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Original Research Article

Embodied (Semi-) Universalities and Differences in the Metaphorical Conceptualization of Love and Anger: A Conceptual Metaphor Theory Study of English and Korean

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Abstract: This study examines how the emotions love and anger are metaphorically conceptualised in English and Korean, focusing on embodied commonalities and culture-specific differences. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), we analyse a validated corpus of attested metaphorical expressions for love and anger in both languages (confirmed by native speakers) to identify semi-universal metaphors (rooted in shared human embodiment) versus culture-specific metaphors (shaped by linguistic and cultural context). The English and Korean data reveal numerous shared metaphorical mappings: for example, both languages conceptualise *love* in terms of physical journeys, heat, unity, and illness, and *anger* in terms of internal pressure, fire, and explosive force – reflecting universal physiological and experiential bases. At the same time, distinct differences emerge. Korean metaphors often emphasise emotional restraint and fate, for example "swallowing anger" or love as predestined connection, aligning with cultural norms, whereas English metaphors more readily invoke outward expressions and individual agency, for example "blow off steam" or love as a game or war. These findings suggest that while embodied cognition yields broadly similar metaphorical structures for fundamental emotions across languages, cultural context can modulate metaphor usage and salience. The paper discusses implications for cross-cultural understanding of emotions and supports the CMT claim that metaphors are both *universal cognitive structures* and *cultural tools* encoding distinct worldviews. The comparative insights contribute to metaphor studies by addressing a less-studied language pairing and highlighting the interplay between shared embodiment and cultural specificity in emotion conceptualisation.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Embodiment, English-Korean Cross-Linguistic Comparison, Metaphors of Anger, Metaphors of Love.

1. INTRODUCTION

Metaphors are more than stylistic flourishes of language – they are central to how humans think, feel, and make sense of abstract concepts. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), first developed by Lakoff and Johnson [1], everyday

metaphorical expressions reflect underlying cognitive mappings that structure our understanding of the world [1, 2]. In this view, abstract domains like emotion are systematically conceptualised in terms of more concrete, embodied experiences. For example, the metaphor "TIME IS MONEY" maps the concrete source domain of financial value onto the abstract target domain of time, shaping how people think about time as a limited resource. Such mappings are not arbitrary linguistic curiosities but reveal fundamental *mental structures* shared by speech communities.

Within the rich field of metaphor research, *emotion metaphors* have received particular attention because they vividly illustrate the interplay of embodiment and culture in human cognition. Emotions like love and anger are universal to human experience, yet cultures often talk about and understand these feelings in different metaphorical terms. For instance, it is common worldwide to describe anger using metaphors of heat and pressure, such as "boiling with anger", reflecting universal physiological responses. At the same time, cultural specificities emerge: one language may associate anger with an organ or element that another does not. For example, Japanese links anger to the stomach, Mandarin to fire, and Indonesian to becoming an animal. Similarly, *love* is often conceptualised as a physical journey or a heat/fire across many languages, yet each culture adds its own nuances – for example, Chinese love metaphors invoke symbols like *mandarin ducks* or the *moon* for harmony, whereas English love metaphors may refer to *contracts* or *bonds* influenced by Western traditions.

Despite a growing body of cross-linguistic metaphor studies, comparisons of English and Korean in the domain of emotion are surprisingly rare. English, an Indo-European language, and Korean, often classified as a language isolate or Altaic language, differ typologically and culturally, providing an intriguing contrast for metaphor analysis. Korean culture, grounded in Confucian traditions, historically emphasises social harmony, restraint, and fate, which might manifest in its metaphoric expressions of emotion. English, shaped by Western individualism and literary traditions, might display different metaphorical emphases. By comparing these two seldom-juxtaposed languages, the present study addresses a gap in metaphor research and seeks to deepen our understanding of how *embodied universals* and *cultural particulars* jointly shape the metaphorical conceptualisation of fundamental emotions.

This paper investigates how love and anger are metaphorically conceptualised in English and Korean, through the lens of CMT. We aim to identify which metaphorical mappings are shared between the two languages – pointing to embodied (semi-)universal patterns – and which are unique to one language – reflecting cultural specificities. We also examine how these metaphors draw upon bodily experience, such as heat, force, movement, and how they diverge in line with each culture's worldview and values.

In the following sections, we first review the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and relevant literature on love and anger. Next, we describe our Materials and Methods, including the corpus of expressions analysed. We then present the Results of our analysis for love and anger, each highlighting shared metaphors and key differences. In the Discussion, we interpret these findings in light of embodiment and cultural cognition, and we conclude by summarising the implications of our study for cognitive linguistics and cross-cultural communication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Embodiment

Conceptual Metaphor Theory posits that metaphor is a *cognitive mechanism* by which people understand abstract targets in terms of concrete sources [1]. Rather than being decorative language, metaphors are "fundamental structures of human cognition" [3]. In CMT, a target domain, such as an emotion of *anger* or *love* is conceptualised via a source domain drawn from more concrete experience, for example, *heat*, *fire*, *physical force*. These source-target mappings are systematic and grounded in recurrent bodily and sensory experiences. For example, because people experience bodily warmth and rising blood pressure when angry, many cultures have metaphors linking ANGER with HEAT or PRESSURISED FLUIDS. Likewise, the physiological arousal and heartbeats of love lead to metaphors of LOVE as HEAT/FIRE or as FORCE of magnetism in diverse languages.

Two key principles guide how conceptual metaphors function. First, the Invariance Principle ensures that the internal structure of the source domain is preserved in the mapping – only aspects of the source that make sense for the target are projected, while irrelevant details are left behind [1, 2]. For instance, in the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, features like a starting point, obstacles along the path, and a destination map onto life events, but not every journey detail (such as modes of transport) transfers over. A related idea is structural selectivity: metaphorical mappings are partial and *select* only those elements of the source that preserve conceptual coherence. Second, conceptual metaphors are often *entrenched* and spawn a network of

entailments. Once a mapping is established, it can generate many expressions and influence reasoning. For example, viewing ARGUMENT as WAR entails that one's interlocutor is an "opponent", points of view are "defended", and counter-arguments can be "shot down" – a metaphor that shapes how people conduct debates [4].

Central to CMT is the notion of embodiment. Our metaphorical concepts are grounded in physical and sensorimotor experience. Metaphors arise from how our bodies interact with the world – what we feel, see, and do. Thus, certain metaphors appear to be near-universal because all humans share basic bodily experiences. For instance, almost everyone experiences warmth as pleasant, leading to metaphors linking AFFECTION and WARMTH, or upward orientation as positive, for example, standing upright vs. lying down, yielding metaphors like "high spirits". Empirical research supports the embodied basis of metaphors: understanding a metaphor can activate the same neural regions involved in the literal experience. For example, spatial metaphors engage motor and orientation areas, whereas texture metaphors engage sensory cortex, and emotion metaphors activate the amygdala. This underscores that metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon but is *rooted in our neurocognitive architecture* [3].

