The NEW Riddle of the Buddhist Monk

UP/DOWN metaphorical extensions

According to Kövecses (2010) Metaphorical linguistic expression may vary widely cross-culturally but many conceptual metaphors appear to be potentially universal or near-universal. This happens because people across the world share certain bodily experiences. However, even such potentially universal metaphors may display variation in their specific details because people do not use their cognitive capacities in the same way for culture to culture. Many conceptual metaphors are unique to particular cultures or sets of cultures because of differences in such socio-cultural context, history, or human concern that characterizes these cultures. If we look at the vertical metaphor in Russian language, UP and DOWN generally correspond to the positive and negative experiences (good/bad). They provide examples in the National Russian Corpus (www.nrcorpus.ru) as well as in the dictionary of Russian language by Davydov I. (eds.), Ushakov D. N. (1985, 1986), ed., Shvedova N. J. (H. К. Шведова), ed., Yermolenko T. F. (Т. О. Ермоленко) ed. that reflect this correspondence. The numbers given in parentheses refer to their number of occurrences in nrcorpus.

UP (uprightness)
1. To ascend to the highest position (80), 2. To move upwards (24), 3. To rise up to the top (20), 4. To get high (14), 5. To square (14), 6. To soar (11), 7. To improve (11), 8. To reach top (10), 9. To climb (9), 10. To climb steep height (9), 11. To rise up (9), 12. To gain position (9), 13. To achieve position (7), 14. To rise high (7), 15. To take place of (7), 16. To go up to the top (7)

UP (unfairness)
1. To ascend to the highest position (6), 2. To move upwards (4), 3. To rise up to the top (3), 4. To get high (3), 5. To square (2), 6. To soar (2), 7. To improve (2)

DOWN (downrightness)

DOWN (unfairness)
1. To descend to the lowest position (2), 2. To move downwards (2), 3. To sink (2), 4. To fall down (2), 5. To sink down to the bottom (2), 6. To decline (2)

Social-economic metaphors (examples from the dictionary)

UP (progress)
1. To improve (12), 2. To advance (10), 3. To rise up (9), 4. To increase (9), 5. To succeed (8), 6. To improve (8), 7. To get high (7), 8. To increase (7), 9. To make progress (7), 10. To make progress (7), 11. To increase (6), 12. To move up (6), 13. To rise up (6), 14. To get high (6), 15. To take place of (6), 16. To gain position (6)

UP (powerlessness)
1. To lose power (2), 2. To lose strength (2), 3. To lose status (2)

DOWN (poverty)

Conclusion

UP is not always positively charged and DOWN is not always negatively loaded. To keep the clouds in the headlines: indulge in dream dreams, fantasies, forget about reality. The expression “The higher you go up, the harder it is to fall” also contradicts the modesty positive assessment of the “UP” metaphor. The high position is short-lived, shaky, unstable, transient, and usually lasts to a fall. Therefore, it is not always good to rise too far (go too high). Moreover, the high position commands, leads to conquests; makes you feel detached from the ground. UP/DOWN metaphor has also the connotation of disrespect, admiration, worship, feeling of adoration. The tower bowing (mean 2), low bow - 1, Deep bow, almost to the ground. 2. To bow with great respect, in this case with great respect, the bow, disadvantages a positive possibility. UP/DOWN metaphors do not have a positive assessment, but plays a key role in a person’s life. The roots, the base, are also at the bottom, from them everything begins, they are the source of life. Those examples do not support the velocity vector image scale, and it turns out that the boundaries between “UP/DOWN” metaphors are not clear cut, but in many cases fuzzy and partially overlapping.

References: