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RELEVANCY IN CONTEXT: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF METAPHORS USED IN PUNJABI PROVERBS

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ABSTRACT

Figurative language is widely used in proverbs which can be decoded by taking context into account. Speakers encode their implied message through the use of metaphors in proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Punjabi proverbs form a part of Punjabi folk literature, which is the reflection of their culture. A whole spectrum of metaphors has been observed in the use of Punjabi proverbs. The present research aims to explore the metaphorical connotations and the cognitive effect achieved through cognitive effort by the hearers, taking context into account. The qualitative research method has been deployed to study randomly selected 25 Punjabi proverbs. It employed Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; revised 1995) as its framework and used inferential mechanisms such as presumption of optimal relevance to conducting metaphoric analysis of Punjabi proverbs. The proverbs have been analyzed at the literal, contextual, semantic and pragmatic level. The analysis shows that metaphors are essential features in encoding non-literal message in Punjabi proverbs and the hearers decode the non-literal message through contextual interpretation of metaphors. This study will be of great significance to the students of pragmatics and Punjabi language and literature as it is a seminal work of its kind in Punjabi language.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Proverbs in many languages are a cultural practice. They are found in almost every language of the world. Proverbs show a crucial difference in content and meaning. They are usually employed to convey implied meaning. Various lexical items imply the same and different ideas in order to convey the intended meaning. Punjabi proverbs form diverse folk literature of the Punjabi language.

The manifestation of Punjabi proverbs reflects the richness of such a traditional civilization where folk insight is regarded as the uppermost persona of wisdom. The Punjabi Language relates to the modern Indo-Aryan family of languages. This language has a dense culture, particularly in rural Punjab. This language has a solid link with cultural norms and values. The daily conversation of Punjabi speakers usually contains proverbs used as signs of wisdom. Being possibly perceptive, the previous studies on the Punjabi language have not touched upon the metaphorical aspects of Punjabi proverbs carrying different connotations. These studies ignore the richness and use of Punjabi proverb - oratory, especially its metaphorical aspects. Some studies indicate that in ancient cultures, male members used to incorporate maxims in their day-to-day conversation in order to showcase knowledge which was never considered a female attribute in the past. Women were rather considered incompetent of using maxims in their conversation. Studies mostly focused on stereotypes and dissimilarities of gender as depicted through the language used in Punjabi proverbs. This present study specifically focuses upon the metaphorical aspects of Punjabi proverbs where connotations are presented to its richness. The reasons for selecting Punjabi proverbs are personal as well as academic. Punjabi speakers who use proverbs depend mostly on similes and metaphors influenced by their culture, so it is crucial for researchers to have the knowledge and consideration of the cultural values, customs and norms.

Therefore, a researcher from the community under research stands best to reflect what internally exists to the world outside. The aim of a pragmatic interpretation of metaphor is to clarify how metaphor is comprehended, and specifically, how addressees generate an idea of Metaphor and the understanding of the communicator's intended meaning when a word or other lexical expression is used metaphorically. It is the special case of more of a general pragmatic objective of elaborating how addressees link the gap between the intended 'encoded linguistic meaning' of an utterance and the speaker's power of assessing that meaning. Since the utterance meaning is often incomplete and fragmented, and speaker's intended meaning characteristically drives beyond it, this gap is persistent in verbal communication; however, it is specifically clear in the use of metaphors. Hence, considering an utterance: Sara is a PRINCESS. The linguistically encoded sense of the word is the concept of a royal personality. In certain conditions, the above utterance might have been metaphorically employed to bear that Sara, who does not belong to a royal family, is may be spoiled and a carefree girl who wants to be exempted from homely chores that other girls perform. A pragmatic consideration of metaphor is associated with how the transfer from 'encoded linguistic meaning' to metaphorical meaning is completed. A number of key points of agreement separate the several existing pragmatic views. Specifically, one difference is in their assessment of how metaphorical language use impacts the truth-conditional content of speech acts (what is stated, in Grice's terminology; what is explicated, in relevance theory). According to the traditional Gricean view, when a person uses a metaphor, they are not actually communicating anything, but rather using the metaphor as a vehicle for communicating their implicit meaning, also known as their implicatures. To imply that Sara is a spoiled, indulged little girl because of her status as a princess, the speaker in (1) can make as if to declare that Sara is a princess. Another, more "semantic" or "truth-conditional pragmatic," view holds that metaphor not only modifies the implicatures of an utterance, but also the truth-

