

# “My Patience is Exhausted” and “Nafida Sabrii”: A Conceptual Metaphoric Account of “Patience” Idioms in English and Arabic

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to explain convergence and divergence of Arabic and English idioms in view of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as set forth by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), one of the landmarks in cognitive linguistics which holds that our conceptual system is based on a group of mental metaphorical images that determine our way of thinking and influence our experience of the world. The paper specifically focuses on idioms related to patience in both languages. It has been found out that patience idioms in both languages emanate from very similar conceptual metaphors: PATIENCE IS HARDNESS, PATIENCE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER, and PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS; multiple differences, however, have been found to originate basically from cultural/linguistic variance. This study also explores how analyzing Arabic and English ‘patience’ idioms within CMT framework can have significant implications for L2 language learning.

**Keywords:** Arabic, conceptual metaphor, English, idioms, L2 language learning

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Overview of the Study

This paper seeks to compare the idiomatic expressions of patience in English and Arabic and motivate their attestation in both universal bodily as well as cultural terms within the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as set forth by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). The paper provides a conceptual-metaphoric analysis of the relevant idioms and explores how it can offer a great explanatory power of idioms and the significant implications for L2 language learning. Sub-section 1.2 presents idiom definition and characteristics that set it out as a peculiar linguistic unit. It also cites some proposals as to how idioms are traditionally and cognitively handled. Sub-section 1.3 explains how CMT can serve as a handy tool for motivating idiom structure, long believed to be opaque and arbitrary. The final sub-section of this introduction explains the rationale for the study.

### 1.2 Idiom Definition and Various Perspectives

According to Simpson and Mendis (2003, p. 423) an idiom is “a group of words that occur in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its constituent parts”. Based on this definition, idioms are considered complex multi-dimensional structures that have peculiar semantic, structural, and lexico-grammatical characteristics in addition to certain degree of conventionality (Langlotz, 2006, pp. 2-3). As regards grammatical status, idioms enjoy a degree of familiarity (institutionalization) and in connection with form, they have the formal complexity of construction as being multi-word units (compositeness); also, they are syntactically, morpho-syntactically and lexically variable. In addition, idioms are known to be of restricted lexico-grammatical behavior (frozenness), and in relation to meaning they are different from other formulaic structures in that their meaning cannot be derived from their constituents (non-compositionality). We will now discuss what is meant by each term.

Institutionalization as defined by Bauer (1983, p. 48) is “the process by which a string or formulation becomes recognized and accepted as a lexical item of the language”. The idiomatic expression is taken as a whole to express a certain meaning accepted by speech community and becomes in currency among native speakers of the language. The idiom *kick the bucket*, for example, is conventionalized to mean ‘die’ and has become common among the speech community to mean so.

As indicated above, idioms have the characteristic of lexical and grammatical fixedness (Svensén, 1993, p. 109).

By this is meant that it is hard to shuffle (i.e., delete or substitute) the elements inside the idiomatic unit (frozenness), which is usually made up of two or more lexical constituents (compositeness). This can be illustrated, once more, by the idiom *kick the bucket*. It would be quite unacceptable to shuffle the parts of the phraseme *kick the bucket*, e.g., \*the bucket which he surprisingly kicked yesterday was... or to change *kick* for *hit* \**hit the bucket* or *the* for *a* \**kick a bucket*. This is what is referred to by Frazer (1970) as lexico-grammatical restriction.

Non-compositionality of the idiom means that the total meaning of the idiom is not the total sum of its parts. Given the fact that *opacity* blacks out chances of inferring the meaning, the arbitrariness of the idiomatic structure is rather severe. Native speakers certainly pick up the meaning of those expressions without dividing them into sub-units and understand them wholly so. Opacity of idioms results from the fact that they are indivisible phrasemes whose meaning cannot be inferred from the individual words included. For example, in the sentence *this action will have the butterfly effect*; the meaning of *butterfly effect* (local change that can have wide consequences) is totally opaque without cultural and meta-linguistic explanation. Another illustrative example is *pass the buck* (to pass responsibility for a problem to another person or to avoid dealing with it). It is hard to guess the total meaning of this idiom based on the individual meaning of each word: *pass* + *buck* (O'dell & McCarthy, 2008, p. 6).