2.2. Semi-Universal vs. Culture-Specific Metaphors

While CMT asserts the universality of the cognitive *process* of metaphor, it also recognises substantial *cross-cultural variation* in metaphorical expressions. Lakoff and Johnson [1], noted that many conceptual metaphors are widely shared across languages, owing to common bodily experiences and shared human environments. These are sometimes called "semi-universal" metaphor**s** [2], for example, associating *up* with good mood or *heat* with anger can be found in many unrelated languages because the human body and basic interactions with gravity/temperature are universal. A comparative study of Chinese and English by Bao [5], indeed found numerous shared source domains for love metaphors arising from "universal human experiences and cognitive processes". Both languages, for instance, use journey, container, war, heart, madness, physical force, fire, disease, and unity as metaphors for love – suggesting a common conceptual mapping process at work across cultures.

On the other hand, metaphors are also "cultural artifacts" [6], that encode distinct histories, values, and environments. CMT acknowledges culture-specific metaphors that arise from unique cultural experiences or linguistic resources. Languages develop metaphors drawing on culturally salient elements: for example, Indonesian has buaya darat "land crocodile" for a womaniser, Japanese uses **腹が立つ** (*hara ga tatsu*, "stomach stands up") for getting angry, and Chinese invokes **发火** (*fā huǒ*, "to catch fire") for losing one's temper. These metaphors make sense within their cultural context (crocodiles in folklore, traditional beliefs about organs, etc.) but have no direct equivalent in languages without that context. Although the conceptual domain of understanding is grounded in shared human embodiment, languages draw on different source domains to express it. For example, the English speakers would say "grasp an idea" whereas Chinese speakers **"吃透一个想法"** ("eat through an idea") and Koreans **"생각에 잠기다"** ("sink in a deep thought"), resulting in metaphorical expressions that diverge despite pointing to the same cognitive process.

Scholars have increasingly emphasized investigating both the universality and variation of metaphors in a systematic way [7]. In a methodological study of anger metaphors across American English, Hungarian, and Russian, Kövecses *et al*., [7], found that all three languages share certain highly salient metaphors for ANGER – notably ANGER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL, ANGER IS FIRE, and ANGER IS INSANITY, which appeared in each culture's lexicon. However, differences were evident in the range and preference of metaphors, and these could be influenced by the method of data collection (lexicon vs. corpus). The study underlines that while there is a core of common metaphorical ideas, such as anger as something hot inside that can erupt, or as a wild force, each language profiles the emotion differently. For instance, the same research noted that English speakers use a plethora of idioms for anger – from violent metaphors, such as "blow up" and "bite someone's head off" to bodily fluids - "make someone's blood boil" – whereas other languages might not mirror all these nuances.

Crucially, cultural norms and social attitudes about emotions shape metaphor usage. If a culture encourages emotional restraint, its language may favour metaphors of *containing or suppressing* emotions; if open expression is valued, metaphors of *explosion or release* may be more common. Huszka *et al*., [4], observe that metaphors are *cognitively framed by culture*: societies highlight source domains that resonate with their ecology and values. Their study of Malay proverbs showed frequent metaphors from *rivers, food, and agriculture*, reflecting the local environment, and these metaphors conveyed core cultural values, such as humility, social harmony. In the realm of emotions, East Asian cultures influenced by Confucianism often conceptualise emotions in terms of balance, inner control, and harmony; this might yield metaphors like "anger is an internal toxin" to be purged, as seen in the Korean concept of

hwa-byung, a culture-bound syndrome of "anger illness", or "love is fate" connecting souls by an invisible thread. Western cultures, by contrast, might emphasize individual passion and struggle, giving rise to metaphors such as "falling in love" as an accidental, uncontrollable act or love as a contract to be maintained. Bao [5], indeed found that Chinese love metaphors are influenced by yin-yang philosophy that stresses *harmonious union and fate*, whereas English metaphors are shaped by Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian ideas, that often stress *union of complementary halves and a partnership contract*.

In summary, CMT provides a framework to understand how love and anger can be represented through recurring metaphors across languages, while also predicting that each language will exhibit unique metaphorical expressions tied to its culture. Prior research across numerous languages, such as Chinese, Indonesian, Hungarian, has documented both commonalities and differences in the metaphors for these emotions. However, English and Korean have seldom been directly compared in this regard. Using CMT, this study will fill that gap by systematically analysing English and Korean love/anger metaphors to distinguish the embodied (semi-)universalities from the culture-specific differences. The literature suggests that shared metaphors are likely to emerge due to universal aspects of human embodiment, while notable variations are anticipated as a result of the contrasting cultural contexts of Anglophone and Korean speakers.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Corpus of Metaphorical Expressions

This research is based on a corpus of attested metaphorical expressions for *love* and *anger* in English and Korean. The dataset was constructed by collecting idioms, common phrases, and colloquial expressions that convey these emotions metaphorically. To ensure authenticity and relevance, we drew examples from a variety of sources, including dictionaries of idioms, linguistic corpora, literature, and everyday usage attested on language forums and media. Each candidate expression was validated by native speakers of the respective language to confirm its meaning and natural usage in context. The final dataset comprises parallel sets of expressions for each emotion in each language, for example, English love metaphors and their Korean counterparts, where available, and vice versa. This approach captures a broad snapshot of how love and anger are figuratively expressed in the two languages, rather than relying on a single source or constructed examples. For English, we included well-known idiomatic expressions, such as "to fall in love", "to spill one's guts in anger", as well as common metaphorical collocations found in contemporary language use. For Korean, we included metaphorical idioms and phrases, such as "사랑에 빠지다" – "to fall in love", "화가 나다" – "anger arises/to get angry", "열받는다" – "to get heated/to get angry", "화가 치밀어 오르다" – "anger wells up/surges inside", that are frequent in speech or writing. When necessary, we consulted Korean language references and native speaker judgments to interpret the literal versus intended meanings. The focus was specifically on expressions that are figurative (metaphorical or metonymic) rather than literal descriptions of emotion.

3.2. Analytical Approach

Our analysis follows the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). For each expression in the corpus, we identified the target emotion: love or anger, and the source domain invoked by the metaphor, such as heat, fire, physical force, container, journey, etc. We then grouped the expressions into conceptual metaphor categories. For example, expressions such as "불같이 사랑하다" ("to love with a burning passion") were grouped under LOVE IS FIRE. At the same time, "사랑이 식다" ("love is cooling down") refers to passion fading as love diminishes. Similarly, in "불같이 화를 내다" ("to flare up in anger"), Korean uses the element fire to conceptualise both love and anger.

We paid special attention to how similarly or differently English and Korean realise each conceptual metaphor.

For each metaphorical expression, we annotated several details:

- Literal meaning (for Korean expressions, translating the Korean words directly to illustrate the image),
- Idiomatic meaning (the actual intended meaning of the expression, in terms of describing love or anger),
- Conceptual metaphor mapping (the source-domain → target-domain mapping, in CMT terms),
- Embodiment notes (how the expression relates to physical experiences or cultural practices).

