influenced by cultural conceptualisation and language-specific semantic organisation (Wierzbicka, 1999; Soriano, 2015).



The contemporary study of metaphor experienced a dramatic transformation once Lakoff & Johnson (1980) postulated metaphor not just to be a figure of speech but a cognitive process used by people to conceptualise their experiences in abstract terms. Expressions like "Feeling down", "a heart full of joy", and "anger is boiling" are the surface realisations of deeper conceptual structures, rather than just rhetorical devices. The works of Kövecses (2000, 2002, 2005, 2010) have extended CMT further, especially concerning the domain of emotion, while subsequent studies have examined the conceptual metaphorical structuring of emotions across languages (Goswami & Yadav, 2024) and posited that although concepts about emotion are based on common bodily experience of the physiological manifestation of such emotions as anger, fear, joy, and sadness, their linguistic and symbolic expression is still influenced by culture.

Research on conceptual metaphors has been extensively conducted in English and other European languages, while Hindi has attracted much scholarly attention as well (Satsangi, 2024; Yadav, 2019). On the contrary, studies on the cognitive-semantics of emotion metaphors have not been conducted systematically in either of the languages Khortha and Marwari. Khortha is a language spoken in eastern India mainly in Jharkhand, West Bengal, and adjoining areas of Bihar (Grierson, 1908), which has characteristics similar to Magahi and Maithili languages, since it belongs to the Magadhan group (Peterson, 2017; Grierson, 1908), while Marwari is mainly spoken in the Marwar region of Rajasthan (Grierson, 1908; Gusain, 2004), and it is a dialect of the Western Rajasthani language group. Both Khortha and Marwari languages have a rich tradition of oral literature like folk songs, folklore, proverbs, and idioms, but both of them lack official recognition and do not feature in formal education.

The current research fills this gap by analysing emotion metaphors, specifically the conceptual metaphors for anger, happiness, sadness, emotions from the perspective of the heart, and emotions relating to society such as pride, honour, and shame in Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari, comparing these languages against English as a comparison language. The research aims to answer questions regarding reasons and mechanisms behind the function of conceptual metaphors to contrive emotions in these languages, the bodily basis for emotions in terms of body parts and physical symbolism, motivations for the embodied and cognitive nature of this structuring, and the degree to which the resultant metaphorical structures represent universality of the embodied schema as opposed to culture-specific elaborations. The chosen five emotions – anger, happiness, sadness, heart-related emotions, and social emotions (pride, honour, and shame) – were chosen as the basis of the analysis, as these categories have the major presence in the elicited and textual data and as heart-related and social emotion metaphors are less studied than anger and happiness metaphors within the Indo-Aryan cognitive semantics; compared to the general emotions literature on fear and disgust, which did not fall into the scope of the current corpus.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The current research work uses a qualitative and descriptive research methodology based on Cognitive Semantics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The goal of the current study is to find and analyze the ways emotions can be metaphorically structured in English, Hindi, Khortha and Marwari. Instead of calculating how frequent metaphors can occur statistically, the study aims to find out how certain conceptual patterns can recur throughout the research. In such a way, the analysis will be mostly qualitative while making a comparison of conceptual connections in four languages. English has been chosen for comparison because of its well-studied nature in cognitive linguistic research, while Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari serve as the main base for cross-linguistic analysis.

2.2 Participants

Primary data were gathered from thirty native speakers, comprising ten speakers of each of Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because this research required native speakers familiar with conventional metaphors in their language communities.

Participants for Hindi and Khortha were selected from the Dumka, Hansdiha, and Godda districts of Jharkhand, and for Marwari, selection was through university contacts and their family members; interviews were conducted mainly by telephone. Across all three language groups, six participants were female, and four were male, as shown in Table 1. Participants varied in their educational qualifications from secondary to post-graduation. All the participants had acquired their languages from early childhood and were using them consistently at home and in



day-to-day communication. The recruitment process for all three language communities was not institutionalised but done in an informal manner, whereby the subjects were individuals living in the villages neighbouring the above - mentioned districts and were introduced directly to the researcher.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

	Hindi	Khortha	Marwari
Number of speakers (N)	10	10	10
Gender	6 female, 4 male	6 female, 4 male	6 female, 4 male
Age	25 years and above (eligibility threshold; specific mean/range not recorded)	25 years and above	25 years and above
Regional background	Dumka, Hansdiha, and Godda districts, Jharkhand	Dumka, Hansdiha, and Godda districts, Jharkhand	Marwar region, Rajasthan (via university contacts)
Educational profile	Secondary to postgraduate	Secondary to postgraduate	Secondary to postgraduate
Recruitment	Informal; nearby villages, direct personal introduction	Informal; nearby villages, direct personal introduction	University contacts and family members; telephone interviews

