

## A Bolt from the Blue: Analyzing the Surprise in the English Proverbs

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### Abstract

This study delves into the complex world of cognitive semantics and utilizes qualitative methodology to analyze the element of surprise present in English proverbs. Proverbs are often considered sources of cultural wisdom, and this research aims to uncover the cognitive processes that lead to the unexpected twists and turns that evoke surprise within these linguistic expressions. By applying cognitive semantics analysis, the study explores the intricate interplay between language, thought, and cultural context to show how surprise functions as a rhetorical device. Through an in-depth qualitative exploration, the research seeks to uncover the underlying cognitive mechanisms responsible for creating and interpreting surprising elements within proverbs, offering valuable insights into the complex landscape of human cognition and communication. The results show that (1) metaphorical expressions, semantic shifts and idiomatic language were observed to intensify element of surprise by manipulating established linguistic norms to subvert anticipated meaning, (2) the creation and comprehension of surprise in proverbs rely heavily on conceptual blending and cognitive resonance, and (3) surprise acts as a cognitive hook by capturing attention and promoting cognitive engagement. To further develop this study, conducting cross-cultural studies could explore how cultural differences influence the perception of surprise in proverbs, revealing how cognitive mechanisms interact with diverse cultural backgrounds.

**Keywords:** cognitive semantics, English proverbs, linguistic expressions, surprise

## I. INTRODUCTION

English proverbs are far more than just linguistic relics of the past. They offer a glimpse into the complex relationship between language, cognition, and culture (Kövecses, 2012; Lakoff, 1993). These pithy expressions of wisdom often hold unexpected insights within their seemingly simple constructs, making them a captivating subject of investigation (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987). Throughout history, proverbs have been highly regarded for conveying cultural wisdom, moral values, and life lessons in just a few words. They act as a bridge of communication, transmitting societies' collective knowledge and experiences through generations (Kövecses, 2018; Lemghari, 2022). However, proverbs contain linguistic elements that spark surprise and cognitive friction beneath their familiar guise, encouraging audiences to pause, contemplate, and delve deeper into their underlying messages.

Furthermore, the central aim of our research is to utilize the analytical frameworks of Cognitive Semantics Analysis (henceforth CSA) (Kövecses, 2022) and Qualitative Methodology (henceforth QM) to deconstruct the significance of surprise in English proverbs. Through thoroughly analyzing linguistic components, cognitive processes, and cultural contexts, we strive to uncover the mechanisms that imbue proverbs with surprise and, ultimately, investigate the impact of these unexpected elements on their ability to effectively convey cultural insights and wisdom.

The theoretical framework of CSA offers valuable insight into the intersection of language and thought. This approach reveals moments of cognitive tension and enlightenment by drawing attention to the power of metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and semantic shifts within proverbs (Gentner, 1983; Kövecses, 2005). Through this lens, we understand how these linguistic elements

stimulate cognitive processes, ultimately leading to a more profound comprehension and retention of cultural wisdom. In addition, QM adds depth to our analysis by thoroughly exploring the unexpected elements found in proverbs. We can uncover the cognitive processes involved in generating and interpreting surprise within these linguistic expressions by conducting qualitative research. Accordingly, we delve into the complex interplay between surprise and cultural contexts, acknowledging that proverbs are not standalone phrases but rather influenced by their specific social and cultural environments.

The study of linguistic expressions, particularly proverbs, has been a subject of fascination among scholars in the fields of cognitive linguistics and semantics for quite some time. One aspect that has gained significant attention is the phenomenon of surprise that language can evoke by generating unexpected shifts in meaning. The study of metaphor and its impact on conceptual frameworks was first explored by scholars such as (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), paving the way for cognitive semantics. This perspective highlights the connection between language, human cognition, and culture, revealing the mental structures underlying linguistic expressions. Proverbs, in particular, offer a rich source for investigating the cognitive mechanisms that contribute to the element of surprise, as they encapsulate cultural wisdom in a condensed form.

Research conducted by Gibbs Jr. (1992) and Gibbs Jr. & O'Brien (1990) and Kövecses (2015) has delved into how figurative language activates cognitive mechanisms that enrich comprehension and evoke feelings. Metaphors frequently establish fresh and unexpected associations between ideas, generating cognitive tension and promoting learning. Regarding proverbs, this cognitive tension arises from surprise and is instrumental in captivating the audience and transmitting cultural knowledge.

Researchers have utilized QM to reveal the intricate details of human experiences that lie within linguistic data. Notably, scholars such as Julich-Warpakowski & Sobrino (2023) and Yuan & Sun (2023) have emphasized the interpretive aspect of qualitative analysis, emphasizing its importance in revealing language's subtle nuances. A thorough examination of the cognitive and cultural factors that play a role in the creation and reception of unexpected linguistic elements can be achieved by utilizing QM to analyze surprise in proverbs.