By comparing these annotations across English and Korean, we identified which conceptual metaphors appear in both languages (shared or "semi-universal" metaphors) and which appear in only one language (potentially culture-specific metaphors). The comparison also considered differences in emphasis – i.e. even if a metaphor exists

in both languages, one language might use it more frequently or in different nuances.

The analysis is primarily qualitative. Rather than quantifying frequencies, we aim to richly describe the metaphors and their cultural or bodily motivations. However, the selection of expressions was done to ensure major metaphorical patterns for each emotion are represented. Any particularly unique metaphors in one language that had no clear counterpart in the other were noted as differences.

Throughout the analysis process, cross-validation was done by consulting additional native speakers or secondary sources if an interpretation was uncertain. This was especially important for Korean expressions, to ensure that subtle connotations or usage contexts were correctly understood.

The Results are organised by emotion: first love, then anger. Within each, we present the shared metaphors followed by the differences. Example expressions from each language are given to illustrate each metaphor category, with the format specified, including original Korean script, romanisation, and meanings. This structure allows a clear side-by-side view of how English and Korean metaphorically frame the emotions of love and anger, highlighting both convergence and divergence.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Love – Shared/Semi-Universal Metaphors and Differences

Shared Metaphorical Mappings for Love:

Despite the distance between English and Korean, our analysis found a robust set of conceptual metaphors for love that are present in both languages. These shared metaphors appear to stem from common human bodily experiences and universally salient aspects of romance. Below we detail the major shared mappings, each illustrated with an English example and a Korean example:

- **LOVE IS A JOURNEY:**
  - *English:* "We hit a dead end in our relationship." – *Idiomatic meaning:* Our love affair reached a point where it could not continue. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS A JOURNEY (a relationship is conceptualised as a travel route, with obstacles and destinations). *Embodiment:* Physical journeys involve movement through space towards a goal; hitting a "dead end" (a road with no exit) corresponds to a relationship failing to progress, reflecting the embodied understanding of progress and impediment in love.
  - In Korean, literary expressions such as **"사랑을 위해 넘어야 할 산이 많다"** (*salang-eul wihae neom-eoya hal san-i manhda)*, literally "there are many mountains to cross for love", *idiomatically* meaning that love requires overcoming many obstacles and **"사랑의 길이 험난하다"** (*sarang-ui giri heomnanhada)*, literally "the path of love is rugged/difficult", idiomatically meaning that the experience of love is challenging and full of difficulties, also reflect the LOVE IS A JOURNEY mapping. These expressions draw on embodied experiences of climbing mountains, exerting physical effort, and navigating uneven or hazardous terrain, projecting these sensations onto the emotional effort required to sustain a romantic relationship. The bodily realities of fatigue, imbalance, and the need to overcome obstacles structure the metaphorical understanding of love as a demanding journey, paralleling the English conceptualisation of relational progress as movement along a path with impediments and endpoints.

- **LOVE IS A CONTAINER (OR SPACE) ONE FALLS INTO:**
  - *English:* "They fell in love at first sight." – *Idiomatic meaning:* They very quickly became deeply enamoured with each other. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS A CONTAINER (or a place) that one can enter. *Embodiment:* Falling into a physical space, such as a hole or a pit, is an involuntary, sudden action. This maps onto the experience of suddenly entering the state of love without control. The phrase also implies depth – being "in" love as if submerged, highlighting how love can encompass or surround a person.
  - *Korean:* **"사랑에 빠지다"** (*sarang-e ppajida*, "to fall into love"). *Idiomatic meaning:* To fall in love, typically suddenly or uncontrollably. *CMT Mapping***:** LOVE IS A CONTAINER or a space into which one can fall. *Embodiment:* This expression conceptualises love as a bounded space – often imagined as a pit or a body of water – into which a person unexpectedly falls/descends. The bodily experience of losing balance and becoming immersed maps onto the psychological loss of control associated with sudden romantic attraction. Similarly in English, the metaphor also implies depth and enclosure, emphasising how love can surround and absorb the lover.

- **LOVE IS FIRE/HEAT:**
  - *English:* "She was burning with love." – *Idiomatic meaning:* She felt intense passion and love. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS FIRE (or

heat). *Embodiment:* Romantic passion often correlates with a warm flush or heightened body temperature. Describing love as "burning" draws on the visceral sensation of heat to characterise the intensity of emotion. Fire's qualities of heat, light, potential destructiveness are mapped onto love's passion and fervour.

- *Korean:* "사랑에 불타오르다" (*sarang-e bultaoruda*) – Literal: "to blaze up in love". *Idiomatic meaning:* To burn with love or passion, to feel one's love ignited intensely. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS FIRE. *Embodiment:* This expression invokes the image of flames flaring up, using the bodily experience of heat and the visual of fire to convey passionate love. In Korean, love "flaring up" suggests a sudden ignition of strong emotion, much as one feels a rush of heat or a "fire in the heart" when deeply in love.

- **LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE (MAGNETISM/GRAVITY):**
  - *English:* "I felt drawn to him from the moment we met." – *Idiomatic meaning:* I felt attracted to him immediately, as if pulled by a force. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE (attraction) IS A PHYSICAL FORCE such as magnetism or gravity. *Embodiment:* The expression "drawn to" uses the experience of a physical pulling force on one's body to describe the psychological attraction of love. Just as a magnet or gravity invisibly pulls objects together, love is conceptualised as an invisible force drawing two people together.
  - *Korean:* **"마음이 끌리다"** (*ma-eum-i kkeulrida*, "(my) heart is pulled"). *Idiomatic meaning:* I felt attracted to someone; my heart was drawn toward her/him. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE/ATTRACTION IS A PHYSICAL FORCE. *Embodiment:* This expression conceptualises the *ma-eum* (mind/heart, the Korean seat of emotion) as being physically pulled by an external force, in the same way that a body can be drawn toward a magnet or gravitational source. The variant **"자석처럼 끌리다"** (*jaseok-cheoreom kkeullida*,) "to be drawn like a magnet" makes this physical-force schema explicit by invoking magnetism as the source domain. These expressions mirror the embodied sensation of being compelled or drawn forward and map it onto the emotional experience of attraction. The bodily understanding of being moved by an external force is thus applied to the onset of romantic interest in Korean.

- **LOVE IS A UNITY OF TWO (TWO HALVES OF A WHOLE):**
  - *English:* "She is my other half." *Idiomatic meaning:* She is my partner to whom I feel so close that together we form a whole; often said of a spouse or true love. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS UNITY - lovers are two halves of one unit. *Embodiment:* Physically, a whole object can be split into two complementary halves; joining halves creates completeness. This tangible concept structures the idea that two lovers complete one another to form a single, unified entity. It reflects an embodied sense of wholeness versus incompleteness.
  - *Korean*: **"내 반쪽"** (*nae banjjok*, "my half"). In spoken Korean, expressions such as **"너는 내 반쪽이야"** (*neoneun nae banjjok-iya*,) "you are my other half" is used to address a partner who is perceived as completing oneself. *Idiomatic meaning:* One's soulmate or "better half", implying that the loved person completes the speaker. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS UNITY / LOVED ONES FORM A WHOLE. *Embodiment:* The metaphor relies on the physical image of a whole object made of two complementary halves; when the halves are joined, they create completeness. This embodied schema of symmetry and fitting parts structures the idea that lovers form a unified whole and emphasises emotional interdependence. Korean also employs the idiom **"일심동체"** (*ilsim dongche*, "one mind, one body"), especially in the form **"부부는 일심동체"** (*bubuneun ilsimdongche*, "a married couple is one body"), to describe spouses who function as a single, unified entity. This further reinforces the embodied notion that two individuals in a committed relationship can metaphorically become one body.