Participants aged above twenty-five years were selected because the research revolves around conventionalised metaphors that are already established in their idiomatisation process within a speech community and are unlikely to have emerged recently and be specific to one particular generation. By only focusing on adult informants, there is little risk that the results will represent rapidly changing vocabulary of a certain age group, code mixing of English or Hindi by younger urban populations, or individual innovation. This is a deliberate scope decision rather than a claim regarding differences in linguistic competence, and the results will therefore pertain exclusively to adults' conventional metaphorical lexicon and cannot be extrapolated to children's use of language.

2.3 Data Sources and Collection

Two types of data were collected to ensure reliability and validity. Primary data were collected by eliciting metaphorical expressions from native speakers of Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari aged 25 or older. The Baseline expressions that are common for expressing emotions in English, Hindi, Marwari, and Khortha were used for collecting data because they were familiar to all the speakers of the languages. The elicitation technique was employed more specifically in the case of Khortha and Marwari languages. The native speakers were requested to provide expressions used in connection with emotions like anger, joy, sorrow, and social emotions. Secondary data were drawn from literary and lexicographic sources: for Marwari, Vijaydan Detha's 'Batan ri Phulwari' served as a key source of culturally embedded lexical and metaphorical material; for Khortha, 'Khortha Loksahitya' (Jha *et al.*, 2012) was consulted. For English and Hindi, secondary data were drawn from established metaphor datasets available online, pre-existing literature for non-literal data and from the existing works of Lakoff & Kövecses (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987).

Expressions had to fulfil the criteria of expressing an emotional experience, containing a metaphorical meaning, allowing for the identification of a source domain and a target domain, and (when applicable) including a bodily element. Expressions that did not fit this description were excluded from the analysis. Only metaphorical expressions which could be identified as conventional expressions used in everyday speech or mentioned in any literary or lexicographical sources were included into the study.



2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data was obtained using individual elicitation tasks. The participants were posed open-ended questions such as "Can you give me some examples of expressions that people make in your language when they are angry?"; "How can happiness, sadness, pride, honor, and shame be expressed in your language?"; "Do you have any expressions with references to body parts like heart, blood, head, chest, eyes or nose that describe feelings?" Follow-up questions were used only to clarify meaning or to determine if the expression is conventional in the language community. Individual interviews were carried out, and the participants were not allowed to refer to other speakers while giving their answers. The responses were recorded through handwritten notes and were subsequently transcribed and organised for analysis. These prompts were used in Hindi for Khortha and Marwari because Hindi served as the common contact language for all the participants who could understand Hindi; the participants had the liberty to answer using their own mother tongue. The classification procedure was such that expressions were considered metonymic if one element (such as a visible physical state, like blushing or hanging one's head) represented the emotion in question without going to another source domain; expressions were considered metaphoric if the emotion was understood using a source domain from a different experience altogether (such as heat, elevation/descent, and objects); and expressions were considered a combination of metaphor and metonymy if a metonymic bodily base was additionally elaborated through metaphor, like in the case of "boiling blood" to represent anger.

2.5 Metaphor Identification and Analytical Procedure

Identification of metaphor was made using both the Metaphor Identification Procedure by [Group \(2007\)](#) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory ([Lakoff & Johnson, 1980](#)). The analytical method also adheres to the principles used by [Charteris-Black \(2004\)](#), which are frequently used in the analysis of cognitive metaphors. The process involved the following steps for identification of metaphorical expressions: the contextual meaning of an expression was established, compared with its more basic lexical meaning, and classified as metaphorical where a semantic contrast and a noticeable conceptual relation between the two meanings were present. The coding unit used in the current study was the complete metaphorical expression instead of isolated lexical terms. Idiomatic and culturally established phrases were considered as single semantic entities where the metaphoric meaning cannot be obtained through composition. Literal translation was applied only to enable comparative linguistics. The conceptual analysis was made in accordance with the conventional sense acknowledged by native speakers. Metaphors that expressed mainly physical conditions (such as facial expression and bodily posture) were analysed very carefully in order to differentiate between conceptual metaphor and metonymy. Situations in which metaphor and metonymy work together were specifically mentioned and analysed. Expressions containing metaphors were analysed in three steps. The first step involved identifying whether the interpretation of the expression in a context differs from its primary meaning. Those expressions that contain a metaphorical relation between the two meanings were selected. Then the source and target domains underpinning those expressions were determined according to the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory e.g., ANGER IS HEAT; EMOTIONS ARE THINGS CONTAINED INSIDE THE BODY where Emotions are the Target domains conceptualised through source domains of embodied experiences e.g. In 'HAPPINESS IS UP' Conceptual Metaphor, the source domain is upward movement and verticality of the bodily posture or position to express the target domain happiness; at the explanation stage, expressions were considered in relation to embodiment, cognitive motivation, and cross-linguistic patterning, following [Kövecses's \(2000\)](#) model of source–target mapping and cultural variation. Image schemas including CONTAINER (emotion as a material, fluid, substance contained in the body), PATH (Change in emotions as movement), and UP-DOWN (based on vertical movement of emotions) were used as an additional analytic layer to capture recurring embodied structures underlying the metaphors ([Evans & Green, 2006](#); [Hampe, 2005](#)).

As expressions referring to body parts like the heart, eyes, blood, and chest were used extensively in the collected data, a lot of focus was put on the physiological experiences associated with these body parts, namely heat, pressure, movement, and weight, in accordance with the study's focus on embodiment.

Identification and categorisation of the metaphors were carried out throughout the research process, and they were reviewed and discussed with the research supervisor periodically. These discussions helped refine the



conceptual categorisation and interpretation of the metaphors. However, an independent coder was not involved in this study since this is a qualitative analysis of cognitive semantics.

2.6 Research Ethics

All respondents were made aware of the research objective before conducting the survey, and verbal informed consent was sought prior to the interviews. Participation was purely voluntary, and any personally identifying information has not been included in the study. All responses collected have only been used for the purpose of academic research and remain anonymous. Since the research was conducted as a part of academic dissertation that involved eliciting normal linguistic utterances with no personal information or medical interventions involved, no formal ethical clearance from the institution was necessary.

2.7 Dataset Overview

The final data set included metaphorical expressions that have been elicited using the primary elicitation method and through secondary textual sources. Elicited expressions from thirty native speakers (ten speakers of Hindi, Khortha and Marwari each) formed the primary data set, while the secondary data set was made up of studies on metaphors, literature, idioms and folk tales. These expressions were classified under five analytical categories, which include anger, happiness, sadness, heart-based emotions and social emotions including pride, honor and shame. In view of the fact that the four languages vary in terms of documentary and availability sources, the data set is expected to facilitate cross-linguistic qualitative comparisons rather than quantitative equivalence. Data collection began with a total of fifty metaphoric expressions in Hindi associated with emotion and body parts, which served as a point of reference for the creation of similar expressions in Khortha and Marwari languages. The expressions were sorted according to the emotional categories. The ones that were thought to be clearly relevant and suitable for the current research theme, regardless of any formal criteria, but rather on the discretion of the researcher, were kept and used for further presentation in the tables below. Table 2 shows the number of expressions in each language and emotion category.

Table 2. Corpus size and distribution across languages and emotion categories

Language	Anger	Happiness	Sadness	Heart-based	Social	Total (in tables)
Hindi	5	5	4	4	4	22 (from 50 collected)
Khortha	5	5	4	4	4	22 (from 50 elicited)
Marwari	5	5	4	4	4	22 (from 50 elicited)
English	5	5	4	4	4	22 (secondary sources, matched to the finalised set)

The figure 1 below represents the framework used in the current research work. Experiences related to the body lead to image schemas, and these create motivations for source domains. The source domains define emotions using the conceptual metaphor framework, thus producing metaphors that can be culturally specific to any particular language or share embodied experiences.

3. Results and Discussion

The expressions discussed in the following sections are representative examples selected from the analysed dataset. They were chosen because they clearly illustrate the conceptual metaphors identified across the four languages. The examples are intended to demonstrate recurring conceptual patterns and should not be interpreted as an exhaustive inventory of all available metaphorical expressions. The analysis has revealed some recurring conceptual structures through which emotions are metaphorically constructed in the four languages.

Instead of comparing identical corpora, the study focuses on qualitative conceptual correspondences that can be observed in the gathered data. The discussion will consequently be arranged according to the recurring



emotion types as well as their embodied source domains, although the documentary material available varies from one language to another.

