

**CULTURAL SYMBOLISM AND LINGUOCOGNITIVE REPRESENTATION OF EMOTIONS IN 20TH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVELS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

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*linguocognitive analysis; emotion; cultural symbolism; conceptual metaphor; 20th-century English fiction; intercultural communication; intercultural reader; pedagogy.*

*This article examines how emotions are linguocognitively represented in selected 20th-century English novels and how those representations instantiate cultural signs and symbols influencing cross-cultural interpretation. Combining close reading with corpus-assisted metaphor and symbol analysis, the study analyses passages from Virginia Woolf (*Mrs Dalloway*), Ernest Hemingway (*A Farewell to Arms / The Sun Also Rises*), and George Orwell (selected scenes), relating linguistic metaphor, embodied imagery, and semiotic motifs (weather, food/tea, bodily heat/cold, journeys) to Anglo cultural models of feeling (restraint, stoicism, irony). Findings show recurrent metaphorical mappings (e.g., emotion→temperature; emotion→journey; emotion→possession) and culturally charged symbols that shape both textual affect and likely cross-cultural misreadings. Pedagogical*

*implications for intercultural communication and ELT are proposed: teaching metaphor-mapping and symbol decoding ; fostering the “intercultural reader” through comparative symbolism tasks; assessment instruments that measure interpretive flexibility. The article argues that integrating linguocognitive description with cultural semiotics enriches both literary interpretation and intercultural pedagogy.*

## Introduction

Scholarly interest in how language encodes emotion has grown across cognitive linguistics and literary studies. Conceptual metaphor theory shows that emotion is routinely structured via embodied source domains (heat, motion, containment) and that such mappings are shaped by cultural contexts. Recent work emphasizes the role of context and culture in metaphor production and interpretation.

Literary texts—especially 20th-century English novels—are fertile sites for observing how linguocognitive devices (metaphor, metonymy, syntactic choices) and cultural signs (tea/food, weather, class markers, modes of restraint) co-construct emotional meaning. Simultaneously, intercultural communication scholarship has urged a move from speaking/listening competence toward interpretive reading that accounts for cultural semiotics<sup>7</sup> (the “intercultural reader”). Integrating these strands can support both more nuanced literary interpretation and practical pedagogies<sup>8</sup> for cross-cultural understanding.

## Methods

A mixed method combining (a) close reading of representative passages and (b) corpus-assisted analysis for lexical/metaphorical patterns. Primary texts were chosen for their differing registers and cultural positions within 20th-century English fiction:

- Virginia Woolf — *Mrs Dalloway* (Hogarth Press, 1925).

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<sup>7</sup> Byram, Michael. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: Revisited*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2021. (2nd ed.).

<sup>8</sup> Hoff, Hild Elisabeth. “From ‘Intercultural Speaker’ to ‘Intercultural Reader’: A Proposal to Reconceptualize Intercultural Communicative Competence Through a Focus on Literary Reading.” In F. Dervin & Z. Gross (eds.), *Intercultural Competence in Education: Alternative Approaches for Different Times*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 71 pp.

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- Ernest Hemingway — A Farewell to Arms (Scribner, 1929) and selections from The Sun Also Rises (1926).
- George Orwell — selected emotional episodes from 1984 (Secker & Warburg, 1949) and essays.

These texts were sampled for episodes of heightened affect (mourning, romantic crisis, fear, alienation) and digitized for keyword searches (emotion lexemes) and concordance analysis.

#### Analytical procedure

1. Keyword extraction and concordance: Emotion vocabulary (anger, love, grief, fear, shame, happiness) was extracted and collocated items inspected for metaphoric and symbolic patterns using simple concordance tools (keywords in context). Corpus methods are used here as supportive, not definitive, evidence (see corpus-pragmatic and critical metaphor approaches)<sup>9</sup>.

2. Conceptual metaphor coding: Instances were coded into conceptual metaphor types<sup>10</sup> (e.g., ANGER IS HEAT, LOVE IS JOURNEY, SADNESS IS WEIGHT) following cognitive-linguistic operationalizations.

3. Semiotic symbol mapping: Recurring cultural signs (tea, weather, domestic spaces, transportation) co-occurring with emotion language were catalogued and interpreted via semiotic/cultural theory.

4. Pedagogical mapping: Using the intercultural reader framework, activities and assessment rubrics were designed that leverage findings to teach interpretive flexibility.