- **LOVE IS MADNESS (LOSS OF REASON):**
  - *English:* "He's crazy about her." – *Idiomatic meaning:* He is deeply in love with her (to the point of acting irrationally). *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS INSANITY. *Embodiment:* Intense love often leads to unusual or irrational behaviour, metaphorically akin to madness. The English expression equates being in love with a kind of benign craziness. It draws on embodied folk understanding that strong emotions can "derange" the mind temporarily, much as mental illness would.
  - *Korean:* **"사랑에 미치다"** (*sarang-e michida*) – Literal: "to go crazy in love". *Idiomatic meaning:* To be crazy about someone, utterly infatuated. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS MADNESS. *Embodiment:* The Korean uses

the verb *michida* ("to go crazy") with love as the cause. It directly parallels the English usage. Embodiment here lies in observable loss of composure or rational thought when in love – akin to symptoms of madness. Both languages conceptualise overwhelming love as something that overwhelms the mind, indicating a universal mapping between extreme emotion and insanity.

- **LOVE IS A DISEASE (AILMENT/SICKNESS):**
  - *English:* "She's lovesick." – *Idiomatic meaning:* She is so in love - often with unrequited love or in the loved one's absence, that she is pining and in low spirits, almost as if ill. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS A DISEASE. *Embodiment:* Strong love, especially when unreciprocated or separated, can cause appetite loss, sleeplessness, and melancholy, resembling physical illness symptoms. English uses "-sick" (as in homesick, lovesick) to denote suffering due to longing. The body's state of illness – weakness, discomfort – is mapped onto the emotional state of longing for love.
  - *Korean:* **"상사병"** (*sangsa-byeong*, "longing-love disease" from Sino-Korean *相思病*, meaning "affection-thinking illness"). In contemporary usage, the phrase often appears as **"상사병에 걸리다"** (*sangsabyeong-e geollida*, "to get lovesick"), even though the term carries an older, somewhat literary tone. *Idiomatic meaning:* Lovesickness – an emotional and physical state characterised by longing for an unrequited or distant love. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS A DISEASE. *Embodiment:* The expression conceptualises intense romantic longing as an actual medical condition, with the morpheme **병** (*byeong*, "disease") explicitly framing love-related suffering as an illness. This metaphor draws on embodied experiences associated with love-related distress, such as loss of appetite, insomnia, and physical weakening, and maps these onto the culturally recognisable schema of bodily dysfunction. Korean thus encodes the emotional pain of separation or unfulfilled affection as a pathological state, reinforcing the embodied link between emotional suffering and somatic symptoms.

- **LOVE IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT (TREASURE):**
  - *English:* "Your love is a treasure to me." – *Idiomatic meaning:* Your love is extremely valuable and cherished by me. *CMT Mapping:* LOVE IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT/COMMODITY. *Embodiment:* Precious materials (gold, jewels) and treasures are things we highly value, guard, and consider rare. This physical value schema is mapped onto love, implying love is something of great worth that one possesses or gives. The embodied basis lies in economic transactions and value – humans everywhere understand the difference between something cheap and something precious, and thus use that to characterise the worth of love.
  - *Korean:* **"보석 같은 사랑"** (*boseok gateun sarang*, "jewel-like love"). *Idiomatic meaning:* Love that is as precious and cherished as a jewel. *CMT Mapping***:** LOVE IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT. *Embodiment***:** By likening love to a jewel (보석, *boseok*), this expression draws on the embodied experience of recognising the value and beauty of physical precious objects such as gems or gold. The schema of material preciousness – objects that are carefully guarded and often costly – structures the understanding of love as something of exceptional worth. Korean thus conceptualises love as a valuable object that should be treasured, mirroring the English metaphor. Both languages treat an abstract emotion as if it were a tangible, quantifiable commodity. Additional Korean metaphors further support this embodied pattern: for example, **"사랑이 꽃피었다"** (*sarang-i kkotpieotda)*, literally "love bloomed", just as in English, mapping the growth and flourishing of love to plant development (LOVE IS A PLANT); and **"사랑이라는 마법에 걸리다"** (*sarang-iraneun mabeop-e geollida*, literally "to be caught in the magic called love"), which parallels English "spellbound by love" by invoking magical enchantment as an experiential source domain (LOVE IS MAGIC). These expressions extend the same embodied and imaginative grounding found across languages, highlighting how Korean, like English, conceptualises love through universally accessible experiential frames.

Differences and Culture-Specific Metaphors for Love:

In addition to the shared metaphors discussed above, English and Korean each exhibit metaphorical conceptualisations of love that are unique or emphasised differently. These differences often stem from cultural concepts, historical background, and linguistic distinctiveness.

- **Love as Fate or Predestined Connection:** One prominent Korean example is the conceptualisation of love as fate/predestined connection. Korean culture – like many East Asian cultures influenced by

Confucian and Buddhist notions of harmony – places significant emphasis on 인연 (*inyeon*, "fate" or "karmic connection" between people). This cultural concept gives rise to metaphors that frame love as something destined or cosmically orchestrated. A well-known example is the folklore motif of the **"붉은 실"** (*bulgeun sil*, "red thread"), as in **"운명의 붉은 실"** (*unmyeong-ui bulgeun sil*, "the red string of fate"), which describes lovers as being invisibly bound together by destiny. A related expression, **"운명이라는 끈"** (*unmyeong-ilaneun kkeun*, "a string called fate"), refers more broadly to the invisible ties that connect people and events and may lead to significant, often coincidental, outcomes. These metaphors have no direct equivalent in English and highlight a distinctively Korean cultural framing of romantic relationships as predetermined or guided by unseen cosmic forces. This metaphor visualises love as a literal thread tying two people together by destiny. *Mapping:* LOVE/RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL BOND DECREED BY FATE. *Embodiment:* The idea of a thread tying two individuals' ankles (as the legend goes) uses the physical experience of being tethered together to represent an invisible emotional bond. While English speakers also talk about "soulmates" or being "meant for each other", the red thread metaphor is specific to East Asian cultures and has no direct English equivalent. English metaphors of love seldom invoke fate so explicitly; instead, English has phrases like "match made in heaven", which are similar in concept of destiny, but not a concrete object like a thread. This reflects a cultural difference: Korean expresses destined love with a tangible connector (thread), influenced by Chinese mythology, whereas English uses more abstract or religious imagery such as heaven.