Based on idiom definition and the multiple views about its structure, an idiom can be seen as having special meaning that is totally independent of its constituents and has a bit arbitrary unmotivated nature, which has raised language learners' complaints. Despite their importance for language learning and fluency, idioms are believed to be difficult parts of language. Moon (1998, p. 3) maintains that "idiom is an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways". According to Cooper (1998), the difficulty of idiomatic uses lies in the special vocabulary that students have to face as well as the figurative expressions which cannot be interpreted at the literal level that students have to come across. Difficulty of idiom learning and assimilation is also asserted by Liu (2003, p. 671) on the grounds that idioms' structure is rather rigid, and their meaning is unpredictable for language learners.

Traditional ways of introducing idioms have been proven inadequate. The traditional view has been that formulaic expressions are better understood through direct and explicit interpretations. According to Chen and Lai (2013) translation has traditionally been seen as the most common and direct way of understanding and introducing idiomatic expressions. Hence, many reference books have been compiled to display contrasts between the target and the native languages. Students were asked to memorize the idiom, a method that has been found to be time- and effort-consuming. The problem with this, as Chen and Lai (2013) claim, is that idiomatic expressions used in these references are not related in terms of meanings or themes. Moreover, the lists of idioms selected lack logical relationship and systematic arrangement and were merely discrete and isolated, which were deemed to be impractical and result in short retention.

Despite the attempts traditionally made to account for and present idioms, one major pitfall in the traditional view of idioms observed by Kövecses and Szabó (1996) and Kövecses (2002, pp. 199-200) is that linguistic meaning of idioms was treated as being dissociated from the human conceptual system, opaque and arbitrary. As explained above (section 1.2), idioms were regarded as a matter of language alone, items of the lexicon, which resulted in treating them as linguistic units independent of each other. To illustrate that the traditional view of idioms is mistaken, and to put forward a conceptual explanation instead, Kövecses (2002, p. 200) uses the following examples of idiomatic expressions that involve the word *fire*:

*He was spitting fire.*

*The fire between them finally went out.*

*The painting set fire to the composer's imagination.*

*Go ahead. Fire away!*

*The killing sparked off riots in the major cities.*

*He was burning the candle at both ends.*

*The bank robber snuffed out Sam's life.*

*The speaker fanned the flames of the crowd's enthusiasm.*

As Kövecses explains, the above idioms tackle the phenomenon of *fire* and refer to its beginning (spark off), its end (snuff out), the energy source it creates (burn the candle at both ends), its intensity (fan the flames), and danger (fan the flames, spit fire). Other words of relevance to fire (i.e., from the domain of fire) are also used in the idioms, such as *burn*, *candle*, *snuff*, *flame*, etc. Contrary to the traditional view that idioms are unmotivated and unanalyzable wholes, Kövecses proposes that the process of creating the idiomatic expression is not actually dependent on the individual words used but on the underlying concept (conceptual domain) of fire.

Such separation between idiom presentation and the considerations of the human conceptual system is seen as an impediment to understanding and learning/teaching idioms in L2 settings (Kövecses, 2002). Kövecses suggests that idioms can be better understood if they are handled in terms of the conceptual domains they represent, not in terms of the individual words. It is the conceptual domains that contribute towards creating idiomatic expressions. The individual words can only be seen as reflection of a deeper process of conceptualization.

Towards understanding how conceptual theories can better explain the nature of idioms and the possible implications of this on presenting idioms to language learners the following sub-section presents the basic tenets of one of the most influential conceptual theories that provide an effective tool for idiom explanation, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

### 1.3 Idioms and the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor

The main hypothesis of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) set forth by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003) is that our conceptual system is based on a group of mental metaphorical images which determine our way of thinking and influence our experience of the world. Lakoff and Johnson see metaphor as central to our thought and language. While for most people metaphor is merely “a device of the poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language... as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action” (2003, p. 4), for Lakoff and Johnson it is part of our everyday thought and action and is not merely a linguistic device, hence: “what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (p. 4).

Lakoff and Johnson elaborate on what it means for a concept to be metaphorical and they illustrate their point by giving many examples. To mention only one, they tackle the concept “ARGUMENT” and the conceptual metaphor *ARGUMENT IS WAR*. The metaphor appears in daily life in such expressions as: your claims are *indefensible*; he *attacked every weak point* in my argument; his criticisms were *right on target*; I *demolished* his argument; I’ve never *won* an argument with him; you disagree? Okay, *shoot!*; if you use that “*strategy*”, he’ll “*wipe you out*”. He “*shot down*” all of my arguments. Those expressions are not merely words of language; they actually represent realities of life that are witnessed in terms of the facts that we “win or lose arguments”, we see the person we are arguing with as “an opponent”, we “attack” our opponent’s “positions” and we “defend” our own, we “gain” and “lose” ground, etc. (p. 5).