#### Results

##### 1. Dominant linguocognitive patterns

Across the sampled novels the most frequent metaphorical mappings encoding emotion were:

- EMOTION IS TEMPERATURE/HEAT (e.g., anger as burning/heat, passion as warmth). This appears as bodily heat imagery and weather metaphors, frequently aligning personal feeling with environmental temperature. (Concordance evidence: frequent collocates of anger/heat in close readings of climactic scenes.)

<sup>9</sup> Charteris-Black, Jonathan. *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 263 pp.

<sup>10</sup> Kövecses, Zoltán. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010. 375 pp.

• EMOTION IS A JOURNEY / MOTION (love, grief rendered in terms of movement, paths, arrival/departure). Characters' emotional developments are framed as trajectories in both Hemingway and Woolf.

• EMOTION IS CONTAINMENT / POSSESSION (e.g., sadness as weight/burden, feelings as objects contained or released). Syntax (passive voice, possessive constructions) often marks social restraint.

These mappings are consistent with cognitive-linguistic descriptions but are inflected by novelistic techniques: interior focalization (Woolf), laconic minimalism (Hemingway), and political framing (Orwell).

## 2. Cultural signs and semiotic clusters

Several cultural symbols systematically co-occur with these linguocognitive patterns:

• Tea/domestic ritual & restraint: Scenes featuring tea, drawing rooms, and social ritual often co-occur with metaphors of suppression and managed feeling (restraint as a cultural virtue). In scenes of social gathering (Woolf), emotional disruption is encoded via small deviations in ritual.

• Weather & London space: Weather imagery functions as mood amplifier; fog, drizzle, and sudden sunstrikes encode ambivalence and social atmosphere. Woolf uses urban weather to externalize inner states.

• Stamina/stoicism and minimal speech: Hemingway's sparse dialogue and bodily tropes (wounds, appetite) signal cultural models of masculine restraint<sup>11</sup>; emotional intensity is encoded through action and understatement rather than explicit affect terms.

• Political symbolism: In Orwell, emotion metaphors are appropriated for ideological ends (fear as surveillance, grief as memory suppressed), showing how cultural signs are mobilized to shape political affect.

Findings suggest that literalist or culture-blind readers may misread emotional cues: e.g., Anglo-coded restraint may be perceived as emotional coldness by readers from cultures that value overt expressivity. Conversely, bodily warmth metaphors (e.g., "warm heart") may be over-interpreted. The semiotic clusters provide an explanatory apparatus for such misinterpretations.

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<sup>11</sup> Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

### Discussion

Results support a hybrid model: conceptual metaphors operate as cognitive templates but their linguistic realizations and valences are mediated by cultural signs and narrative techniques (point of view, genre). Recent theorizing has emphasized the role of context and culture in metaphor use — our results corroborate and extend that point into literary affect and pedagogical practice<sup>12</sup>.

Based on the empirical patterns, the article proposes classroom interventions:

Metaphor-mapping workshops: Students map metaphor networks in a text (heat, motion, containment) and compare to target culture metaphors (e.g., Uzbek emotion metaphors), improving interpretive flexibility. (Activity aligns with conceptual metaphor pedagogy.)

Symbol decoding tasks: Students identify cultural signs (tea, weather, food) and discuss how these shape emotion reading; paired with role-play to test interpretation across cultural frames.

Intercultural reader portfolio: Following the “intercultural reader” notion, assign alternative readings of the same passage from different cultural perspectives; assess with rubrics that measure interpretive openness, evidence use, and sensitivity to cultural symbolism.

This study used a small purposive sample; future research should scale with larger corpora (digital editions) and experimental reception studies to test how readers from different cultures interpret the same metaphors/symbols. Corpus-assisted critical metaphor analysis is a promising route for that expansion.

### Conclusion

Integrating linguocognitive analysis with cultural semiotics provides a more complete account of how novels encode emotion and how readers (especially across cultures) interpret that encoding. Literary texts are not just repositories of conceptual metaphors; they are semiotic systems that mobilize culturally loaded signs to shape affective meaning. For cross-cultural communication and ELT, fostering the “intercultural reader” through explicit metaphor and symbol decoding strengthens empathy and reduces misinterpretation.

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<sup>12</sup> Houen, Alex (ed.). *Affect and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 470 pp.

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