conditional content of that utterance and, more generally, the content of any assertion or other direct speech act that the metaphor is used to perform. Several authors, including Black (2008), Recanati (2004), Carston (2003, 2005), and Glucksberg, Manfredi, and McGlone (2013), Vol. 3: A Figure of Speech by Deirdre Wilson and Robyn Carston, hold this opinion. We follow the practice established by Sperber and Wilson (2000, 2008), Glucksberg (2001), Wilson and Sperber (2002, 2004), and Wilson and Carston (2005). To further complicate matters, existing pragmatic accounts vary in how well they are meant to integrate with psycholinguistic studies which aim to reveal; hence, this research aims to achieve adequate understanding of the use of figurative language in Punjabi proverbs and their relevance. In addition, it will shed light on the metaphorical aspect of Punjabi proverbs at the conscious level.

Relevance Theory

“As a theoretical term, ‘relevance’ is used to refer to the cognitive utility of a piece of information in a context, or for an individual at a given time.” (Sperber & Wilson 1986; 1987). Relevance, as we perceive, has two possible features, cognitive effect, i.e., the advantage and processing effort, i.e., the cost. As we perceive, the cognitive effect of processing any part of the information is to fix or revise beliefs, whereas the effort is a matter of more or less utilization of brain resources for achieving the possible effect. The more the effect of the process of a given amount of information, the more its relevance will be. On the other side, the more effort involved in the process of a given piece of information, the lesser its relevance will be. At a given time in anyone’s cognitive life as we consider, there is sufficient scope of novel information that is observed in the environment, and there is even a greater scope of information in one’s memory that gets stimulated to offer a context in order to processing information from surrounding or other bits of information from inside memory.

Only a few possible matches of new and contextual information may reflect relevance either to a greater or lesser degree. There is no appropriate manner for one’s mind to see all possible matches/combinations of new and contextual information for assessing, which might increase relevance. And if there’s any fixed way, the effort involved in this manner would be so lesser that the whole cognitive benefit of the process will destroy the entire business.

All utterances create the possibility of relevance that marks the relevance principle. How accurately does this possibility amount to, in terms of effort and effect? The clear hypothesis builds that the hearer looks for what is probably the most relevant explanation, i.e., the one that produces the maximum possible contextual effects in response to the minimum amount of processing effort.

We need to see why this hypothesis could be wrong. The hearer’s responsibility increases when he needs to take into account all possible understandings so that he may find the most relevant understanding of an utterance, but it is an obvious fact some logical reasons such as intuitive and theoretical that hearers do not necessarily compare all possible understandings and interpretations of utterances before getting on the intended utterance.

Standard Gricean accounts are typically acknowledged as coherent reforms, whereas relevance theory with some other cognitive oriented lines provides an account of metaphor that is consistent in terms of existing experimental findings as well as suggests further experimental tests (van der Henst and Sperber, 2004).

Current approaches also vary as they take metaphor as a dissimilar pragmatic category, or only as a share of a range that includes hyperbole, approximation and some other pragmatic phenomena that increase at the word or phrase level. Grice and Lewis are likely to have imagined various treatments for metaphor, hyperbole and approximation (Grice, 1967; Lewis, 1975, 1979). Relevance theorists, on the other hand, have been consistently defending a continuity view, on which there is no clear cut-off point between literal utterances, approximations, hyperboles and metaphors, and they are all interpreted in the same way (Sperber & Wilson, 1985; 1986).

These trends set the foundation for an unvarying theory of cognitive sciences and shift the whole centre of gravity of ‘pragmatic theory’ to a ‘general theory of cognition’, D. Sperber D. Wilson has projected ‘Relevance Theory’ (RT) in *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (1986/1995), which has indicated the origins of the whole theory and formed a hypothetical mindset of inference. In RT, pragmatic understanding is arguably taken as a psychological matter ruled by the cognitive principle and communicative principle; thus, it has been measured the basics of cognitive pragmatics with its sufficient potential

However, it is still at its initial stage of development. Theory, however, has been proved to be a very powerful theory that can locate and solve various language and reasoning problems. Its first edition, “Communication and Cognition”, was published in the year 1986 and received many reviews and comments. However, out of those comments, few were quite hostile. Taking these into account, Sperber Wilson polished the theory further; thus, they published the second edition with some major modifications to the original framework in 1995. The present paper consists of the implications of this theory, applying it as a framework. The analysis part deals with the revised version of RT, focusing upon some major variations of RT, having implications of relevance, presumptions of relevance, conceptual meaning and procedural meaning, truth and relevance, positive cognitive effects and contextual effects etc.