According to this theory, there are two domains for conceptual metaphors. The *source* domain, the domain of experience from which we draw the metaphorical expressions, represented by the word *WAR* in the metaphor *ARGUMENT IS WAR*; and the *target* domain, the domain we try to unravel, represented by the word *ARGUMENT* in the current metaphor. The process of mapping across those conceptual domains puts the two elements together (“*ARGUMENT*” and “*WAR*”) so that you can see the common ground, resemblances and parallels that may exist between the source and the target. The metaphor, here, as asserted by Lakoff and Johnson, is primarily based on this mapping, and language is only secondary. From this standpoint, metaphor is defined as “a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system” (Lakoff, 2003, p. 203).

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory can provide a very handy tool for handling idioms. Kövecses (2004, p. 311) maintains that “the theory of conceptual metaphors is emerging as a new tool that is capable of providing serious assistance to both teachers and students in teaching and learning foreign languages”. He believes that learning conceptual metaphors can be a useful means of understanding and teaching idiomatic expressions. Believing in the need for developing conceptual fluency in language learning, Danesi (1994, p. 454) stresses the necessity of raising awareness of metaphorical reasoning and how languages may converge or diverge based on encoding various concepts.

Many researchers (Lazar, 1996; Deignan et al., 1997) have found that metaphor awareness can be of pedagogical use in assisting foreign language learners to acquire L2 figurative expressions. Other researchers believe that acquiring metaphoric competence is of great significance for language learning (Gibbs, 1994; Ponterotto, 1994; Giora, 2003; Boers, 2003; Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans, 2004; Littlemore & Low, 2006b). Based on a study conducted by Charteris-Black (2002, p. 104) on university students, it was found out that “the easiest metaphoric expressions are the ones that have equal conceptual foundation and linguistic forms both in the native and target languages”, while those metaphoric expressions which have different conceptual foundations but equal linguistic forms are the most difficult. The difficulties here, according to Charteris-Black emanate from differences between native language and the target language with regard to conceptual systems and cultural underpinnings of the idiomatic expressions.

Perhaps the crucial point about handling idioms within the conceptual theory approach is that cognitive linguistics in general and the Conceptual Metaphor Theory in particular can motivate idioms. Motivation is very

important to making language easier. According to Kövecses (2001, p. 305): “the assumption concerning the potential usefulness of cognitive linguistics is predicated on the commonsensical belief that motivation always facilitates learning”. Motivation is also seen by Boers and Lindstromberg (2006) as “The cognitive linguistics feature that seems to have the greatest potential as a source for complementing current language pedagogy...” (p. 305), which has been also asserted by Langlotz (2006) who states that value of treating figurative idioms under the cognitive approach is that the speaker is enabled to understand the meaning of idiomatic expressions, which occurs via “reactivating or re-motivating their figurativity” (p. 45).

Many idiomatic expressions can be motivated based on conceptual and cognitive explanation, which reflects people’s relation to their surrounding world as well as their own embodied experience, i.e., the way the human body shapes how we understand and cognize our world (Gibbs, 2006). This embodied motivation can be explained, for example, via the English idiom *spit fire* “express anger” in which a native speaker of English unconsciously looks upon his or her body as a container ready to explode, which shows that idioms, in addition to their linguistic properties, can also be conceptually motivated (Kövecses, 2002). Lakoff (1987) also shows that learning is made easier if it is motivated rather than being arbitrarily presented. He illustrates how an idiom such as *spill the beans* can be cognitively motivated: “In this case, the relevant metaphor is the CONDUIT METAPHOR [...]. According to the conduit metaphor, THE MIND IS A CONTAINER, IDEAS ARE ENTITIES and communication involves taking ideas out of the mind, putting them into words, and sending them to other people” (p. 450). According to such metaphoric extension “the beans corresponds to the information. The container corresponds to the head” (p. 450). Thus, the meaning of *spill the beans* becomes fully motivated. (For further discussion of the issue of motivation, see also Leung, 2008).

Based on the discussion above, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory has the potential of explaining and motivating idioms, traditionally considered to be unanalyzeable and arbitrary structures, and is expected to yield various pedagogical benefits, which this paper partly ventures to explore.