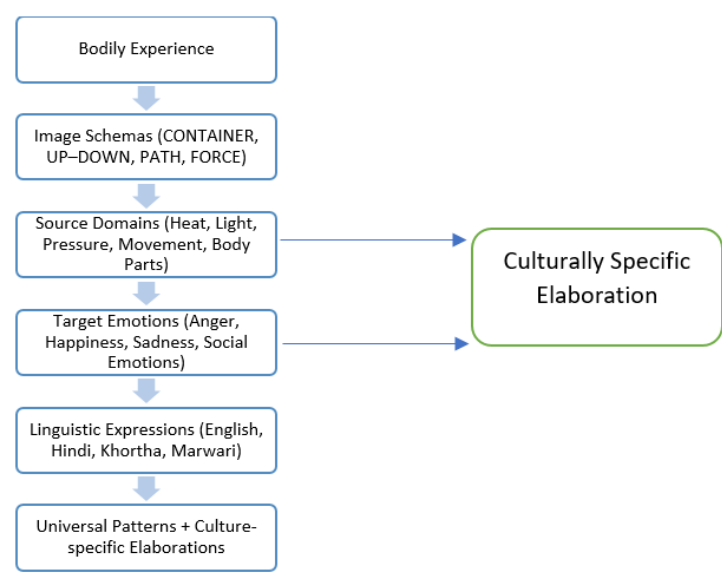


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Emotion Metaphors.

3.1 Anger as Heat, Fire, Fluid, and Pressure

The emotions of anger in all four languages do not represent an abstract concept of internal states, but a dynamic force which acts in the body’s container: heat accumulates, pressure builds, and the emotion is ultimately released or forcibly suppressed. Certain conceptual metaphors emerged: Anger Is Heat/Fire, Anger Is Hot Fluid in a Container, Anger Is Pressure and Internal Agitation, And Anger Is Explosion or Sudden Release.

Table 3. Metaphorical expressions of anger

English	Hindi	Khortha	Marwari	Natural Translation/Interpretation
boiling with anger	/kʰuːn kʰɔːlnaː/ (blood boil)	/kʰuːn kʰole laːgle/ (blood boil)	/gʊsːo bʱəɾəknoː/ (anger flare-up)	Intense, seething fury
hot-headed	/maːtʰaː gəɾəm hoːnaː/ (head hot become)	/maɪtʰaː gəɾəm hoʊək/ (head hot become)	/mʌtʰa gəɾəm ʰoːno/ (head hot become)	Irritability, losing one’s temper quickly
bottled-up anger	/gʊsːe ko dabaːnaː/ (anger to suppress)	/raːg bʱɪɽərəkʰlek/ (anger inside keep)	/gʊsːaː dʱəbaːr ʰraːkʰno/ (anger suppress keep)	Controlling or holding down anger
swallow one’s anger	/gʊsːaː piːnaː/ (anger drink)	/gʊsːaː piː lelek/ (anger drink)	/gʊsːo pi jaːsəŋo/ (anger drink)	Suppressing anger internally
burst out in anger	/gʊsːe se pʰət pəɾnaː/ (anger with burst)	/kroːdʰe pʰaːtɪ gele/ (anger burst)	/gʊsːo pʰɪt pəɾno/ (anger burst)	Sudden, violent outburst

Note: The expressions presented in this table are representative examples selected from the analysed dataset. They were obtained through native-speaker elicitation and, where applicable, supplemented by literary and published sources described in the Methodology.

The Hindi and Khortha expressions *kʰu:n kʰo:lna:* and *kʰu:n kʰole la:gle* ('blood boiling') and *ma:tʰa: gəɾəm ho:na:* ('head becoming hot') locate anger explicitly in the blood and the head, treating it as a physiological event with a bodily locus. The CONTAINER metaphor is equally prominent: *gʊs:e ko daba:na:*, *ra:g bʰɪtʰər rəkʰlek*, and *gʊs:a: dʒəba:r ra:kʰno* all depict anger as a substance stored within the body, while *gʊs:a: pi:na:* ('to drink/swallow anger') extends this further by figuring suppression as internal consumption. English metaphors such as bottled-up anger and burning with anger draw on the same conceptual base but tend to foreground pressure and combustion rather than bodily fluid; Hindi and Khortha in the current dataset indicate relatively more usage of blood as the carrier of heat, while Marwari expressions from the present dataset such as *gʊs:o pʰɪt pəɾno* (see Table 3) show relatively more instances of outward and explosive expression of anger on outward, explosive release. The overall pattern — heat, pressure, containment, and explosion — is thus shared across all four languages, with the precise bodily substance and site of anger varying in culturally patterned ways. Based on the criteria outlined in Section 2.5, the examples below should be analysed as metaphor-metonymy blends because the blood and head act as metonymic sources of anger (visible physiological markers representing the emotion), which are in turn metaphorically developed with heat and boiling.