- Traditional Korean discourse on romantic love, particularly in older literature and in contexts influenced by Confucian modesty, tends to express affection in indirect and euphemistic ways. Korean love expressions often rely on gentle metaphors or nature imagery. For example, instead of stating "passionate love" explicitly, a speaker may use expressions such as **"마음을 주다"** (*ma-eum-eul juda*, "to give one's heart") to imply deep affection in a modest way, or **"마음을 빼앗기다"** (*ma-eum-eul ppaesgida*, "to have one's heart taken away") to describe being captivated. By contrast, English – especially in contemporary usage – readily employs overtly passionate metaphors, frequently drawing on imagery of fire, heat, or even madness. This contrast aligns with observations from cross-cultural research: Chinese metaphors for love and, by extension, many traditional Korean expressions, favour gentle symbols such as the moon or water, whereas English tends toward more intense imagery such as flames and heat. The difference is therefore not a matter of entirely distinct conceptual mappings but rather differences in metaphorical preference and salience. Both languages have the LOVE AS FIRE metaphor, where an English speaker might naturally say "flaming desire", but the Korean equivalent **"불타는 사랑"** (*bultaneun sarang)*, "burning love" is less common in everyday conversation and appears more frequently in poetic and dramatic contexts. Korean speakers may instead invoke metaphors of fate or use softer expressions of endearment. This contrast reflects cultural expectations regarding emotional expression and the social appropriateness of explicit versus understated metaphorical language.
- **Love as Contract or Commitment:** In English, which is commonly influenced by Western legalistic and individualistic thinking, there is a metaphor of love or marriage as a contract/agreement – e.g. "tie the knot" (marriage as binding), "contractual love", or speaking of relationships in terms of "commitment", a term shared in Korean as 약속, promise, but the contractual nuance is stronger in English idioms. English also speaks of "investing in a relationship" or "banking on love", which draw from commerce. These metaphors conceptualise love using the domain of law or economics, highlighting commitment and mutual obligation. In Korean, while marriage is certainly seen as a commitment, the metaphors of love-as-contract are less prevalent in idiomatic usage. Instead, love is often framed more through family and fate terms, such as referring to a spouse as one's "half" or invoking fate as above. This difference likely arises from historical context: English love metaphors have traces of Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian influence where marriage is a contract or sacred bond. Korean, coming from a different tradition, did not historically describe love in terms of legalistic contract in its idioms, even

if modern language in the media might occasionally borrow such notions.

- **Cultural Symbols in Love Metaphors:** Korean and English also differ in the specific symbolic references they use for love. For example, Korean popular culture sometimes refers to couples as **"운명"** (*unmyeong*, fate) or invokes the idea of **첫사랑** (*cheot-sarang*, first love) with almost sacred reverence, though these are concepts rather than metaphors. English, on the other hand, has metaphors like "love is a journey" deeply embedded ("we're *at crossroads* in our relationship"), which, while also present in Korean, have been more extensively elaborated in English literature and song. Another symbolic difference: Western lore of Cupid's arrow (love as being shot by an arrow) has no direct Korean folk equivalent; Korean speakers understand it, but it is not a native metaphor. Conversely, the East Asian symbol of the moon as an image of love's beauty is more pronounced in Korean and Chinese poetry, whereas in English the moon is less tied to love except in a romantic ambiance sense. These differences show how cultural lore and literature supply additional metaphoric content on top of the embodied experiences.

In summary, English and Korean share a rich common ground of love metaphors based on the human body and universal experiences of romance – from feeling warmth and physical attraction to perceiving love as a unifying force or a perilous fall. These shared metaphors confirm the notion of *embodied universality*: despite no historical contact, the two languages independently evolved very similar ways to talk about love because the human experience of love has common elements. At the same time, each language carries its cultural signature: Korean metaphors weave in concepts of fate, restraint, and collective unity, while English metaphors reflect notions of individual passion, struggle, and contractual partnership. These differences, though fewer in number than the similarities, are significant in understanding how Koreans and English-speakers might *think* slightly differently about love. They highlight what CMT describes as the influence of culture on metaphor: our metaphors both arise from *shared biology* and are shaped by our *unique cultural stories*.

4.2. Anger – Shared/Semi-Universal Metaphors and Differences

Shared Metaphorical Mappings for Anger:

English and Korean also exhibit a high degree of overlap in the fundamental metaphors used to conceptualise anger. This is unsurprising given that anger's physiological effects, i.e. heat, pressure, agitation are universally experienced. Many of the classic conceptual metaphors for anger identified in prior research [8, 9], are visible in both languages. Here we present the key shared mappings for anger, with illustrative examples:

- **ANGER IS HEAT (A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER):**
  - *English:* "She was boiling with anger by the end of the meeting." – *Idiomatic meaning:* She was extremely angry (to the point of metaphorical boiling). *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER, where the body is referred to as the container, and anger as heated fluid. *Embodiment:* When people get angry, their body temperature rises, and may experience feeling hot or face flushes, and blood pressure increases, akin to liquid heating up and potentially boiling. The English metaphor "boiling with anger" directly maps this physiological heat to the concept of anger intensity. The container aspect is implied: one boils with anger, suggesting anger is inside, like water boiling in a pot.
  - *Korean***: "열받다"** (*yeol batda*, "to receive heat"). *Idiomatic meaning:* to get angry or to become emotionally heated. *CMT Mapping***:** ANGER IS HEAT / ANGER IS A HOT SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER (the body). *Embodiment:* The expression conceptualises anger as a form of heat entering or rising within the body, drawing on the embodied experience of increased temperature, flushing, and internal agitation that accompanies anger. Because 열 (*yeol*, "heat") denotes physical warmth, the metaphor frames anger as a thermal event affecting the body as a container. The figurative "receiving of heat" reflects how anger is often experienced as an involuntary surge of warmth, paralleling the English metaphor of "boiling with anger." The bodily sensations associated with elevated temperature and pressure are thus mapped onto the emotional intensity of anger in Korean.

- **ANGER IS A PRESSURIZED SUBSTANCE THAT RISES AND EXPLODES:**

(This is an extension of the hot fluid/container metaphor, highlighting the build-up and release aspect.)

  - *English:* "Don't bottle up your anger or you'll explode." – *Idiomatic meaning:* Don't suppress your anger continuously, or you will suddenly lose control, in other words, have an angry outburst. *CMT Mapping:*

ANGER IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER / ANGER IS AN EXPLOSIVE FORCE. *Embodiment:* Keeping anger "bottled up" equates the emotion to a volatile substance under pressure in a bottle. The verb "explode" explicitly maps anger to a bomb or pressurised container bursting. Physically, when we hold in anger, we feel tension or pressure and at a breaking point that can result in a sudden emotional explosion (shouting, etc.). This mapping is virtually universal – many languages talk of anger building and bursting.