#### 1.4 Rationale for the Study

The main purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the idiomatic expressions of patience in English and Arabic within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The paper attempts to illustrate the conceptual aspects of understanding the meaning of idiomatic expressions with a view to showing how the tool of conceptual metaphor can be of considerable benefit to language learning. It indicates the interaction between the bodily universal aspects of the human experience and the cultural assumptions in formulating Arabic and English idioms.

The reason why this piece of research focuses on patience is that it is primarily a universal human feeling with idioms prevalent in almost every language and culture. Patience idioms reflect in many ways the society’s value systems and beliefs. To my knowledge, no previous study has focused on addressing these idioms in Arabic and English, unlike “anger” expressions, the anti-thesis of “patience”, which have been the focus of many studies whether in relation to some languages or cross-linguistically. Moreover, patience also conjures many interesting conceptual metaphors that are worth exploring.

## 2. Data

The corpus of this study has been compiled from various sources in English and Arabic. The English data is mainly based on two major sources. The first is the *NTC’s Thematic Dictionary of American Idioms* by Richard A. Spears. It is a thematic dictionary of essential idioms including more than 5500 of the most common idioms covering 900 themes. This dictionary is almost encyclopedic in range and coverage of English idioms and what makes it even more valuable is that it follows a topical order rather than the regular alphabetic arrangement. This dictionary has been manually and electronically searched to pick up idioms relevant to the theme of patience.

The other English source is *Metaphorically Speaking: A Dictionary of 3,800 Picturesque Idiomatic Expressions* by N. E. Renton. This is a self-contained dictionary and thesaurus of metaphors; it is arranged in alphabetical order by keyword and in various categories and covers many topics primarily focusing on idiomatic metaphors. The metaphors included in the dictionary are linguistically rather than conceptually presented.

It is assumed that the two works above represent the core of English language idioms, especially in light of the fact that the idioms under study, i.e., patience-related idioms, do not vary much between the dialects of English.

The term “Arabic” as used in the study stands for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Though some scholars are of the view that MSA is mainly a written rather than a spoken mode of expression, it is still widely used in various spoken contexts including religious sermons and discussions, university lectures, TV serious talk shows and debates, and many other significant encounters. Moreover, the linguistic situation in the Arabic-speaking

countries involves the concurrent use of dialectal and standard Arabic. Though this study is mainly based on MSA data, many of the expressions used have equal dialectal counterparts, and they may sometimes be used in vernacular Arabic in diglossic situations.

The sources of Arabic data are primarily based on three works. The first is Ibrahim Al-Yaziji's *Nuj'at Al-raa'id wa Shur'at Al-waarid fi L-mutaraadif wa L-mutaawarid* (The Spring of the Seeker in Synonyms and Associations), an encyclopedic reference of Modern Standard Arabic which incorporates a big wealth of idiomatic expressions arranged under various thematic headings.

The second reference work is *A contextual Dictionary of Idioms*, an Arabic-Arabic Dictionary compiled by Mahmoud E. Sieny, Mokhtar A. Hussein & Sayyed A. Al-Doush. This work includes more than 2000 entries featuring idioms in a simple language. It focuses on the language of media and current usage citing examples from the Holy Quran, poetry and expressions of common use.

The last Arabic source is Dawood's *Mua'ajam Al-ta'abeer Al-istilahy fi Al-Arabiya Al-Mua'asirah* (The Dictionary of Contemporary Arabic Idiomatic Expression). The dictionary includes idioms of contemporary Arabic obtained from Arabic press and modern literary works. It also includes allusions to Classical Arabic expressions.

The data in this study was compiled by listing patience-related entries in the works above based on manual and electronic inspection. As for the Arabic data, the researcher had to use his intuition as a native speaker to verify the currency of the data, and it was also cross-checked informally by other natives.

The data procured from the dictionaries forms a solid basis for a cross-linguistic exploration into the two languages and cultures. From the perspective of this study, the conventionalized, lexicalized dictionary idiomatic expressions used are reflections of traditional language used in everyday life. In order to allow for a cross-linguistic analysis, only those idioms relevant to patience were taken into consideration.

### 3. Methodology

Patience idioms in both languages are analyzed in view of the tenets of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory set forth by Lakoff and Johnson and the subsequent literature, which can be summarized as follows.