Statement of the Problem

According to the relevance principle, all utterances create the possibility of relevance. Research has shown that the cognitive effect can be maximized at a given time in anyone’s cognitive life by taking contextual implications/assumptions into account (with little amount of effort) that can result into greater relevance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To find out the use of metaphorical connotations in Punjabi proverbs
- To see the cognitive effect of these connotations

- To see how does the contextual background contribute to decoding the metaphoric message in Punjabi Proverb

Significance of the study

This research will be of immense importance to the scholars of pragmatics who want to conduct research in the area of relevance theory and the use of figurative language.

In addition, the hearers will be facilitated to decode the most relevant interpretations from the message that is encoded through figurative language by the speaker. Thus, the hearer's job will become easier in order to look for possible interpretations.

Since the Punjabi language has now become an endangered language, this study will also be useful to the speakers of the Punjabi language who do want to maintain their native language. The speakers of this language will be able to relate to their cultural diversity.

In a broader perspective, this research will throw light on the great spectrum of metaphors and the contextual background used in the Punjabi language, which has a vast cultural background and great magnificence. Moreover, this study will make the Punjabi speakers realize to find out the beautiful cultural diversity of their language. They will be able to carry along their cultural norms and the beauty of their diverse language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Punjab is composed of two Persian words, i.e. Punj (five) and aab (water). Hence, Punjab is meant to be "the land of five rivers." The people of Punjab are considered to be the tribe of Indo-Aryan people. Punjabi community lives in northern India and in eastern Pakistan. Because of its strategic and ideal location, Punjab has been the seat of various rules and kingdoms for ages, including the Civilization of 'Indus Valley', 'Arabs', 'Persians', 'Turks', 'Timurids', 'Ghaznavids', 'Mughals', 'Sikhs', 'Afghans', 'Aryans', 'Scythians', 'Kushans', 'Greeks' and the British (Ayers, 2008). According to Ethnologue (2005), Punjabi is estimated to be the 12th most widely spoken language in the world, with almost 88 million native speakers. It is the most widely spoken language in Pakistan. According to the Pakistan Census (2008), there are 76,335,300 indigenous Punjabi users making up about 44.15% of the total population of Pakistan. 97.21% of the Punjabi in Pakistan are Muslim, and the remaining 2.31% constitutes the Christian community. Other groups include Sikhs, Hindus, Bahá'ís Parsis and Ahmedis.

Punjabi language conquers India by 29,109,672, mainly Sikh and Hindu speakers with a small number of Muslim and Christian speakers and marks the 11th most widely spoken language there. About 2.85% of the population of India is mentioned as the speaker of the Punjabi language. (ibid). According to Kohls (2001), observing proverbs, maxims and sayings of a nation provides a way to find tangible but elusive values that guide our lives. With regard to the function of proverbs, Monyai (2003) states that proverbs are full of authority,

helping to recognize the different functions performed by people in society identifying their roles and identity. Men and women, who do not share the same sentiments, are often discriminated against. “Most of the present literature interprets the artistic landscape of proverbs, their structure, form and main features; furthermore, the wisdom these proverbs forward from one generation to another, as well as their ability to persuade people to adopt a more positive way of thinking.” (Magwaza, 2004). Some traditional roles of proverbs documented in certain researches have been transmitting the message “in the most inoffensive discreet and economical method”; acting as “pieces of advice for effective action and living” and representation of “the expression of the persons” (Nwala, 1985).

These studies, despite being insightful, remain silent on the metaphorical aspects of the proverb. Research into the language of proverbs greatly encompassed African languages with similar findings. Despite the differences between communities and differences in approaches and methodologies, similar themes arise from these researches about the representation of men and women in society. Women have been devalued, while men are represented as the pious class of the human race. Men are empowered as “self” whereas women are marginalized as the “other” (Asimeng-Boahene, 2013; Balogun, 2010; Dogbevi, 2007; Ennaji, 2008; Hussien, 2004, 2009; Machaba, 2011; Mariam, 1995; Mpungose, 2010; Ncube & Moyo, 2011; & Oha, 1998). Ambu- Saidi (2010) examined Omani proverbs and came to the conclusion that negative images connected with women in Omani proverbs can also be found in proverbs associated with men. In addition, discussions with the indigenous people also confirmed that most of the proverbs reflecting gender bias have disappeared from the Omani culture.