- *Korean:* **"화를 참으면 병 생긴다"** (*hwaleul cham-eumyeon byeong saeng-ginda*) and **"화를 참으면 화병 난다"** (*hwaleul cham-eumyeon hwabyeong nanda*) – *Literal meanings:* "If you hold in your anger, illness arises", and "If you hold in your anger, you develop *hwa-byeong* ('anger illness')". *Idiomatic meaning:* Suppressed anger builds up internally and eventually causes harm. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS A PRESSURISED SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER / SUPPRESSED ANGER CAUSES INTERNAL DAMAGE. *Embodiment:* These Korean expressions conceptualise anger as a substance that accumulates inside the body-as-container when not released. Instead of highlighting outward explosion, Korean emphasises the *internal* consequences of accumulated emotional pressure. The verb **참다** (*chamda*, "to suppress/endure") frames anger as something that is forced downward and held inside, increasing inner pressure. The culturally salient syndrome **화병** (*hwa-byeong*, literally "anger illness") reflects the belief that prolonged internal pressure can result in psychological and somatic symptoms such as chest pressure, heat sensations, insomnia, or digestive problems. This metaphor shares the embodied logic of the English mapping – pressure accumulation leading to a breaking point – but Korean conceptualises the "break" as inward collapse or illness rather than outward explosion. Both systems therefore rely on the container–pressure schema, yet diverge in whether the endpoint is external eruption (English) or internalised harm (Korean).

- **ANGER IS FIRE/FLAME:**
  - *English:* "He was spitting fire when he found out about the betrayal." – *Idiomatic meaning:* He was extremely angry, speaking in a furious, enraged manner. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS FIRE. *Embodiment:* This metaphor likens anger to fire, emphasising its destructive potential and heat. In English, to "spit fire" suggests one's words are like flames – scathing and heated. The embodied basis is the heat in the angry person (they may feel hot or "fiery") and the observable signs like a red face (as if inflamed).
  - *Korean:* **"불같이 화를 내다"** (*bul-gati hwareul naeda*, "to express anger like fire"). *Idiomatic meaning:* to lose one's temper fiercely or suddenly, as when fire flares up. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS FIRE. *Embodiment:* The adverb **불같이** (*bul-gachi*, "like fire") explicitly frames anger as a blaze, emphasising its sudden ignition and potential destructiveness. This metaphor draws on the embodied experience of heat and rapid acceleration associated with fire. The Korean expression mirrors the English metaphor in highlighting the explosive and consuming nature of anger, reflecting physiological experiences such as warmth, flushing, and heightened agitation. A related Korean description, **"성질이 불같다"** (*seongjil-i bulgatda*, "to have a temperament like fire"), is commonly used to characterise a person with a fiery temper. These expressions collectively illustrate how Korean conceptualises anger through the imagery of flame and combustion, aligning closely with the embodied heat-based understanding of anger found in English.

- **ANGER IS AN OPPONENT (to be controlled or fought):**
  - *English:* "I wrestled with my anger after hearing the news." – *Idiomatic meaning:* I struggled internally to control or overcome my anger. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS AN OPPONENT (in a struggle/fight). *Embodiment:* Anger is personified as an adversary within oneself that one must grapple with. This reflects the embodied experience of tension – muscles tensing, an urge to act – which can feel like an internal fight. The phrase suggests conscious effort to subdue the emotion as one would restrain an opponent.
  - *Korean:* **"화를 참다"** (*hwareul chamda*) – Literal: "to suppress/hold back anger". Also, **"화를 이겨내다"** (*hwareul igyeonaeda*) – "to overcome anger". *Idiomatic meaning:* To control one's anger, not letting it out. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS AN OPPONENT / ANGER IS A FORCE TO BE RESTRAINED. *Embodiment:* The Korean verbs imply battling or endurance: *chamda* means to bear or endure, as one would bear a burden or fend off something pressing, and

igyeonaeda means to win over or get the better of. These metaphors frame anger as something that attacks or pressures the self, requiring strength or will to resist. The bodily experience of *restraint* - physically holding something down or in, underlies these metaphors. Both languages see controlling anger in terms of fighting an adversary or holding down a force, and this highlights the universal perspective on anger management as a form of combat with the self.

- **ANGER IS A CAPTOR or POSSESSION (losing freedom/control):**
  - *English:* "He was gripped by anger." – *Idiomatic meaning:* He was seized by anger, as if anger took hold of him and that he lost control at that time. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS AN AGENT THAT POSSESSES/SEIZES YOU. *Embodiment:* In intense anger, people often report feeling "not themselves" or controlled by the emotion. The English phrase uses the physical sensation of being grabbed or clenched by something stronger than oneself to describe how anger can take over one's behavior.
  - *Korean:* **"분노에 사로잡히다"** (*bunno-e sarojaphida*) – Literal: "to be captured by anger". *Idiomatic meaning:* To be overcome with anger, in the grip of anger. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER IS A CAPTOR/AGENT. *Embodiment:* The Korean expression vividly uses *sarojapda* ("to capture/seize") indicating that anger is like an enemy or captor that can imprison one's rationality or normal self. This shares the sense of *loss of agency*: the angry person feels held hostage by the emotion. Both languages personify anger as an external force or entity that can control a person, reflecting how, biologically, strong anger can hijack one's decision-making, where when we act "in anger", we are not fully in a rational state. The metaphor resonates with a universal feeling of being "beside oneself" with anger, as if another force has taken over.

These shared metaphors reinforce how deeply embodied experiences shape the concept of anger in both English and Korean. The sensations of *heat*, *internal pressure*, *upward bodily sensations, like a head rush*, *violent energy*, *and loss of control* are encoded in both languages' figurative speech. The presence of near-identical metaphors – e.g. boiling blood, anger exploding, holding in anger, fiery temper – suggests that any human with a body undergoes similar internal processes when angry, leading to analogous figurative interpretations [3]. Even without mutual influence, English and Korean folk models of anger arrive at the same imagery, underlining the *semi-universal* nature of anger metaphors.

Differences and Culture-Specific Metaphors for Anger:

While the core metaphors for anger are shared, there are noteworthy differences in how English and Korean employ or emphasise certain metaphors, as well as a few unique expressions in each. These differences often correlate with cultural attitudes toward anger and linguistic particularities:

- **Emphasis on Restraint vs. Expression:** A key cultural divergence lies in how openly anger is expected to be shown. Korean culture traditionally values emotional restraint and harmony, meaning open displays of anger are often discouraged in public or formal settings. This is reflected in the language: Korean has many expressions about *holding in anger* or *calming anger*. For example, **"화를 삭이다"** (*hwareul sakida*, literally "to dissolve anger") means to let one's anger subside by itself (as sugar would dissolve – an interesting metaphor of anger as something that can dissipate gradually). Another phrase, **"속으로 화를 삭였다"**, means "I digested my anger internally", suggesting one dealt with it quietly. These metaphors of dissolving or digesting anger have a less direct counterpart in English. English speakers certainly talk about *controlling* anger, but there is also a cultural tolerance (even a minor valorisation in some contexts) for venting anger, expression such as "blowing off steam", "giving someone a piece of your mind". English idioms like "air your anger" or "let off steam" convey releasing anger outwardly to feel better, whereas Korean tends to frame it as something to be *swallowed or quenched*. This difference is subtle, but it underscores that Korean metaphorical language encapsulates the idea that anger kept inside can cause internal harm, hence one must calm it internally, aligning with the cultural norm of not disrupting social harmony by outward rage.
- *Hwabyeong* (**화병**) (often written as a proper noun) is a recognised **Korean culture-bound syndrome**, classified in traditional Korean medicine as a specific mental-emotional disorder. The term derives from **火病** ("fire-illness"), reflecting its semantic and symbolic association with internalised heat. *Hwabyeong* is understood as an illness resulting from the long-term suppression of

anger and perceived injustice, leading to a range of physical and psychological symptoms such as chest pressure, heat sensations, insomnia, fatigue, and anxiety. Although not an idiom in the everyday lexical sense, *Hwabyeong* carries clear metaphorical implications: it conceptualises repressed anger as a pathogenic force inside the body. *CMT Mapping:* ANGER (WHEN SUPPRESSED) IS A DISEASE / ANGER IS A PATHOGEN IN THE BODY. *Embodiment:* The syndrome exemplifies how unexpressed emotional heat and tension are understood to accumulate within the body-as-container, eventually manifesting as physical dysfunction. Whereas English may describe anger metaphorically as "poisonous" or suggest that resentment/bitterness "eats you up inside", these expressions remain figurative and non-medical. Korean, by contrast, codifies this metaphor in an actual diagnostic category, demonstrating a culturally salient link between emotional suppression and bodily illness. The existence of *Hwabyeong* thus highlights a uniquely Korean extension of the anger-as-heat and anger-as-pressure metaphors into the domain of health, reflecting both cultural norms of emotional restraint and an embodied recognition of the consequences of unexpressed anger.

- **Different Body-Part Focus:** Metaphors for anger often involve body parts as sites of emotion. Both languages mention the head, where anger "rising to one's head" in Korean, and being "hot-headed" in English, and the heart, though heart in anger is more for calmness vs. anger in English idioms – e.g. "cold-hearted" seen as unemotional. However, there are slight differences: English has an idiom "to vent one's spleen" meaning to express anger, stemming from medieval humorism where spleen was the seat of ire. Korean traditionally associated the liver (*간, gan*) with anger in older expressions – e.g. **"부아가 치밀다"** (archaic, "the bile rises") – again reflecting humoristic medicine from Chinese influence. These specific body-part metaphors (spleen, liver) are unique to the cultural histories (Western vs. East Asian medicine), though they are less common in modern usage. Another example: English says "make someone's blood boil", Korean says **"피가 거꾸로 솟다"** ("blood rises upside-down") meaning one's fury caused blood to rush upward. The slight difference in phrasing ("boil" vs "rise upside-down") is culturally flavored but based on the same perceived physiology of blood behaving violently. In essence, the *organs or bodily fluids invoked* may differ, due to historical medical theories or expressions surviving from them, yet the underlying metaphor of anger as bodily dysfunction remains shared.
- **Idioms and Slang:** Some differences between English and Korean arise not from distinct conceptual metaphors but from the specific idioms and slang each language uses to elaborate anger. English has colourful expressions such as "seeing red", which frames anger through visual redness – either metaphorically or through cultural associations such as bullfighting. Korean does not use colour-based metaphors for anger in this way; instead, it frequently draws on heat-based slang, as in **"열받는다"** (*yeol batneunda*, literally "to receive heat," idiomatically "to get angry"), which conceptualises anger as internal heat rising within the body. Another modern colloquial expression is **"뚜껑이 열리다"** (*ttukkeong-i yeollida*, literally "the lid opens"), meaning "to become extremely angry." This expression imagines the body as a container whose lid bursts open when emotional pressure becomes too great. English has no direct equivalent except vulgar slang, although expressions such as "to go through the roof" convey a similar sense of sudden escalation. These idioms do not represent fundamentally different conceptual metaphors, since both languages rely on the pressure-container and anger-as-heat schemas; rather, they illustrate how each language develops its own culturally and socially marked ways of expressing the same underlying embodied patterns.
- **Cultural Attitudes in Metaphor:** Perhaps the most significant difference is not in the existence of a mapping but in its salience. Both languages know the mapping ANGER IS DANGEROUS FIRE. Yet, in English rhetoric, one might more freely call an angry person "explosive" or "volcanic", whereas a Korean speaker might be more inclined to describe the person as "참지 못했다" (could not hold it) – focusing on the loss of restraint rather than the explosive quality per se. This reflects a cultural lens: English descriptions sometimes glorify or at least vividly emphasise the *power of anger*, whereas Korean descriptions often emphasise the *breach of calm*. These nuances are subtle in language use but can be seen as metaphorical framing: anger as a powerful

destructive *force of nature* vs. anger as a failure of *self-control*.

In conclusion, the metaphorical conceptualisation of anger in English and Korean is largely governed by human embodiment – hence the striking overlap in metaphors of heat, pressure, fire, and containment. Both languages see anger as something that *burns inside and demands release*, and as something one struggles to control. Where they differ is how these metaphors are culturally foregrounded or extended. Korean's concepts like **화병** (anger illness) and the strong vocabulary around suppressing anger highlight an ethos of restraint and the somatisation of emotion. English's rich array of idioms for outward expression of anger highlights a comparatively more direct attitude toward venting feelings, as also seen in its literature and media. Nonetheless, neither language lacks the metaphors of the other entirely – it is often a matter of degree and context. These differences in metaphorical language can lead to subtle miscommunication or differing expectations, for example, an English speaker might find a Korean speaker's way of saying "I was angry but I held it in" as unusual or overly stoic, while a Korean might find an English speaker's vivid "I was fuming and I blew up at him" somewhat brash. Understanding the shared metaphors assures us that anger is fundamentally conceived in similar ways in our minds, but appreciating the differences reminds us that culture shapes *how we package and prefer* those conceptualisations when we communicate.

5. DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of English and Korean metaphors for love and anger reveals a dynamic interplay between *universal embodiment* and *cultural specificity*, in line with the premises of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. We find that for both emotions, the two languages share a substantial core of metaphorical mappings, affirming that human beings, by virtue of having similar bodies and emotional experiences, often think alike. At the same time, each language's unique cultural context inflects its metaphors in distinctive ways. This section will discuss the implications of these findings in light of cognitive linguistic theory and cross-cultural understanding.

The presence of so many shared metaphors – from love as a journey or a unifying bond to anger as a hot fluid in a container – strongly supports the CMT notion that abstract concepts are grounded in embodied experience [1]. English and Korean speakers, despite linguistic unrelatedness, both conceptualise *love* using physical schemas like heat, fire, physical force, journeys, nourishment, unity, etc., and *anger* using schemas like heat, pressure, fire, explosive force, opponents, and captors. These correspond to real physiological or physical correlates of emotion:

- Love tends to involve bodily warmth, attraction, heartbeats – hence metaphors of warmth/fire and force.
- Anger involves heat, internal pressure, agitation – hence boiling, exploding, burning metaphors.