To summarize, this proposed research aims to enhance the current knowledge base through CSA and QM to explore the element of surprise in English proverbs. By utilizing the expertise of cognitive linguistics and qualitative analysis, this investigation seeks to reveal the complex relationship between language, cognition, and culture, ultimately providing insight into how surprise operates as a powerful rhetorical tool within proverbs. Our study delves beyond linguistic analysis and delves into the captivating and resonant power of language that transcends generations. By investigating how surprises within proverbs impact their efficacy as vessels of cultural wisdom, we aim to uncover insights into how audiences can be meaningfully engaged.

In the upcoming sections, we will examine the concept of surprise in English proverbs, analyzing how linguistic elements, cognitive

mechanisms, and cultural contexts contribute to their enduring rhetorical impact. Our investigation will centre around the following research inquiries: (1) how do English proverbs employ linguistic elements to create moments of surprise and cognitive dissonance within their structures; (2) what cognitive mechanisms are involved in generating and interpreting surprise in English proverbs, and how do these mechanisms interact with cultural contexts; and (3) how does the element of surprise enhance the rhetorical effectiveness of English proverbs in conveying cultural wisdom and engaging the audience, as evidenced through qualitative analysis?

## II. METHOD

In order to delve into the research questions presented in this study, we implemented a blend of CSA and QM. This methodology thoroughly investigated the cognitive mechanisms and cultural influences that lie beneath the surprising aspect of English proverbs. First, Data Collection. We have gathered a vast assortment of English proverbs from three primary sources: literatures (Collis, 1992; Siefring, 2004; Speake & Simpson, 2008), modern media (e.g., Instagram and Quora), and various cultural artefacts (in online media). This extensive collection ensures various samples from different historical periods and cultural backgrounds. This data management allowed for thoroughly examining the theme of surprise in proverbs.

Second, Cognitive Semantics Analysis. We thoroughly investigated the linguistic structures, metaphors, and underlying conceptual mappings found within the selected proverbs through CSA. We identified instances where linguistic elements create unexpected connections between concepts, eliciting surprise. We carefully scrutinized metaphorical expressions, idiomatic language, and semantic shifts to understand better how they contribute to cognitive friction and generate surprise. On the other hand, during the qualitative analysis phase, we thoroughly examined the collection of proverbs to uncover the cognitive and cultural aspects contributing to the generation and interpretation of surprise. The interpretive process has been guided by grounded theory principles, which enabled us to extract themes and patterns related to the surprise element naturally. We implemented coding and categorization techniques to identify recurring structures, cognitive mechanisms, and cultural influences that shape the surprise factor.

Third, Triangulation of Findings. In order to guarantee the accuracy and soundness of the examination, we will employ a triangulation strategy. This methodology entails scrutinizing the outcomes of CSA and qualitative analysis to pinpoint consistent perspectives and affirm discoveries pertaining to the three research inquiries. Accordingly, in our research, we have placed the utmost importance on ethical considerations. We have selected proverbs while respecting proper attribution and cultural sensitivity. In the event of any ethical concerns arising from cultural representation, we will address them promptly. This approach has allowed us to conduct our research honestly and impartially while honouring the diverse cultural heritage of our study objective.

Lastly, through CSA and QM, this research added to comprehensively understand the role of surprise in English

proverbs as a rhetorical device. By combining cognitive linguistic theories with qualitative insights, this study added to the broader body of research on language, cognition, and culture, revealing the intricate workings of human communication and cultural expression.

### III. FINDINGS

This research analyzes the relationship between language, cognition, and culture in proverbs. By looking at linguistic structures, cognitive mechanisms, and cultural contexts, the study reveals that surprise is a powerful rhetorical tool that enhances the impact of proverbs. It helps to communicate cultural insights and impress audiences. The research uses CSA and QM to investigate how surprise works in English proverbs. This work provides valuable insights into the intricate nature of human communication and the linguistic expression.

#### 2.1 Linguistic Elements of the Moment of Surprise

The analysis explored the intricate methods through which English proverbs strategically utilize linguistic elements to create moments of surprise and cognitive friction within their structures. By scrutinizing the chosen proverbs, various unique linguistic strategies were pinpointed that add to the element of surprise. An in-depth analysis revealed that incorporating various linguistic mechanisms in English proverbs can effectively stimulate a feeling of surprise. In particular, using metaphorical expressions (*see Example 1*) is a widely adopted strategy, as it creates unlikely associations between seemingly unrelated ideas. This approach generates cognitive conflict by juxtaposing distinct domains, triggering novel cognitive processes. In addition, semantic shifts (*see Example 2*) and idiomatic language (*see Example 3*) were observed to intensify this element of surprise by manipulating established linguistic norms to subvert anticipated meaning.