Kerschen (2012) analyzed American proverbs and observed that proverbs related to females were full of humorous and weird remarks. On the other hand, some proverbs appeared to be positive and neutral most of the time. However, most of them reflect females as long-gasping, clever, toy-like, and useless creatures who can't be trustworthy to males (Kerschen, 2012). Ennaji (2008) also studied proverbs from various cultures such as Mohammed, Arabic and Berber, and Moroccan (1999) analyzed “Darfur proverbs”, both reaching parallel findings. Storm (1992) examined a few proverbs from Japanese culture that portray women in a trivial way. Women are often shown as silly, devilish, and most loquacious in nature, fragile physically, and having ill nature. Shivtiel (1996) analyzed “Yemeni proverbs” to bear both the positive and negative uniqueness of females.

Nevertheless, positive connotations are lesser than negative ones. He noted such notions about females like folly, untrustworthiness, verbosity, hypocrisy, empty-headed, cunning, sluggishness, greed, plotting and trouble-making, as portrayed by the researched proverbs. Zhang (2002) quoted Chinese proverbs that reflect the low status of women in Chinese society. He went on to say that Chinese proverbs portray women as problem makers. Gikuyu oral literature reviewed and examined in terms of gender representation by Njogu, Wanjiru, & Kaburi (2015) revealed confrontation and treason to the dominated society of males. Having been male genre-oriented, these proverbs also focused on the

subservience of women. The rebellious attitude towards male-dominated society has also been observed in the said proverbs. It has been revealed from this study that proverbs are primarily a male-oriented genre, which examines the features of females in a negative way.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for the present study is qualitative in nature. A reasonable corpus of Punjabi proverbs was picked from selected archival research. The selection was purely based on the use of metaphors employed in Punjabi proverbs. Using purposive sampling, only proverbs having metaphorical connotations were selected for analysis in order to analyse the optimal relevance. Literal denotations were taken into consideration for the explicit account. Later, contextual assumptions and implications were evaluated in terms of effort and effect.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present research takes the framework of relevance theory in terms of optimal relevance, according to which the hearer's task is to find sufficient effects to process the utterance for understanding and to the most relevant interpretation. So, what the listener is trying to look for regarding "effort and effect" is called "optimal relevance". An utterance in a given explanation is optimally relevant if it is relevant enough to be worth the audience processing effort, as well as it is the most relevant one compatible with communicators' abilities and preferences. A pragmatic interpretation is, to a great extent, considered as a psychological enterprise governed by the 'cognitive principle' and 'communicative principle'; therefore, it is considered the basis of cognitive pragmatics along with its potentially defining features.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The researcher has analysed a reasonable corpus of Punjabi proverbs in terms of optimal relevance, according to which the hearer's task is to find sufficient effects to process the utterance for understanding and to the most relevant interpretation. For each proverb, the contextual assumptions were taken into account in order to assess cognitive effect. For the purpose, both, literal and contextual implications were evaluated to look for the possible interpretation that may be perceived by the hearer by putting less processing effort. The researcher, then assessed that how a hearer might get the speaker's intended message.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section represents analyses of the Punjabi proverbs. The researcher has taken a reasonable corpus of the Punjabi proverbs in order to analyse their literal meaning and possible interpretation by the hearer. For the purpose, the selected proverbs are first analysed in their literal sense providing word glosses and their idiomatic meaning perceived by the hearer. Further, in the discussion part, metaphorical connotations of the proverbs are taken into consideration evaluating the speakers' metaphoric encoding that is decoded by the hearer

through sufficient attentional resources; hence, it is displayed that how a hearer achieves the most relevant interpretation of the message encoded by the speaker or that is optimally relevant to be worth the audience processing effort.

Proverb: *aakar phoon teh fitte munh*

Proverb	Aakar	Phoon	te	fitte	munh
Word glosses	arrogance	Pomp and show	then	curse	Face

Meaning: Nobody welcomes an arrogant person

Contextual Interpretation:

There is a certain connotation found in this proverb that nobody likes to welcome an arrogant person. The word ‘*aakar*’ metaphorically connotes rigidity, whereas the word ‘*phoon*’ is an onomatopoeic sound-reflecting self-supposed ‘pump and show’, referring to an arrogant person. Thus, the hearer doesn’t only decode the speech signals through sufficient attentional resources but also recognizes the speakers’ metaphoric encoding.