Such parallels echo findings in broader cross-linguistic studies, which note that many emotion metaphors are near-universal [9-5]. Our study reinforces that claim, showing that English and Korean, too, exhibit these "semi-universal" metaphors. This is significant because it adds evidence from a less-studied language pair. It also aligns with cognitive neuroscience indications that understanding these metaphors engages similar brain regions in all humans. In short, the shared metaphors highlight that embodied cognition bridges cultural divides: when an English speaker says "I'm boiling with anger" and a Korean says "열받는다" (*yeol-badda*, "get heat"), they are leveraging the same body-based intuition, which suggests a kind of universal cognitive biology at work.

However, the study also illuminates how culture shapes the metaphorical landscape on top of this embodied foundation. We observed that Korean metaphors for love and anger often carry traces of Confucian, Taoist, or indigenous concepts such as predestined connections, and an emphasis on inner restraint which English metaphors do not. Conversely, English metaphors tend to reflect individualistic or legalistic notions of relationships that are traditionally absent from Korean idioms. These differences reinforce the CMT view that while primary metaphors may be grounded in common experience, the selection and elaboration of metaphors are culturally mediated. In other words, cultures "choose" certain metaphors to foreground based on what resonates with their values and environment [4].

For example, the cultural norm of emotional moderation in Korea means metaphors of *containing anger* and the pathology of anger (*hwa-byeong*) are salient; it is a linguistic reflection of the social consequence of anger, where to maintain harmony, one often must swallow their anger. Meanwhile, Western (Anglo) culture's relative tolerance for emotional expressiveness gives space to metaphors of anger as an explosive release or as something one simply lets out to be free of it ("blow off steam"). Neither culture *lacks* the other's perspective entirely, but each emphasizes what aligns with its social ethos. This is consistent with what Kövecses [6], called

"differential cognitive preference" – different cultures habitually prefer certain source domains for the same target. Our findings provide concrete examples of that: both English and Korean know anger is like fire, yet Koreans might more often speak of "controlling fire" whereas English might speak of "venting fire".

One might ask, given these findings, to what extent are metaphors truly universal? The evidence here suggests a nuanced answer. On a deep conceptual level, there appear to be universal patterns – e.g. *anger is hot and up*, *love is warm and connecting*. These likely stem from universal experiences, such as body heat and gravity as discussed. Our English-Korean comparison adds weight to this argument by demonstrating those patterns in two very different languages. However, at the level of surface expression of specific idioms, frequency of use, and symbolic details, there is considerable variation. This aligns with the idea that metaphors are universal *"in the large"* but culture-specific *"in the details".* As CMT scholars have noted, metaphors of emotions are often *near-universal at the level of primary metaphor* but *diverge at the level of complex metaphor* due to cultural narratives [10, 11]. Our results exemplify this: primary metaphors like AFFECTION IS WARMTH, ANGER IS HEAT are clearly present in both languages; more complex metaphors like LOVE IS FATE'S DECREE appear in one culture and not the other.

Understanding these similarities and differences has practical implications, especially as global communication increases. For language learners or translators, recognising a shared metaphor can ease comprehension – for instance, an English speaker learning Korean can map "사랑에 빠지다" to "fall in love" easily because it is conceptually the same. Nonetheless, one must also be aware of the differences: as such phrase like "화병" has no direct English metaphor and carries cultural context; without explanation, an English speaker might misinterpret it or not grasp its weight. Misunderstandings can also occur if one side uses a metaphor the other finds unusual, for example, if a Korean says "I have a lot of anger inside but I dissolve it in my heart", an English listener might be perplexed at the phrasing, not realising it is a cultural metaphor for *calming down internally*. As noted in other research, divergent metaphorical frameworks can subtly affect how emotions are discussed and addressed across cultures. Our findings encourage greater metaphor-awareness in intercultural settings: by learning the other culture's figurative language of emotion, one gains insight into their emotional worldview and avoids misinterpretation.

This study also contributes to metaphor theory by reinforcing that one must examine a broad range of languages to distinguish what is truly universal from what is language-specific. English has often been the default in cognitive linguistics, but studies like this with Korean, and others referenced, such as Chinese vs. Persian, Russian vs. Chinese, broaden the empirical base. Our results uphold the core of CMT and the embodiment hypothesis, but also echo calls Kövecses *et al.*, [7], for integrating cultural analysis to fully understand metaphorical variation. Additionally, the detailed inclusion of how metaphors tie to embodied experiences, such as heartbeats, and heat, in both languages strengthens the argument that these metaphors are not arbitrary. In Korean, even the linguistic etymology (anger = fire) and idioms such as blood boiling, point to a shared human embodied motivation.

Finally, examining English and Korean side by side has highlighted the concept of "semi-universality"**.** We rarely find absolute universals or absolute uniques; instead, many metaphors are widespread but not truly global, and few are entirely exclusive. Even a seemingly unique idea like the red thread of fate in love is understood in other cultures via similar concepts of destiny – it is the expression (thread imagery) that is unique. Thus, the notion of *semi-universal metaphors* is apt: they recur across numerous languages, though not necessarily all, and can be considered grounded in common human experience with room for local variation. Our study illustrates this with love and anger: both emotions show many semi-universal metaphors found in at least these two and usually more languages, supporting the claim that embodiment yields common cognitive structures, which are then colored by culture.

While comprehensive, this study has limitations. The dataset, though carefully curated, is not exhaustive – there are certainly more idioms and less common expressions we did not include. Frequency and salience were not quantitatively measured; a corpus-based frequency study à la Kövecses *et al*., [7], could complement our findings by showing which metaphors truly dominate usage in each language. Additionally, emotions are context-sensitive: how metaphors are used can depend on genre as well, such as love metaphors in poetry vs. conversation. Future studies might explore metaphor usage in comparable corpora, for example in social media posts in English vs. Korean about anger, and to see our qualitative patterns borne out in spontaneous language. It would also be illuminating to extend comparisons to other emotions, such as joy, sadness, fear, or to include more languages, for instance, Japanese or Chinese with Korean and English, to see

if Korean aligns more with its East Asian neighbors in some metaphors.

The metaphorical conceptualisation of love and anger in English and Korean underscores a dual truth: we are embodied minds with shared experiences, and we are cultural beings with unique histories. Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides a powerful lens to see how these forces converge in language. By studying and comparing metaphorical expressions, we gain not only linguistic insight but a deeper appreciation of how people from different cultures *feel and think* about fundamental human emotions. In practical terms, recognising these embodied universals and cultural differences can foster better cross-cultural empathy – we realise that, for example, a Korean's "heart on fire" and an English speaker's "heart on fire" truly reflect the same passion, even if one also speaks of fate's red string and the other of Cupid's arrow. Ultimately, our analysis affirms CMT's key proposition: metaphors are "conceptual architecture" through which abstract meaning is built, and this architecture has common foundations across humanity with innumerable local designs. Understanding those designs is crucial to understanding each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

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