On the one hand, metaphors are an effective tool in creating surprise. Proverbs frequently use metaphoric language to connect concepts from various domains in unanticipated ways. Take, for example, the adage, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch." This proverb employs a metaphorical comparison between projected future events and eggs hatching, resulting in cognitive tension by contrasting abstract ideas with concrete imagery.

Furthermore, the usage of idiomatic expressions has a substantial impact on evoking surprise. Proverbs, including "Bite the bullet" or "Break a leg", employ idiomatic language that strays from literal meanings, thus requiring figurative comprehension and prompting cognitive engagement. This departure from conventional language norms sparks surprise and fosters profound introspection.

On the other hand, another technique involves using semantic shifts to change the expected meanings of words or phrases. For instance, famous sayings like "The early bird catches the worm" play with the traditional definitions of "early" and "catches," creating a surprising interpretation that makes people think. These kinds of semantic shifts not only challenge people's assumptions but also pique their interest.

Additionally, proverbs that utilize the technique of juxtaposition and reversal of commonly known ideas can be impactful. Take, for

instance, the saying, "Every cloud has a silver lining," which contrasts negative and positive concepts to deliver an unforeseen optimistic outcome. Similarly, the proverb "Out of the frying pan and into the fire" uses reversal to disrupt the anticipated progression, ultimately creating a cognitive challenge through surprise.

#### (1) Example 1

Proverb: "Don't count your chickens before they hatch."

Explanation: This adage employs a clever metaphor that catches one off guard by contrasting the notion of predicting future outcomes ("count your chickens") with the tangible imagery of unincubated eggs ("before they hatch"). The unconventional link between theoretical foresight and physical representation stimulates the mind, encouraging individuals to reassess their presumptions and engage in figurative thinking.

#### (2) Example 2

Proverb: "Bite the bullet."

Explanation: This particular phrase utilizes linguistic deviation to evoke a sense of astonishment. Although its literal meaning implies biting a physical bullet, the figurative meaning conveys the notion of confronting a challenging or uncomfortable circumstance with resolute courage. The contrast between the literal and metaphorical meanings creates cognitive tension, urging the audience to reconcile the disparity and comprehend the intended symbolic representation.

#### (3) Example 3

Proverb: "Every cloud has a silver lining."

Explanation: By using contrasting ideas, this proverb creates a sense of surprise. It merges the unfavourable concept of a "cloud" with the advantageous notion of a "silver lining." This unusual combination generates cognitive tension, prompting the audience to ponder over the proverb's hopeful message. The proverb's arrangement urges the audience to re-evaluate the connection between hardship and possibility.

These instances exemplify the usage of various linguistic mechanisms by English proverbs to induce surprise and cognitive friction. These mechanisms comprise the use of metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and manipulation of conventional meanings, which stimulate the cognitive faculties of listeners and prompt deeper reflection upon the message conveyed by the proverb.

**Table 1. Other Example of Proverbs' Linguistic Elements**

No.	Proverb	Linguistic Elements
1.	Blue are the hills that are far away.	Idiomatic language
2.	One year's seeding makes seven years weeding.	Semantic shifts
3.	He who plants thorns should not expect to	Semantic shifts

	gather roses.	
4.	The more you stir it, the worse it stinks.	Semantic shifts
5.	The road to hell is paved with good intentions.	Metaphorical expressions

Overall, the examination of linguistic components presents in English proverbs highlighted a diverse range of tactics designed to prompt cognitive challenge and intrigue (see Table 1). Using metaphorical phrasing, idiomatic language, semantic adjustments, and various forms of contrast and inversion, these linguistic expressions can produce unexpected meaning shifts that embody the element of surprise. These discoveries underscore the ability of proverbs to captivate audiences by manipulating language conventions and creating cognitive tension, ultimately allowing for the transmission of cultural wisdom and fostering engaging communication.

**2.2 Cognitive Mechanisms in the Proverbs of Surprise**

It has been discovered through cognitive analysis that the creation and comprehension of surprise in proverbs rely heavily on conceptual blending (see Example 4) and cognitive resonance (see Example 5). Proverbs utilize cognitive blending to merge different mental spaces, resulting in surprising and unexpected combinations. The selection of metaphors and idiomatic expressions is heavily influenced by cultural contexts, which aid in identifying the linguistic elements that elicit surprise. The dynamic interplay between cognitive mechanisms and cultural context shapes how different audiences receive a surprise (see Example 6). Through analysis, it has been discovered that cognitive mechanisms, such as conceptual blending, play a crucial role in generating surprise. By blending separate cognitive spaces, proverbs can establish unforeseen connections between concepts. This process often leads to original and unexpected interpretations that stimulate cognitive friction. For instance, the proverb "Actions speak louder than words" merges the concepts of "actions" and "words" to provide a unique outlook on the correlation between communication and behaviour, ultimately generating cognitive surprise.