3.2 Happiness as Upward Movement, Light, and Expansion

Happiness emerged as a state consistently associated with upward motion, bodily lightness, facial brightness, and expansion, drawing on embodied experiences such as jumping, rising, and an energised, radiant physical presence. Table 4 presents the metaphorical expressions for happiness.

Table 4. Metaphorical expressions of happiness

English	Hindi	Khortha	Marwari	Natural Translation/Interpretation
on top of the world	/kʰɪʃi: se ʊʧəlna:/ (happiness with jump)	/kʰuʃi: se utʃli: gel/ (happiness with jump)	/kʰɪʃi mɛ ʊʧəl pəɾva:ɳo/ (happiness in jump)	Exuberant, energetic display of joy
walk on air	/kʰɪʃi: se ʊɾna:/ (happiness with fly)	/kʰɪʃi se ʊɾ gel/ (happiness with fly)	/həʊa: me:ɳ ʊdʒa: la:gjo:/ (air in fly state)	Feeling weightless, euphoric
heart filled with joy	/dʒɪl ba:g ba:g ho dʒa:na:/ (heart garden garden become)	/dʒɪl ba:g ba:g ho gelek/ (heart garden garden become)	/ka:ɳdʒo ba:g ba:g ho dʒa:ʊəɳo/ (heart garden garden become)	Deep inner satisfaction, delight
glowing with happiness	/tʃəfɾa kʰɪl ʊtʰna/ (face bloom)	/tʃe:ra: kʰili: gelek/ (face bloom become)	/tʃəfɾo kʰɪli dʒa:ʊəɳo/ (face bloom go)	Radiant happiness visible on the face
bursting with joy	/kʰɪʃi se pʰu:le na: sama:na:/ (happiness with bloom not fit)	/kʰɪʃi se pʰu:l gelek/ (happiness with bloom state)	/a:nənd sū: bʰər dʒa:vo/ (joy with fill)	Overwhelming joy that cannot be contained

Note: The expressions presented in this table are representative examples selected from the analysed dataset. They were obtained through native-speaker elicitation and, where applicable, supplemented by literary and published sources described in the Methodology.

The HAPPINESS IS UP conceptual metaphor (*kʰɪʃi: se ʊɾna:*, walk on air) is found across all the languages under study, alongside HAPPINESS IS LIGHT/BRIGHTNESS (*glowing with happiness*, *tʃəfɾa:kʰɪl ʊtʰna:*). A distinctive pattern emerges, however, in the Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari expressions built around *dʒɪl/ka:ɳdʒo ba:g ba:g ho dʒa:na:*, literally 'heart becoming garden-garden,' which extends happiness beyond simple elevation or lightness i.e. HAPPINESS IS EXPANSION toward an image of blossoming or flourishing at the emotional centre. Where the closest English equivalent, heart filled with joy, evokes containment and fullness, the Indo-Aryan expressions add a



flourishing dimension that has no direct parallel in the English data, indicating a culturally specific elaboration in the expressions examined from the current data set.

3.3 Sadness as Downward Movement, Darkness, and Submersion

Conceptualisation of Sadness emerged as a systematic opposite of Happiness: It is described by means of downward movement, darkness, loss of facial brightness, submersion, and an emotional overflow of tears. The following table (Table 5) illustrates the metaphorical expressions.