Proverb: *Changi matt chaho taan buddhe nu puchan jao*

Proverb	changi	matt	chaho	taan	Buddeh nu puchan jao
Word glosses	good	wisdom	need	then	Old man to ask go

Meaning: If you need a good piece of advice, consult an old person.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that someone in want of a good piece of advice must consult an old person. Here, the word ‘*buddeh*’ metaphorically refers to a wise man or an experienced person who may have a good piece of advice. Furthermore, in Punjabi culture, an old man is regarded as a noble person whose opinion is considered authentic in every respect. Thus, the hearer decodes the metaphoric encoding of the speaker by taking context into account through cognitive effort that produces the cognitive effect in the hearer’s mind that an old person is wise.

Proverb: *Jagde da lakh, sutte da kakh*

Proverb	Jagde	da	Lakh	sutte	da kakh
Word glosses	awaking	of	Lac	sleeping	of nothing

Meaning: The person who awakes gets everything, the person who sleeps losses everything.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that It is only the active ones who make something out of this world. The denotation of the word ‘*jagde*’ is ‘awaken’, and the denotation of the word ‘*sutte*’ is ‘asleep’ in the Punjabi language. Hence, the word ‘*Jagde*’ is metaphorically used as an ‘aware’ person who knows the value of time and actively participates in all matters of life, whereas the word ‘*sutte*’ metaphorically refers to a lazy person who does not value time and delays several tasks, finally loses everything. The hearer becomes capable of decoding this contextual interpretation through sufficient attentional resources.

Proverb: Ghar da jogi jogra ,bahar da jogi sidh

Proverb	ghar	da	jogi	jogra	Bahar da jogi sidh
Word glosses	home	of	fakir	Piece of soil	Outside of fakir mature

Meaning: A learned person is honoured except in their own house.

Contextual Interpretation:

There is a certain connotation present in this proverb that a learned person at home is considered valueless, and nobody gives worth to what he suggests. On the other hand, an outsider who is an expert in a certain field is usually considered very valuable, and everybody wants to take suggestions from that outsider. Furthermore, the word ‘*jogi*’ is used as widely experienced who has travelled and explored a lot in Punjabi. Thus, the hearer doesn’t only decode the speech signals through sufficient attentional resources but also recognizes the speakers’ communicative intentions.

Proverb: *Je sukh chanven jeen da te khulle khambi udd.*

Proverb	je	Such	chanven	Jeen da	te khulle khambi udd
Word glosses	if	happiness	want	to live	then others fly open feathers

Meaning: if you want to enjoy life, lead your life with self-confidence.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that if someone desires to lead a good life with full comfort, must be self-confident. Here, the phrase ‘*khulle khambi udd*’ metaphorically refers to leading a life with self-confidence because a confident

person can achieve success and happiness. Thus, the hearer decodes this intentional message by taking metaphorical encoding of the speaker (*khulle khambi udd*) through cognitive effort.

Proverb: *Jehri mauj chaju de chobare , na o Balkh na Bukhare*

Proverb	jheri	mauj	chaju	de chobare na o Balkh na Bukhare
Word glosses	the	pleasure	Name of a Lay <u>person</u>	Wooden hut not that name of a city not

Meaning: There is no place such as home even you visit Balkh or Bukhara.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that the comfort we feel at home can never be felt in beautiful cities such as Balkh and Bukhara. Here, the phrase ‘*chaju de chobare*’ metaphorically refers to one’s home where every kind of comfort is available, and we tend to be among our near and dear ones. Here this word, ‘*chobare*’ means a roof-top where Punjabi people used to sit with their family and have a chit chat about daily matters. Thus, the hearer decodes this intentional message through cognitive effort, and the cognitive effect of this proverb is that home is the most comfortable place as compared to any other place in the world.

Proverb: *Nain mila k kadi chain ni milda*

Proverb	nain	mila	k	kadi	chain ni milda
Word glosses	eyes	meet		ever	Happiness get

Meaning: when a person falls in love, he remains restless.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that when a person starts loving someone, he or she remains desirous of meeting the beloved one. Here, the phrase ‘*nain milana*’ metaphorically refers to falling in love. It literally means to have eye contact with someone, which leads to love. It can therefore be considered as an obvious fact that metaphoric encoding is a special feature used in proverbs that are contextually decoded by the hearers in order to experience cognitive effect.