Interpreting proverbs unexpectedly is influenced by cultural contexts and cognitive processes. Understanding metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and changes in meaning often requires shared cultural knowledge. For instance, the proverb "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" depends on familiarity with Rome's culture. The connection between the proverb and the cultural context can increase its surprise impact.

Prevalent cultural norms and values determine the cultural appropriateness of surprise-inducing elements in proverbs. For the intended message to be effectively conveyed, the level of surprise introduced must align with the audience's cultural expectations. Any culturally inappropriate surprise could lead to confusion or misunderstanding.

The surprise factor in proverbs can sometimes cause cognitive

friction, leading to cognitive dissonance where individuals seek to reconcile seemingly opposing ideas. This thought-provoking process can prompt deeper reflection and engagement with the proverb's meaning. The efficacy of this transfer from dissonance to engagement is contingent on factors such as cultural context and the audience's cognitive flexibility.

The interplay between cognitive processes and cultural surroundings leads to differences in interpreting surprise in proverbs across cultures. What may be deemed surprising and captivating in one cultural context may not produce the same impact in another. The subtleties of each culture affect how much the element of surprise resonates and how effectively it communicates the intended messages.

(4) Example 4

Proverb: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Explanation: The saying above offers a fitting representation of the dynamic interplay between our mentality and the societal standards surrounding us. As an illustration, the term "do as the Romans do" is worded in a way that strongly associates it with adapting to an unfamiliar location, such as Rome. This connection serves to reinforce the phrase's resonance with individuals. Additionally, given the widespread acknowledgement of the importance of respecting local customs in a new environment, the message conveyed by the adage is easily understood. This context highlights how our understanding of culture can significantly influence our thought processes.

(5) Example 5

Proverb: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Explanation: This proverb illustrates how cognitive dissonance interacts with cultural norms. By presenting a contradictory scenario ("a bird in the hand" versus "two in the bush"), the mechanism triggers cognitive dissonance, which forces individuals to reconcile the conflicting ideas. The proverb's effectiveness depends on the audience's cognitive flexibility and cultural appreciation of the importance of certainty versus potential gain. In cultures where risk aversion is highly prized, the dissonance induced by the proverb may prompt deeper reflection, while in others, the level of surprise and cognitive friction may be less pronounced.

(6) Example 6

Proverb: "All that glitters is not gold."

Explanation: This proverb highlights how surprise can vary depending on cultural context. Semantic reversal, where "glitters" are contrasted with "gold," creates cognitive tension and surprise. The extent of surprise depends on how familiar the audience is with the metaphorical connection between "glitters" and "gold" as a symbol of value. However, the impact of the proverb differs across cultures. The proverb may elicit more surprise and cognitive involvement in societies prioritizing material wealth. Conversely, in cultures that prioritize more profound significance over superficial appearances, the cognitive dissonance may be less pronounced, leading to differing levels of surprise.

These instances highlight the intricate interplay between cognitive processes like blending, dissonance, resonance, and cultural backgrounds, shaping the level of astonishment conveyed through proverbs (see Table 2). Factors like cultural awareness, cognitive adaptability, and societal beliefs significantly impact how individuals interpret and respond to the element of surprise inherent in these linguistic sayings.

**Table 2. Other Example of Proverbs' Cognitive Mechanism**

No.	Proverb	Cognitive Mechanisms
1.	Man proposes, God disposes.	Conceptual blending
2.	While the grass grows, the steed starves.	Cognitive resonance
3.	Hasty climbers have sudden falls.	Conceptual blending
4.	A fool may give a wise man counsel.	Conceptual blending
5.	Let sleeping dogs lie.	Cognitive resonance

In short, the intricate cognitive processes contributing to generating and comprehending surprise within English proverbs are inextricably linked to cultural elements. The amalgamation of concepts, cognitive resonance, and the interplay between surprise and cultural norms all factor into how individuals mentally engage with these adages. These discoveries highlight that producing and interpreting surprise in proverbs is not an isolated event but rather a deeply entrenched aspect of human communication's cognitive and cultural context.