Table 5. Metaphorical expressions of sadness

English	Hindi	Khortha	Marwari	Natural Translation/Interpretation
feeling low	/mən uda:s ho d̪ʒa:na:/ (mind sad become)	/mən uda:s bʰe: gelek/ (mind sad become)	/d̪ʒi: ko:ni: la:grjo:/ (heart good not feel)	To become/feel sad
drowning in sorrow	/gəm mē d̪u:b d̪ʒa:na:/ (sorrow in sink)	/du:kʰ mē d̪u:bi gelek/ (sorrow in sink)	/d̪ʊkʰ me:ɳ d̪ʊbgo:/ (sorrow in sink)	Feeling overwhelmed by grief
face lost its glow	/tʃefra uʈar d̪ʒa:na:/ (face fall go)	/mũh ʊʈar gelek/ (face fall become)	/mʊŋd̪o: fi:ko: padgo:/ (face dull/pale become)	Visible sadness or disappointment on the face
a curtain of darkness fell	/ã:kʰ ke a:ge ã:gh̪era: cha: d̪ʒa:na:/ (eye before darkness spread)	/a:nkʰok a:gu: əndʰe:ra: pəsa:ri: gelek/ (eyes before darkness spread)	/a:ŋkʰja: a:ge: əndʰe:ro: ho:go:/ (eyes before darkness become)	Loss of clarity from shock or despair

Note: The expressions presented in this table are representative examples selected from the analysed dataset. They were obtained through native-speaker elicitation and, where applicable, supplemented by literary and published sources described in the Methodology.

The SADNESS IS DOWN, and SADNESS IS DARKNESS schemas recur consistently, and the SADNESS IS SUBMERSION schema (drowning in sorrow, gəm mē d̪u:b d̪ʒa:na:, du:kʰ mē d̪u:bi gelek, d̪ʊkʰ me:ɳ d̪ʊbgo:) is shared identically across the three Indo-Aryan languages and closely related in English. Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari data. It is observed that the expressions identified in languages under study usually convey feelings of sorrow through physical signs like a dull face, darkness in front of the eyes, and tears, suggesting the embodiment of emotions in the current dataset. toward visible bodily symptoms of sadness — facial dullness (mʊŋd̪o: fi:ko: padgo:), darkness before the eyes, and welling tears — treating emotional suffering as something legible on the body and face rather than purely as an interior state. In accordance with Section 2.5 criteria, the facial and ocular expression used here (i.e., dull face, darkness before eyes) can best be described as metonymic since an observable physiological condition is used to refer directly to the emotion of sadness.

3.4 The Heart as an Embodied Source domain in Emotional Conceptualisation

While the earlier segments of this paper have been structured based on different emotion categories, the following segment analyses the heart as a recurrent embodiment source domain which plays a part in the formation of different emotions. In English, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari languages, the heart serves as an important source of emotions including sorrow, compassion, emotional strength, desolation, and affection. Thus, this segment deals with the metaphoric aspect of the heart related to the formation of various emotions.

These mappings converge on a shared HEART IS AN OBJECT metaphor: emotional pain as breakage (broken heart, ɣɪl t̪u:t̪ d̪ʒa:na:), insensitivity as hardness (heart of stone), compassion as softening (heart melted), and desolation as emptiness (empty-hearted). The consistency of these mappings across unrelated lexical items in the languages under study indicates that the underlying conceptual structure is not dependent on any single lexeme, as



shown in Table 6, but suggests a shared embodied logic in which the emotional centre is treated as a physical and malleable object.

Table 6. Metaphorical expressions of heart-based emotions

English	Hindi	Khortha	Marwari	Natural Translation/Interpretation
broken heart	/d̪ɪl ʈu:t̪ d̪ʒa:na:/ (heart break go)	/kəre:d̪ʒa: ke: t̪ɔkd̪a: ho: gelek/ (heart piece become)	/ka:ld̪ʒo: ʈu:t̪ d̪ʒa:ʋəŋo/ (heart break go)	Severe emotional pain or devastation
heart of stone	/d̪ɪl pəʈʰər ka: ho:na:/ (heart stone of)	/kəre:d̪ʒa: pa:ʈʰər b̪ʰe: gelek/ (heart stone become)	/ka:ld̪ʒo: g̪ʰa:t̪ʰo ʱo:d̪ʒano/ (heart hard become)	Emotional insensitivity or numbness
heart melted	/d̪ɪl pɪg̪ʰəl d̪ʒa:na:/ (heart melt)	/d̪ɪl pɪyli gelek/ (heart melt)	/d̪ɪl pɪg̪ʰəl gəjo/ (heart melt)	Deep empathy, sympathy, or tenderness
empty-hearted	/d̪ɪl k̪ʰa:li ho d̪ʒa:na:/ (heart empty become)	/mən k̪ʰa:li ho gelek/ (heart empty become)	/ka:ld̪ʒo k̪ʰa:li ho d̪ʒa:ʋəŋo/ (heart empty become)	Desolation or despair

Note: The expressions presented in this table are representative examples selected from the analysed dataset. They were obtained through native-speaker elicitation and, where applicable, supplemented by literary and published sources described in the Methodology.

These mappings converge on a shared HEART IS AN OBJECT metaphor: emotional pain as breakage (broken heart, d̪ɪl ʈu:t̪ d̪ʒa:na:), insensitivity as hardness (heart of stone), compassion as softening (heart melted), and desolation as emptiness (empty-hearted). The consistency of these mappings across unrelated lexical items in the languages under study indicates that the underlying conceptual structure is not dependent on any single lexeme, but suggests a shared embodied logic in which the emotional centre is treated as a physical and malleable object.

3.5 Social Emotions as Body-Part and Postural Metaphors

Social emotions: pride, honour, and shame are conceptualised less through internal sensation and more through visible bodily posture, orientation, and specific body parts, particularly the head, chest, eyes, and nose. The following Table 7 shows expressions related to metaphors of social emotions.

Table 7. Metaphorical expressions of social emotions

English	Hindi	Khortha	Marwari	Natural Translation/Interpretation
hold one's head high	/sɪr ʊʈʃa: rək̪ʰna:/ (head high keep)	/ma:t̪ʰa ʊʈʃa: rək̪ʰlek/ (head high keep)	/ma:t̪ʰo ʊʈʃo: rək̪ʰŋo/ (head high keep)	Asserting honour, dignity, self-respect
hang one's head in shame	/sɪr d̪ʒʰʋka:na:/ (head bend)	/ma:t̪ʰa d̪ʒʰʋk gel/ (head bend/bow)	/ma:t̪ʰo d̪ʒʰʋki d̪ʒa:ʋəŋo/ (head bend/bow)	Feeling embarrassed or ashamed
lose face	/na:k kaʈ d̪ʒa:na:/ (nose cut go)	/na:k kaʈ gel/ (nose cut go)	/na:k kaʈ d̪ʒa:ʋəŋo/ (nose cut go)	Severe damage to social standing or reputation
swell with pride	/ʈʃa:t̪ɪ ʈʃa:ʋd̪i: ɾi ho d̪ʒa:na/ (chest broad become)	/ʈʃa:t̪ɪ ʈʃa:ʋd̪a: ho gelek/ (chest broad become)	/ʈʃa:ti ʈʃa:ʋd̪i: kərdi:/ (chest broad make)	A sense of accomplishment or elevated social stature



Note: The expressions presented in this table are representative examples selected from the analysed dataset. They were obtained through native-speaker elicitation and, where applicable, supplemented by literary and published sources described in the Methodology.

Elevated head and chest posture consistently signals pride and honour, while a lowered head signals shame, replicating the UP-DOWN schema observed for happiness and sadness at the level of social, rather than purely internal, emotion. The nose acts as a vital cultural marker representing social respect among the examined Indo-Aryan expressions. Even though these expressions use body part imagery, they can also be seen to represent an interaction of conceptual metaphors and cultural metonymies, especially when the body part is used to signify concepts such as honor or social identity.: na:k kaṭ dʒa:na: and its Khortha, and Marwari expressions all encode loss of honour through the image of a severed or damaged nose, in keeping with prior findings on na:k in Hindi (Yadav, 2019). English nose-idioms — look down one's nose at, turn up one's nose at — invoke the same body part but encode arrogance or disdain rather than honour or its loss, indicating that while the SOCIAL STATUS IS EMBODIED IN THE NOSE mapping is shared, its evaluative content diverges sharply between the English and Indo-Aryan data, pointing to a culturally specific rather than purely universal elaboration of an otherwise embodied schema.

3.6 Oppositional Cognitive Schemas

Across the languages under study, emotional meaning is organised not in isolation but through recurring oppositional schemas grounded in bodily experience: upwardness versus downwardness, brightness versus darkness, expansion versus contraction, and fullness versus emptiness, as summarised in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of oppositional cognitive schemas identified across the four languages.

Cognitive Schema	Positive Emotional Conceptualisation	Negative Emotional Conceptualisation
Upwardness / Downwardness	Happiness, pride, honour — upward posture, elevation	Sadness, shame — downward posture, lowering
Brightness / Darkness	Happiness — facial glow, flourishing, visibility	Sadness — fading glow, darkness, obscurity
Expansion / Constriction	Happiness, joy—blooming, fullness, upward vitality	Suppression, emotional tension, containment
Fullness / Emptiness	Joy, fulfilment, emotional richness	Emotional emptiness, desolation, loss

These oppositions instantiate the UP-DOWN, CONTAINER, and related image schemas central to embodiment theory (Evans & Green, 2006), and their recurrence across four typologically related but sociolinguistically distinct languages — one of them (English) not closely related historically to the other three within the immediate Indo-Iranian branch, though all four ultimately belong to the Indo-European family — provides cross-linguistic support for the result that emotional cognition draws on a shared physiological and perceptual foundation, while its specific lexical and cultural elaboration (blood, the nose, garden imagery) is language- and culture-specific.

3.7 Universal and Culture-Specific Patterns

The findings support Kövecses's (2002, 2010) cultural embodiment notion: emotion metaphors in English, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari share a common embodied conceptualisation — heat and pressure for anger, verticality and brightness for happiness and downwardness, darkness for sadness, containment for emotional states generally, and posture and body-part symbolism for social emotion — while diverging in the specific bodily substances, organs, and cultural imagery through which that emotion is lexicalised. The current data reveal that in the current data, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari have a larger quantity of explicit body part expressions than the English comparative data. As the research is qualitative in nature and uses various sources for the analysis of language, this observation should be interpreted as a qualitative tendency rather than a quantitative generalisation. The English language uses metaphors such as short-tempered and feeling low, while the Indo-Aryan languages include explicit reference to body parts such as blood and heart, as in kʰu:n kʰɔ:l̪na: ('blood boiling') and ḡ ɪl bʰa:ri ho dʒa:na: ('weighed down



by sadness'). The three Indo-Aryan languages examined here are themselves not identical: Khortha and Marwari display closer lexical and structural parallels with Hindi than with English, consistent with their shared Indo-Iranian ancestry, yet each also contributes distinctive imagery. Examples from the Marwari language in the analysed data set show explicit signs of expressing emotions on the surface compared to similar examples found in other three languages; nonetheless, this point is purely qualitative and needs to be examined further. The similarity between the three Indo-Aryan languages must, therefore, be understood with some caution, in that it could indicate genetic descent from a common ancestor, a history of borrowing/mutual influence between adjacent speech communities, or, in the case of items from secondary literary sources, translation practice rather than independent conventions in all three languages; the present data do not allow these possibilities to be fully separated, and this is noted as a limitation of the current comparative design.

4. Conclusion

Thus, this research paper has examined emotion metaphors in English, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari through the combined lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and embodiment-based cognitive semantics. The findings show that anger, happiness, sadness, heart-based emotional states, and social emotions are consistently structured across all four languages through embodied source domains — heat, verticality, brightness, containment, and bodily posture — organised into recurring oppositional schemas. At the same time, Hindi, Khortha, and Marwari display culturally specific elaborations, particularly in their denser use of body-part symbolism (blood, nose, heart) and in imagery, such as heart-as-garden, that has no direct equivalent in the English data. These results indicate that emotional conceptualisation is both grounded in shared embodied experience and mediated by cultural and linguistic context. The study extends Conceptual Metaphor Theory's empirical base to two previously under-documented Indo-Aryan languages.

This study makes three principal contributions. First, it provides an early cognitive-semantic account of emotion metaphors in Khortha and Marwari, addressing a clear gap in metaphor research of under-documented languages. Second, it offers a cross-linguistic framework — spanning a Germanic and three Indo-Iranian varieties — for evaluating universality and cultural variation in emotion conceptualisation. Third, it has practical implications: for translation studies, in flagging expressions such as 'ḍṭl ba:g ba:g ho gelek', 'na:k kaṭ dʒa:na:', etc. whose meaning depends on cultural-metaphorical rather than literal interpretation; for multilingual education, in helping learners recognise shared and divergent metaphorical patterns; and for computational linguistics, in informing metaphor identification and sentiment analysis in low-resource Indo-Aryan languages. While the process of metaphor identification and classification was discussed throughout the research process, no formal independent coding or inter-rater reliability statistical analysis was used for the research study. However, future research can enhance methodological rigour of future research by having several researchers trained in cognitive semantics conduct coding and analyse inter-rater reliability and might extend the framework to additional emotion categories and Indo-Aryan languages, investigate sociolinguistic variability in metaphor use across age and gender, and pursue computational modelling of emotion metaphors for low-resource language technology.

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Conflict of interest

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