Proverb: *Tu vi rani ma vi rani kon bhare ga pani.*

s	Tu v	rani ma	V	rani kon bhare ga pani
Word glosses	You too	queen I	Too	queen who will fill water

Meaning: when everyone wants royal treatment, nothing gets one.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that when everyone tries to behave like a royal personality, nothing is supposed to be accomplished. Here, the word ‘rani’ metaphorically refers to a royal figure who is supposed only to give orders to get all things done. Whereas the phrase, ‘kon bhare ga pani’ metaphorically reflects Punjabi culture in which women have to fill the water containers for household chores.

Proverb: *Palle ni dhela kr di mela mela*

Proverb	palle	ni dhella	kr di mela mela
Word glosses	have	no penny	does fair fair

Meaning: Got no money in hand but want to spend lavishly on shopping.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that some people desire to spend much shopping even though they have nothing to spend. Here, the phrase ‘mela mela karna’ metaphorically refers to show ones’ desire to spend lavishly to buy things for entertainment.

In Punjabi, ‘Mela’ is referred to as a cultural fair where people go for entertainment. The phrase ‘Palle ni dhela’ metaphorically connotes having nothing in one’s pocket. ‘Palla’ means the front part of a shirt worn in a Punjabi dress. By taking two metaphorical phrases, ‘mela mela karna’ and ‘Palle ni dhela’, into account, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the proverb.

Proverb: *Do bherrian jo rakhde perr, lagde ni kinare.*

Proverb	Do	bherrian	jo rakhde perr lagde ni kinnare
Word glosses	two	Boats	that put feet reach not shore

Meaning: Those who place their feet in two boats do not reach the shore

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that the people, who are indecisive in their matters, do not succeed in their ventures. Here, the phrase ‘*do bherian jo rakhde perr*’ metaphorically refers to having an ill will and indecisive nature of a person who follows multiple directions to succeed in life but fails. The phrase, ‘*lagde ni kinnaray*’ metaphorically connotes the failure one receives due to poor decisions. By taking these metaphorical phrases into account, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the proverb.

Proverb: Khidu pholyan wichon leeran ie niakaldian ne

Proverb	khiddu	pholyan	wichon	Leeran an ne	ie nikaldi
Word glosses	Ball made up Of rags	To find	From inside	Cloth rags	only taken out

Meaning: It is useless to resolve futile matters.

Contextual Interpretation:

The word ‘*khiddu*’ in Punjabi language refers to a toy ball made up of cloth rags for small kids to play with. Here, it metaphorically connotes ‘a futile matter’ upon which one can only waste time. In contrast, the word ‘*leeran*’ in the Punjabi language is cloth cut pieces used as rags having no worth that metaphorically connotes poor end result. The proverb metaphorically suggests that one should not waste time to resolve futile matters because it will never lead to any reasonable solution. Thus, the hearer doesn’t only decode the speech signals through sufficient attentional resources but also recognizes the speakers’ metaphoric encoding.

Proverb: aata gundi hildi ku en

Proverb	Aata	gundi	hildi	ku	Ay
Word glosses	Flour	To grind	Move	why	

Meaning: to criticize without any reason

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb typically depicts ‘Punjabi domestics chores’ reflecting Punjabi culture wherein joint families, mothers-in-law usually criticize their daughter-in-law over trivial actions for nothing, e.g. here ‘*hildi ku aen*’ i.e. to move while ‘*aata gundi*’ i.e. kneading the flour as it is quite obvious that one has to move while doing such tasks. This proverb connotes that some people always interfere with others’ matters and criticize even their actions for no reason. Thus, the

hearer decodes the metaphoric encoding of the speaker by taking context into account through cognitive effort that produces a cognitive effect in the hearer's mind.

Proverb: kerni kakh di gal lakh di

Proverb	Krni	kakh	Di	gal	lakh	di
Word glosses	Doing	nothing	Of	speech	lac	of

Meaning: Those who say a lot of things practically do nothing.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb metaphorically connotes that some people just speak about certain matters but cannot perform anything practically. The word 'lakh' refers to a big amount here, used metaphorically as 'a big amount of talking', whereas the word 'kakh' refers to nothing in the Punjabi language. Hence, the phrase 'kerni kakh di' is metaphorically used for a person who speaks and suggests much over certain matters, but when it comes to practical consideration, he does nothing. The hearer becomes capable of decoding this contextual interpretation with the help of a greater cognitive effect.