**2.3 Rhetorical Impact of the Proverbs of Surprise**

After conducting a thorough, it has been determined that the element of surprise plays a crucial role in the rhetorical effectiveness of English proverbs. This evident is particularly true regarding conveying cultural wisdom and engaging the audience. Our research has uncovered complex and intricate dynamics, particularly regarding the relationship between surprise, communication impact, and cultural resonance. Accordingly, incorporating surprise into proverbs can significantly boost their rhetorical impact. Surprise acts as a cognitive hook (see Example 7) by capturing attention (see Example 8) and promoting cognitive engagement (see Example 9), drawing listeners or readers into deeper contemplation of the proverb's intended message. This added layer of cognitive friction can elicit an emotional response, making proverbs an even more effective tool for conveying cultural wisdom in a succinct and impactful manner.

The analysis revealed that incorporating an element of surprise acts as a cognitive hook, effectively capturing the audience's attention and promoting active engagement with the proverb. The unconventional linguistic components create a cognitive shift, prompting individuals to pause and ponder the proverb's intended meaning. Take, for example, the proverb "Curiosity killed the cat;"

the unexpected outcome of the cat's demise encourages the audience to reflect on the proverb's message about the perils of curiosity taken too far.

Proverbs are made memorable by the element of surprise they contain. The cognitive friction that arises from unexpected linguistic elements creates a mental disruption that embeds the proverb's message in the audience's memory. This surprise factor acts as a mnemonic device, facilitating the retention of cultural wisdom encapsulated within the proverb. This is evident in proverbs like "The squeaky wheel gets the grease," where the unexpected metaphor ("squeaky wheel") enhances the proverb's memorability, making it easy to recall.

The qualitative analysis has shown that the element of surprise plays a significant role in fostering emotional resonance, ultimately intensifying the impact of a proverb. When surprise triggers cognitive dissonance, it elicits a strong emotional response, ranging from humour and curiosity to reflection. As a result, the formed emotional engagement enhances the proverb's effectiveness in conveying cultural wisdom, as it creates a memorable and emotionally charged experience for the audience.

The element of surprise further enhances the cultural significance of proverbs they may contain. Linguistic components that deviate from the expected norm often carry cultural connotations, necessitating the utilization of cultural knowledge in deciphering their intended meaning. This cultural depth imbues the proverb with added value, as it encourages the audience to delve into the intricacies of cultural nuances and enlightening wisdom. A prime example of this is the proverb "Many hands make light work," which embodies the collective power of teamwork and is elevated by the element of surprise, intensifying its cultural relevance.

In the context of proverbs, surprise is a highly effective tool for enhancing their rhetorical impact and conveying cultural wisdom. By introducing an unexpected element, surprise captures the audience's attention, fosters deeper cognitive engagement, and elicits strong emotional responses, all contributing to a powerful rhetorical experience. This effect is particularly evident in proverbs such as "Honesty is the best policy," where the seemingly simplistic nature of the phrase belies its profound underlying message.

(7) Example 7

Proverb: "A leopard can't change its spots."

Explanation: The proverb's power lies in its surprising metaphorical connection between a "leopard" and its "spots." This unexpected comparison grabs the audience's attention and encourages them to reflect on its more profound significance. By vividly conveying the cultural wisdom that people are often reluctant to change, the proverb's surprise factor adds to its rhetorical impact. This memorable message resonates with audiences on both cognitive and emotional levels, thanks to the unexpected metaphor's relevance to human behaviour.

(8) Example 8

Proverb: "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

Explanation: The cleverness of this proverb lies in its ability to

turn familiar concepts on their head. By pairing the commonplace act of "making an omelette" with the unconventional idea of "breaking eggs," the proverb upends our expectations and creates a sense of surprise. This unexpected twist enhances the proverb's power to communicate the valuable lesson that progress and achievement often require us to sacrifice and shake up the status quo. By challenging our assumptions, the proverb encourages us to rethink our attitudes towards the connection between hard work and success.

(9) Example 9

Proverb: "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Explanation: The power of this proverb lies in its unexpected semantic shift, which heightens its rhetorical impact. While the audience anticipates "proof" to refer to evidence or demonstration, the proverb emphasizes firsthand experience's importance in the pudding's actual consumption. This twist generates cognitive friction and captures attention, effectively communicating the cultural wisdom that accurate assessment requires more than theoretical knowledge. The element of surprise adds an emotional layer to the message, prompting audiences to reflect on the deeper meaning.

The power of proverbs lies in their ability to surprise and captivate their audience, evoking emotions and engaging cognitive processes to create a lasting impact (see Table 3). By embedding unexpected linguistic elements, proverbs effectively convey cultural wisdom and stimulate meaningful reflection, fostering a deep connection with the audience. These examples demonstrate the rhetorical effectiveness of surprise in language and its power to enhance communication experiences.

**Table 3. Other Example of Proverbs ad the Cognitive Hook**

No.	Proverb	Rhetorical Impact
1.	Many are called but few are chosen.	Promoting cognitive engagement
2.	What must be, must be.	Promoting cognitive engagement
3.	As a tree falls, so shall it lie.	Capturing attention
4.	All good things must come to an end.	Promoting cognitive engagement
5.	Fortune favours fools.	Capturing attention

To sum up, the qualitative analysis highlights the crucial role of surprise in bolstering the rhetorical impact of English proverbs. By increasing focus, involvement, recollection, sentiment, and cultural richness, surprise is a powerful persuasion tool. Its capacity to captivate, stimulate reflection, and stir up emotions enhances the transmission of cultural insights through proverbs, empowering these linguistic constructs to captivate listeners and facilitate impactful dialogue.

**DISCUSSION**

Through the lens of CSA and QM, examining surprise's role in English proverbs exposes the complex mechanisms at work. The results highlight the crucial part surprise plays in conveying cultural knowledge, elevating captivation, recall, and emotional impact. This conversation stresses the interdependent connection between cognitive functions, cultural surroundings, and successful communication in proverbs.

First, linguistic elements of the moment of surprise. Several diverse strategies have been identified through a thorough investigation into using linguistic elements to generate surprise within English proverbs. One of the most prominent mechanisms for introducing surprise is using metaphorical expressions (Spellerberg, 2022). Such expressions juxtapose disparate concepts and challenge conventional associations, eliciting cognitive friction and promoting a deeper level of contemplation. Additionally, idiomatic language and semantic shifts have been identified as practical tools for eliciting cognitive tension. The findings of this study underscore the importance of proverbs as repositories of cultural wisdom, utilizing linguistic mechanisms to engage audiences by disrupting expected interpretations. By creating cognitive tension and prompting deeper contemplation (Gibbs Jr. et al., 1997, 2004), these elements of surprise contribute significantly to the rhetorical effectiveness of proverbs. Overall, this discussion highlights the crucial role of surprise in effectively using language and communicating cultural wisdom.

Through a thorough investigation, it has been uncovered that English proverbs uniquely elicit surprise and cognitive friction through their strategic use of linguistic elements. This dynamic interplay between language, cognition, and communication highlights the multifaceted nature of proverbs and their remarkable capacity to engage audiences through their unexpected, meaningful shifts (Nugraha, 2016; Villers, 2022). The diverse range of linguistic mechanisms employed within these proverbs showcases their versatility and ability to captivate listeners.

Proverbs are crafted with clever metaphors to surprise and captivate the reader or listener. Using metaphors combines disparate concepts, resulting in unexpected contrasts that create a sense of cognitive tension. This tension prompts the audience to form new connections in their mind, effectively enhancing their ability to remain fully engaged and stimulated by the proverb (Bredis et al., 2020). The fact that proverbs tap into the brain's innate tendency to form new associations is a testament to their effectiveness as a tool for communication and education.

Figurative language can create cognitive friction through the use of idiomatic expressions. These phrases deviate from literal interpretations and introduce unexpected contrasts between literal and figurative meanings. A great example is the idiom "barking up the wrong tree," which requires audiences to navigate the nuanced landscape of figurative language to decipher the intended message. This cognitive challenge fuels engagement and deepens the impact of the proverb, making the audience active participants in the process.

Proverbs that utilize semantic shifts to modify the connotations of words or phrases demonstrate how unexpected elements can generate cognitive complexity. By manipulating standard linguistic patterns, these proverbs elicit cognitive dissonance that demands reinterpretation. Take, for instance, the proverb "The apple of my eye," in which "apple" is used metaphorically to represent something cherished. This linguistic manoeuvring stimulates mental engagement and prolongs contemplation of the proverb's intended message.

Using contrasting and inverted concepts showcases the power of unexpected arrangements to elicit surprise. Traditional sayings, such as "There's no smoke without fire," expertly employ this technique to challenge established associations. By bringing together elements that are usually connected (smoke and fire), these proverbs encourage people to reevaluate their assumptions about cause and effect. This cognitive dissonance sparked by the element of surprise boosts the rhetorical impact of the proverb.

Examining how English proverbs use language to create surprise and cognitive friction demonstrates their intentional and intricate construction. Through metaphors, idioms, semantic shifts, and various strategies, proverbs become practical tools for communication by engaging audiences with unexpected linguistic choices. This element of surprise stimulates cognitive engagement and reveals the complex relationship between language, cognition, and cultural communication. Overall, proverbs serve as vessels of cultural wisdom and effectively engage audiences.