- a) The metaphor is a mapping which is well known to be unidirectional, from source to target domains.
- b) The physical experience is the basis of the source domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which presents itself via "image content" reflecting bodily sensation and perception (Grady, 1997a).
- c) The commonalities of our bodies and of the environments we live in constitute our conceptual systems to a great extent (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

In this paper we set out to explore contrastively the similarities and differences between patience idioms in English and Arabic, and towards this goal, lists of idioms in both languages have been established based on the conceptual metaphor they were found to stand for. The comparison conducted resulted in the conceptual metaphors dealt with in the analysis section.

The methodological principles for the description of conceptual metaphors in expressions are those put forward by Barcelona (2001) and (Kövecses, 2002); hence, the linguistic expressions in our data are seen as manifestations of conceptual metaphors in accordance with Kövecses' statement that "it is the metaphorical linguistic expressions that reveal the existence of the conceptual metaphors" (2002, p. 6). The analysis and description of the linguistic expressions (i.e., idioms) in English and Arabic is done in order to corroborate the similarities and differences in conceptual metaphors between the two languages.

### 4. Analysis

This section analyzes the data collected relating to conceptual metaphors. The expressions analyzed all relate to patience. According to the definition offered by Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (Hornby, 2010), patience is an ability to stay calm, quiet, steady, even-tempered without complaining, which requires a person to bear provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, without complaining or losing one's temper or getting irritated. It is also an ability or willingness to suppress agitation or infuriation when facing up to any delay; it is a special ability in that you have to be careful and diligent. These conditions of patience are shared by humans and their physiologically-based embodiment primarily motivates the conceptualization of such a feeling.

The following section presents the three metaphors that have been found to emanate from the data procured, namely **PATIENCE IS HARDNESS**, **PATIENCE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER**, and **PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS**. Each metaphor is fully analyzed, and its bodily as well as cultural basis is detected. The

analysis clarifies how the two contrasted languages converge or diverge in delineating the relevant metaphors.

#### 4.1 *Patience Is Hardness*

Because patience is an ability to bear undesirable things without complaining, it causes much body stress, holding one's breath, and hardness of breathing; it is considered an agonizing experience, a type of difficulty; this type of difficulty is motivated by the metaphor DIFFICULTY IS HARDNESS, which is a common observation in everyday life. Hardness of objects correlates with discomfort we live through when trying to manipulate them; this can be easily detected through expressions such as *this is a very hard problem to solve*; or *this is a tough situation to deal with* (Grady, 1997a).

Remaining patient against hardships is a difficult situation that needs a powerful person to handle it; no wonder then that we see a patient person delineated as a bearer of hardships. Owing to the heavy burden of having to remain steadfast and persistent, hardness is seen as a real physical load which requires a patient person to be powerful in body; hence, we see in Arabic many references to a patient person as being "strong" in body as (1) and (2) show:

1. huwa Salbu l-3uud (هو صلب العود)

he hard the-physique

"Lit. He is of powerful physique."

2. huwa Salbu l-mu3jam (هو صلب المعجم)

he hard the-body

"Lit. He is of powerful body."

Besides the powerful-body images, Arabic data compares the hardness of a patient person to that of the "mountain", a symbol of hardness and resilience. In Arabic, a mountain is much more than merely a natural elevation of the earth surface rising from the surrounding level; it stands for fortitude and the ability to withstand the test of time and erosion. It also stands for pride and forbearance, not submitting to the hardships of life; hence the patient person is seen as "as hard as a mountain" and "as hard as a valley's rock", as (3-4) indicate:

3. ka?anna-hu Tawdun mina l-?aTwaad (كأنه طود من الأطواد)

like-him mountain of the-mountains

"Lit. He is like one of the mountains."

4. huwaa fii f-fadaa?idi Saxratu waad (هو في الشدائد صخرة واد)

he in the-hardships rock valley

"Lit. At hardships, he is as hard as the rock of the valley."

For a patient person, a calamity is no more than just a small rift in a rock:

5. waqratun fii Saxrah (وقرة في صخرة)

small rift in rock

"Lit. A small rift in a rock."

Because patience is seen as "hardness", failing to remain patient, as our Arabic data shows, is a sign of weakness, which is presented here in "softness" terms. A forbearing person is someone who is "never softened by incidents":

6. laa yaliinu janbu-hu li-7aadiθ (لا يلين جنبه لحادث)

no soften side-his to- incident

"Lit. His sides are never softened by incidents."