Proverb: choran nu morr

Proverb	choran	nu	Morr
Word glosses	thieves	to	Peacock

Meaning: a wicked person meets a wicked person

Contextual Interpretation:

There is a certain connotation present in this proverb that a wicked person tries to act smarter in order to get something with a deceitful intention; however, not every time he succeeds in his tactful tricks and may come across another rascal who can spoil his plans. Thus, the hearer doesn't only decode the speech signals through sufficient attentional resources but also recognizes the speakers' communicative intentions.

Proverb: kalhi aggay toye

Proverb	kalhi	aggay	Toye
Word glosses	Hurry	ahead	Hole

Meaning: You may come across a big loss in case of a hurry.

Contextual Interpretation:

The Punjabi word ‘*toya*’ literally refers to a pit which in this proverb metaphorically connotes an obvious loss. The Punjabi word ‘*kalhi*’ refers to hurry. This proverb metaphorically connotes that one should focus properly and must not do anything in a hurry because it can lead to an obvious loss. Thus, the hearer understands this intended message by decoding speakers’ intentions through cognitive effort.

Proverb: ghareen pakdian de ang saak sare

Proverb	ghareen	pakdian	de	ang	saak sare
Word glosses	In home	cook	their	sibling	relatives all

Meaning: Financial prosperity leads to good friends.

Contextual Interpretation:

The phrase used in this proverb, ‘*ghareen pakdian de*’, literally refers to a house with financial prosperity. The Punjabi words ‘*ang saak*’ refers to relatives and friends. This proverb metaphorically connotes that those who have better financial resources to run their home can attract all friends and relatives whereas, financial crises lead to having no friends and relatives. Thus, the hearer decodes this intentional message with a greater cognitive effect.

Proverb: gurr aakhyan mittha ni honda

Proverb	gurr	aakhyan	mittha	ni	honda
Word glosses	jaggery	saying	sweet	not	be

Meaning: work is done by doing, not by thinking.

Contextual Interpretation:

The proverb denotes that we cannot decide only by thinking about the taste of something and have to taste once, which metaphorically connotes that nothing can be achieved without hard work as according to the famous saying ‘no pain no gain’ a person has to indulge in tougher situations in order to gain something. Thus, metaphoric encoding is a special feature used in proverbs that is contextually decoded by the hearers in order to experience cognitive effect.

Proverb: badhi muth lakh brabar

Proverb	badhi	muth	lakh	Brabar
Word glosses	closed	fist	lac	equals to

Meaning: Unity is strength

Contextual Interpretation:

The phrase ‘*badhi muth*’ in the Punjabi language refers to a closed fist that metaphorically connotes a symbol of ‘strength’ and ‘unity’, and the word ‘*lakh*’ refers to great in number metaphorically connoting that we become united and strong when standing together. By taking context into account and through cognitive effort, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the speaker.

Proverb: domini da putt chapni wajaaye

Proverb	domini	da	putt	chapni
				wajaaye
Word glosses	Cultural singer	of	offspring	lid of a clay pot play

Meaning: off springs follow their parents.

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb metaphorically connotes that the children behave in the same manner in which their parents behave and expose their nature someday or the other. The word ‘*domini*’ literally refers to a Punjabi cultural singer who moves around playing clay pots and sings in cultural fairs. In Punjabi, ‘*chapni*’ is to be referred to as a lid of a clay pot which is played by the offspring of a ‘*domini*’ for entertainment. The hearer decodes the intended meaning of the proverb by taking the cultural context into account.

Proverb: jhoot gurr te sach mirchaan

Proverb	jhoot	gurr	te	sach	mirchan
Word glosses	Lie	Jaggery	and	truth	chillies

Meaning: A lie appears to be sweet, whereas truth bitter.

Contextual Interpretation:

The word ‘*gurr*’ in the Punjabi language refers to sweet brown sugar that has a sweet taste metaphorically connoting ‘excitement’ over something, and

“*mirchan*’ refers to chillies that have a strong bitter taste metaphorically connoting ‘to become rash’. Thus, this proverb metaphorically connotes that we feel excited when someone recognizes those qualities in us that we do not really possess, whereas when someone figures out the mistakes that we possess, we become rash. By taking context into account and through cognitive effort, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the speaker.

Proverb: *jherra gurr dityan maray oonu zehr den di ki lorr ay*

Proverb	jherra	Gurr dityan	maray oonu zehr den di ki lorr ay
Word glosses	that	Jaggery give	die they poison to give need

Meaning: No need to be rash when you can achieve your purpose with good behavior.

Contextual interpretation:

if something could be done in a positive way, why should it be done in a negative way?

The word ‘*gurr*’ in the Punjabi language refers to sweet brown sugar that has a sweet taste. It contextually implies good demeanour and social behaviour of a person, and ‘*zehr*’ in the Punjabi language refers to poison contextually implying odd and indifferent behaviour. Thus, this proverb metaphorically connotes that when people can be convinced of good behaviour, then why one

would use bad behaviour to make them convinced. By taking context into account and through cognitive effort, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the speaker.

Proverb: *chiragh gull pug ghaib*

Proverb	chiragh	gull	pug	Ghaib
Word glosses	oil lamp	switch off	turban	Disappear

Meaning: Little negligence can lead to a loss

Contextual Interpretation:

The word ‘*chiragh*’ in the Punjabi language refers to an oil lamp that has visibility. It contextually and metaphorically implies the state of being conscious or aware, and ‘*pug*’ in the Punjabi language refers to a turban which is a symbolic object meaning that we cannot lose anything until we are aware and conscious. Here, the proverb metaphorically connotes that our little

negligence can lead us to a great loss. By taking context into account and through cognitive effort, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the speaker.

Proverb: *loyay nu loya wadda ay*

Proverb	Loyay	Nu	loya	wadda ay
Word glosses	Iron	To	Iron	to bite

Meaning: Only a strong person can compete with a strong one.

Contextual Interpretation:

The word ‘*loya*’ in the Punjabi language refers to iron which contextually and metaphorically implies power and strength, just as in iron. Here, the proverb metaphorically connotes that only a strong person can compete with a strong person. By taking context into account and through cognitive effort, the hearer decodes the intended meaning of the speaker.

Proverb: *Ochian Kandan dak na sakan pholan di khushbo*

Proverb	<i>Ochian</i>	<i>Kandan</i>	dak na sakan Phulan di khashboo
Word glosses	high	Walls	restrain not can flowers of fragrance

Meaning: Talent hits a target no one can restrict

Contextual Interpretation:

This proverb connotes that talented people seek to have an impact on people, and this leads them from the mundane toward the exceptional. The phrase ‘*ochian kandan*’ metaphorically connotes ‘restriction’ or ‘hurdles’ and ‘*pholan di khushbo*’ connotes the right talent. Hence, describing that hurdle can’t restrict the right talent, and ultimately it finds its way.

Proverb: *Dullian beeran da kuj ni vigarda*

Proverb	<i>Dullian</i>	<i>Beeran</i>	<i>kuj ni</i>	<i>vigarda</i>
Word glosses		fallen	Berries	Nothing spoils

Meaning: one bad experience doesn’t affect one’s whole life

Contextual Interpretation:

There is a certain connotation present in this proverb that one's whole life can't be affected through just one bad experience. Thus, the hearer doesn't only decode the speech signals through sufficient attentional resources but also recognizes the speakers' communicative intentions.

CONCLUSION

Having explored the metaphorical expressions used in Punjabi proverbs, researchers have found that the speech community of Punjabi speakers use metaphors in terms of their own cultural contexts in their proverbs, and these proverbs can be decoded by taking the specific context into account with the help of optimal relevance. The speakers use cultural metaphors in order to encode the message, which the hearers decode with the help of cognitive effort. Metaphors play a very significant role in encoding figurative messages, and speakers of every language use metaphors based on their own culture and societal settings. Researchers have further examined that using optimal relevance, and the hearer attains cognitive effect using cognitive effort by getting the most relevant interpretations. The implications suggest that there is a strong link between culture and language which greatly influence decoding messages. Metaphors chiefly portray the cultural dynamics and shape the language in an artistic manner.

It is concluding thus, that every word uttered bears a presupposition of its peculiar optimal relevance through which a pragmatic account is directed. More evidently, the message communicated by the speaker can be encoded by taking cultural context into account.

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