Second, cognitive mechanisms in proverbs of surprise. Investigating the cognitive mechanisms in generating and interpreting surprise has provided valuable insights into the significance of blending, resonance, and cultural awareness. The process of conceptual blending has been shown to facilitate the formation of novel connections that elicit surprise. Furthermore, the interplay between these cognitive mechanisms and cultural contexts has revealed how shared knowledge (Andersson, 2013) and values (Kövecses, 2023) influence the perception of surprise. The degree of surprise elicited by metaphors and idiomatic expressions is strongly influenced by cultural resonance, with cross-cultural differences having a notable impact. These findings underscore the critical link between cognitive processes and cultural awareness, ultimately shaping the significance of surprise within proverbs.

Studying how surprise is generated and interpreted in English proverbs sheds light on the complex interplay between cognitive processes and cultural contexts. These mechanisms lead to surprising creations and influence their impact and resonance through shared cultural knowledge and cognitive habits.

On the one hand, conceptual blending plays a crucial role in generating surprise and promoting creativity. By bringing together different mental spaces, proverbs and other forms of communication can create unexpected connections between seemingly unrelated concepts. This introduces cognitive friction, which can be an effective way to engage audiences and inspire contemplation. For instance, consider the proverb "The calm before the storm," where weather and emotions are metaphorically

blended to create a powerful and thought-provoking message. Such examples highlight the power of conceptual blending to foster innovation and spark new ideas.

On the other hand, the interplay of cognitive mechanisms and cultural contexts sheds light on cognitive resonance's critical role in interpreting surprise. Comprehending metaphors and idiomatic expressions relies heavily on a shared cultural understanding. For instance, "Don't cry over spilled milk" underscores how familiarity with the metaphorical comparison of "spilled milk" amplifies cognitive resonance, intensifying surprise and engaging the audience in deciphering the intended message. This resonance underscores the interdependence of cognitive mechanisms and cultural awareness, which heightens the impact of surprise.

The evaluation reveals that cultural conventions heavily influence the suitability of unexpected components in proverbs. What may come as a surprise in one culture may not have the same impact in another due to differences in cognitive norms and cultural values. An excellent illustration of this cultural divergence can be found in the proverb, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." In cultures that value assertiveness, the unexpected metaphor of the "squeaky wheel" may have a more pronounced effect, causing heightened cognitive tension.

The occurrence of cognitive dissonance that arises from surprise is a pivotal component of the process of interpretation. This dissonance compels individuals to harmonize seemingly conflicting concepts, ultimately provoking contemplation at a deeper level (Giang, 2023). By doing so, engagement is increased, and audiences spend more time reflecting on the intended meaning of the proverb. The adage "Two wrongs don't make a right" is an excellent example of this cognitive dissonance, as the unexpected association prompts viewers to delve into the proverb's ethical implications.

The notion of surprise is not uniform across cultures and can be attributed to the interplay between cognitive mechanisms and cultural contexts. Individuals' familiarity with metaphors, idioms, and cultural symbols plays a crucial role in shaping the significance attached to surprise. It is noteworthy that the cultural perspective (Phuong, 2023; Stachurska, 2023) largely influences cross-cultural dissimilarities in the interpretation of surprise. This emphasis on the cultural aspect underscores the intricate interrelationship between cognitive processes and cultural awareness. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of cultural context when trying to comprehend the perception of surprise across different cultures.

In conclusion, the examination of cognitive mechanisms involved in generating and interpreting surprise within proverbs underscores the intricate dynamics between cognition and culture. The interplay between conceptual blending, cognitive resonance, and cultural awareness illustrates how surprise is not solely a cognitive phenomenon; it is deeply embedded within cultural contexts. The interaction between these mechanisms enriches the audience's experience of surprise and contributes to the overall rhetorical effectiveness of proverbs in communicating cultural wisdom.

Third, rhetorical impact of the proverbs of surprise. The findings of the analysis underscore the significance of surprises in the effectiveness of proverbs. The element of surprise captures our attention and motivates us to engage with the proverbs actively. Consequently, the proverbs become more memorable as surprise disrupts our regular thought patterns, embedding the message deep into our minds. Furthermore, the surprise's emotional impact enhances the meaning of the proverbs, making them emotionally engaging (Lau et al., 2004; Zaikauskienė, 2021). The cultural context also plays a pivotal role in making proverbs more meaningful. When surprise and cultural values work together, proverbs become a powerful tool for conveying cultural wisdom. The role of surprise in making proverbs more persuasive and emotionally engaging cannot be overstated, as it creates a lasting impression on the listener.

The analysis of surprise's role in English proverbs sheds light on how it enhances the rhetorical effectiveness of these expressions. The impact of surprise on communicating cultural wisdom and engaging audiences is a complex phenomenon that influences the resonance and lasting impact of proverbs.

After conducting a comprehensive qualitative analysis, it has been confirmed that utilizing surprise is a potent cognitive hook that can effectively seize the audience's attention from the outset. Incorporating a surprising element creates a cognitive tension that disrupts the listeners' flow, compelling them to pause and contemplate the significance behind the proverb momentarily. This heightened focus is particularly noticeable in proverbs such as "Too many cooks spoil the broth," where the unexpected phrasing immediately captivates the audience, prompting them to explore further the wisdom embedded within the words.

The inclusion of unexpected elements in proverbs greatly enhances their memorability. When the mind encounters linguistic surprises, it creates a cognitive disturbance that leaves a lasting impression (Szpila, 2017). Proverbs that incorporate these elements of surprise, such as "Easy come, easy go," stand out among other expressions due to the mental friction they produce. The mnemonic power of surprise ensures that these linguistic gems are easily remembered and readily shared within cultural discourse.

The analysis reveals that surprise is a powerful tool that can elicit emotions that intensify the impact of a proverb. The cognitive dissonance that arises from surprise can evoke emotions, from curiosity and amusement to introspection. This emotional resonance strengthens the proverb's ability to communicate cultural wisdom by establishing a personal connection with the audience.

Proverbs gain a significant cultural depth through the interplay between surprise and cultural resonance. Linguistic elements that catch one off guard are frequently infused with cultural symbolism, necessitating that the listener draw on their cultural knowledge to comprehend the proverb's intended message. This dynamic is apparent in sayings such as "Penny wise, pound foolish," where the unexpected combination of currency denominations reinforces the cultural value of making sensible choices. The resonance of culture attached to these proverbs provides additional interpretations that

enhance the audience's comprehension of their meaning (Khakimzyanova & Shamsutdinova, 2016).

According to the qualitative analysis, using surprise in proverbs greatly enhances their rhetorical impact. By igniting cognitive engagement, improving memorability, evoking emotions, and strengthening cultural resonance, surprise generates a rich and complex rhetorical experience (Wu et al., 2023). Proverbs that contain surprising elements, like "The more, the merrier," illustrate how surprise can enhance their ability to concisely and effectively convey cultural wisdom.

To summarize, the qualitative analysis of surprise's function in English proverbs sheds light on its pivotal role in shaping their rhetorical effectiveness. The significance of surprise in conveying cultural wisdom and captivating audiences is multifaceted, encompassing attention-grabbing, memorability, emotional poignancy, cultural profundity, and rhetorical impact. The interdependent relationship between surprise and these facets emphasizes the crucial role of surprise in elevating proverbs into potent tools for cultural communication, capturing the audience's intellect and emotions.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the fascinating realm of English proverbs, revealing surprise's significant role in effectively communicating cultural knowledge and captivating listeners. Using CSA and QM as our guiding frameworks, we discovered the intricate interplay between linguistic components, cognitive processes, and cultural contexts that generate moments of intellectual challenge and enlightenment within these ageless sayings.

Through analyzing linguistic elements such as metaphors, idiomatic language, semantic shifts, and techniques of juxtaposition and reversal, we uncovered the intentional construction of proverbs designed to elicit surprise. Our research highlighted how these elements act as cognitive hooks, capturing attention, encouraging engagement, and promoting contemplation. Additionally, our examination of cognitive mechanisms revealed the significant impact of conceptual blending, cognitive resonance, and cultural awareness in shaping the interpretation and resonance of surprise within proverbs. By combining cognitive processes with cultural contexts, we offered a nuanced understanding of how surprise enhances the rhetorical effectiveness of proverbs in conveying cultural wisdom.

Although our research yielded valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. Our analysis was predominantly qualitative, leaving room for interpretive subjectivity. Furthermore, our sample of proverbs for analysis was limited to a specific subset, potentially restricting the applicability of our findings to the broader spectrum of English proverbs. Additionally, our exploration of cultural contexts may have accounted for only some possible cultural nuances, emphasizing caution when applying our findings to different cultural frameworks.

To further develop this study, there are several directions that future investigations could take. Firstly, by adding quantitative analyses to our qualitative findings, we could better understand



how linguistic elements are distributed and their impact across a broader range of proverbs. Secondly, conducting cross-cultural studies could explore how cultural differences influence the perception of surprise in proverbs, revealing how cognitive mechanisms interact with diverse cultural backgrounds. Lastly, examining the role of surprise in other linguistic genres, such as idiomatic expressions or metaphors in literature, would provide a more complete understanding of how surprise operates in language and communication.

To summarize, this study sheds light on the intricate relationship between surprise, cognition, culture, and communication. Using CSA and QM, we have gained a deeper understanding of how surprise intensifies the persuasive effect of proverbs, effectively conveying cultural knowledge while captivating the audience. Although exploring the surprising elements in proverbs is an ongoing journey, this research provides a solid groundwork for further investigations into the multifaceted realm of language, cognition, and culture.

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