One aspect of portraying the hardships that a patient person has to go through is to picture that person as carrying a heavy load. Patience is illustrated in Arabic as a cumbersome object that weighs heavily on the bearer; a patient person is required to be able to bear such a heavy burden. This is very much in keeping with Grady's primary metaphor DIFFICULTY/HARDSHIP IS HEAVINESS (1997a) based on the observed correlation between our sensory judgment of mass and the affective states associated with exertion; it is this correlation that relates the conceptual domain of HARDSHIP to the source domain of HEAVINESS. Because patience is seen as a "heavy" object, a patient person has to be up to the task of bearing. Recurrent idioms in Arabic depict an enduring person as someone who is a "bearer of hardships", a "bearer of misfortunes", and a "bearer of the calamities of time":

7. muTTali3un bi-ffadaa?id (مضطلع بالشدائد)

bearer of-hardships

"Lit. [He is] a bearer of hardships"

8. amuulun l-innaa?ibaat. (حمول للنائبات)

bearer of-misfortunes

“Lit. [He is] a bearer of misfortunes.”

9. muqrinun li-xuTubi d-dahr (مقرن لخطوب الدهر)  
bearer to-calamities the-time

“Lit. [He is] a bearer of calamities of time.”

The effect of bearing the difficulty would require someone to “bite hard on one’s molars” in order to be able to carry the heavy burdens of patience:

10. ya3aDDu 3alaa naaji ðay-h (يعض على ناجزيه)  
bite on two-mollars-his

“Lit. [He] bites hard on one’s molars.”

A patient person is not only delineated in terms of physical power, but also psychological vigor. A patient person is a fearless person, who never submits:

11. laa turawwi3u-hu n-nawaa?ib (لا تروعه النوائب)  
no frighten-him the-calamities

“Lit. [He is] not frightened by misfortunes.”

12. laa yataDa3Da3 li-riyabi D-Dahr (لا يتضعضع لريب الدهر)  
no submit to-uncertainties the-time

“Lit. He never submits to the uncertainties of time.”

Showing no patience, on the other hand, is seen as weakness, and falling down. The conception of presenting lacking one’s fortitude as such seems to be induced by the bodily primary metaphor FUNCTIONALITY/VIABILITY IS ERECTNESS, based on the observed correlation between functionality and erect (up) position; the sense of weakness is carried through the following idioms which represent various signs of weakness:

13. wahana bi-hi Sabru-h (وهن به صبره)  
weaken with-him patience-his

“Lit. His patience weakened.”

14. wahaa jaladu-h (وهي جلده)  
weakened patience-his

“Lit. His patience weakened.”

15. wahaa ja? fu-h (وهي جأشه)  
weakened self-possession-his

“Lit. His self-possession weakened.”

16. xaara ?iSTibar-uh (خار اصطباره)  
faltered powerful patience-his

“Lit. His powerful patience faltered.”

17. Da3ufa i-7timaalu-h (ضعف احتماله)  
weakened forbearance-his

“Lit. His forbearance weakened.”

As the examples above show, contrary to the toughness of patience, losing patience is a sign of fragility; a person is required to endure all hardships patiently; an eager desire for relief is a sign of feebleness.

Arabic also elaborates on lack of patience as a sign of weakness by introducing the term “3uqdah” (knot), which is a symbol of power and strength; to have endurance and remain patient is to have your knot “tied”, while losing one’s patience is to have your knots “untied”. The following examples show weakness in terms of “untying the knots of patience”, “loosening the knots of patience”, “tearing the rims of patience cloth”:

18. ?In7allat 3uqdatu Sabri-h (انحلت عقدة صبره)  
untied knot patience-his

“Lit. The strength of his patience was lost.”

19. ?intaqaDat mirratu Sabri-h (انتقضت مرة صبره)  
loosened knot patience-his

“Lit. The knots of his patience loosened.”

20. ?infaSamat 3uraa Sabri-h (انفصمت عرى صبره)  
tear-passive rims patience-his

“Lit. The rims of his patience cloth were torn.”

Another perspective of weakness is presented through the image of structure destruction; while patience is depicted as a well-structured building, losing one's patience is a total fall and destruction of such a structure:

21. ?infataqat banaa?iqu Sabri-h (انفتقت بنائق صبره)

break loose the supporting blocks his patience

"Lit. The supporting blocks of his patience broke loose."

22. taqawwaDat da3aa?imu iSTibarih (تقوضت دعائم اصطباره)

demolished pillars forbearance

"Lit. The pillars of his patience demolished."

Weakness (lack of patience) may also be embodied as submission; someone who cannot bear hardships is said to "submit":

23. ?axlada ?ilaa j-fujuun (أخذ إلى الشجون)

submitted to the-grief

"Lit. He submitted to grief."

24. ?istakaana lil-3abrah (استكان للعبرة)

surrendered to-the-tear

"Lit. submitted to tears."

Weakness is also represented in terms of lack of restraint, inability to control one's self; a person who cannot remain patient is someone who cannot control his tears or heart:

25. laa yamliku dam3a-h (لا يملك دمعته)

no hold tears-his

"Lit. He cannot hold his tears."

26. laa yamliku qalba-h (لا يملك قلبه)

no control heart -his

"Lit. He cannot control his heart."

Another sign of weakness is represented in military terms. Lack of resilience in the face of trouble is embodied as losing one's protective forces and fortresses. This is in keeping with the above-mentioned bodily primary metaphor FUNCTIONALITY/ VIABILITY IS ERECTNESS, as well as the primary metaphor DIFFICULTIES ARE OPPONENTS, where feelings of discomfort mirror physical struggle. In the following Arabic data (27-29), the lack of patience is represented as a military defeat where one suffers the destruction of his fortresses, fences and combatant battalions:

27. tada3a-t 7uSunu Sabri-h (تداعت حصون صبره)

fell-they fortresses patience-his

"Lit. The fortress of his patience fell."

28. dukka-t ?aswaari Sabri-h (دكت أسوار صبره)

pounded-passive fences patience-his

"Lit. The fences of his patience were pounded."

29. muzziqat kataa?ibu Sabri-h (مزقت كتائب صبره)

destroyed-passive battalions patience-his

"Lit. His battalions of patience were destroyed."

Our data shows that the hardness of patience metaphor is equally detected for English idiomatic expressions. However, English does not seem to be very detailed or figurative in showing the hardness of bearing patience compared to Arabic.

English data shows that, indeed, remaining patient requires being strong:

30. Give me strength!

31. You have to live with it.

On exhibiting the hardness of patience, English sometimes focuses on the external aspects of how a patient person should be (facial gestures) as well as the agony of having to control one's anger and remain patient:

32. grin and bear it !

33. grit your teeth !

The idiomatic expressions above reflect the sense of patience being a real agony and hardship. The stoical



courage expected of someone bearing patience also relates to the primary metaphor DIFFICULTY/HARDSHIP IS HEAVINESS.

English also summons the experiential and the cultural to convey the meaning of patience, as the following idiom shows:

34. You must bite the bullet.

The expression above reflects the true fact that army doctors gave patients a bullet to put between their teeth in order to alleviate the agonizing pain of surgery (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, etymological note, 2010).

Difficulty of the patience experience in English is also associated with having to wait until difficulty is overcome; managing to be patient and surviving a difficult situation without complaining is echoed in the expression:

35. sweat it out

36. ride it out

37. keep your shirt on

The difficulty of keeping patient is sometimes associated with remaining steadfast in the face of provocations and exercising great self-possession and self control. As was seen with Arabic, the primary metaphor FUNCTIONALITY/VIABILITY IS ERECTNESS, based on the observed association between functionality and erect position, is fleshed out in English. However, unlike Arabic, where erect position takes the form of mountains, buildings as well as the military defences, English focuses on natural erect postures of sitting and standing:

38. sit tight !

39. stand for it!

40. stand still for something

Based on the hardness metaphor presented above in English and Arabic, it seems that Arabic idioms are particularly meticulous about delineating hardness/weakness images. Arabic is really exhaustive in terms of illustrating many aspects of hardness/weakness in physical and figurative terms. There are numerous references to patience in terms of powerful/weak body, mountains, rocks, calamity-bearing, structure demolishing, submission, knot tying/untying, military defeat, etc. Though the English idioms, generally, refer to patience in hardness terms, they are by no means intricate, as far as the current data is concerned. They do not seem to have full attention to detail. It mainly focuses on external appearances, such as facial gestures (grinning and teeth-gritting) and postures, e.g., *sit tight!*. Compared to the extravagant figurative Arabic idioms of forbearing and non-submission, English is scanty in delineating ornate imagery.

#### 4.2 Patience Is a Fluid in a Container

Emotions are usually conceptualized as internal forces that exercise pressure somehow. Based on Talmy's work (1988) about "force dynamic", Kövecses (2000, pp. 61-86) explains that what lies behind most of the emotion metaphors is EMOTION IS FORCE. He detects the following emotion-related metaphors: ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER (*She is boiling with anger*); LOVE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER (*She was overflowing with love*).

The fluid image has a bodily basis since emotions usually have the force of fluid (based on the primary metaphor EMOTIONS ARE FLUIDS) and are easily affected by pressure which causes them to overflow; controlling an emotion is an attempt to keep the fluid inside the container; overflowing is one possible effect of not being able to control one's anger and keep patient (Kövecses, 2000, p. 67). There has been cross-linguistic evidence of the fluid image in many languages; Kövecses (1995b, p. 118) suggests, based on data from English, Chinese, Japanese and Hungarian that many cultures conceptualize human beings as containers and emotions as substance inside the container. There is also a difference relative to productivity; while the fluid image is productive in English, it is not very productive in some other languages.

Our data shows the association of patience to fluid in Arabic and English. Problems of self-control and losing one's patience break out in two cases. First, when one's "supply" of patience is exhausted:

41. nafida Sabru-h (نفد صبره)

ran out patience-his

"Lit. His patience ran out."

42. faraḡa Sabru-h (فرغ صبره)

became empty patience-his

“Lit. His patience became exhausted.”

The exhaustion of the patience “fluid” can other substantiations in Arabic. It may take the form of “drainage” as in (43) or “seepage” as in (44-45):

43. nazafa Sabru-h (نزف صبره)

drained patience-his

“Lit. His patience drained.”

44. naDaba S-STibaru-h (نضب اصطباره)

seeped away great patience-his

“Lit. His great patience seeped away in the ground”

45. naDaba ma3iinu S-STibaarih (نضب معين اصطباره)

seeped away in the ground source forbearance

“Lit. The source of his forbearance seeped away in the ground.”

As we note here, most of the fluid expressions in Arabic refer to the concept of termination from different perspectives; so, the verbs *nafida*, *faraYa* refer to the mere act of “exhaustion”; *nazafa* refers to the act of “drainage”, while *naDaba* denote the “seepage” perspective.

While Arabic possesses a multi-perspective image of liquid exhaustion, English focuses merely on a single-sided image of exhaustion, as examples (46-49) indicate:

46. His patience is *exhausted*.

47. They can never *keep* patience.

48. They are easily *out of* patience.

49. They *lose* patience.

The other case of losing self control (i.e., losing patience) is when another form of fluid (i.e., the anger fluid) in another container (i.e., anger container) “overflows”, which conjures the classic metaphor ANGER IS FLUID IN A CONTAINER. The container here is represented in Arabic by the term “kayl” (vessel). Having more than enough is a real cause of anger and breaking into rage, the antithesis of patience, as in (50-52):

50. faaDa l-kayl (فاض الكيل)

overflowed the-vessel

“Lit. The vessel overflowed.”

51. Tafa7a l-kayl (طفح الكيل)

spilled over the-vessel

“Lit. The vessel spilled over.”

52. balYa s-saylu z-zubaa (بلغ السيل الزبي)

reached the-flood the-elevated places

“Lit. The flood reached the elevated places.”

ANGER IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor is echoed in the following English expressions:

53. They *have had enough*

54. They have had it *up to here*.

Based on the image of patience as a fluid, both English and Arabic assert the importance of keeping a good supply of “patience”, considering such an asset a very important precaution for facing difficulties. An ideal state of “patience” occurs when one has abundant supply of patience; this is exemplified by the following famous Arabic phrase:

55. Sabrun jameel

patience great

“Lit. great patience; have great patience.”

The following English expressions also assert the importance of keeping as much as possible of patience:

56. He has *great* patience.

57. She has *endless* patience.

58. He has *infinite* patience.

When this supply is less than what is required, anger rears with its ugly head:

59. She has *little* patience

The above English expression also resonates in Arabic:

60. huwaa qaliilu S-Sabr  
he little the-patience  
“Lit. He has little patience.”

Based upon the exposition above, the fluid metaphor suggests that a forbearing person should not let his supply of patience exhaust, nor allow his anger fluid to overflow.

It is astonishing to see the striking resemblance between English and Arabic. The difference between the two languages, however, seems to lie in elaboration and figurativeness. Arabic is more elaborate and figurative than English in delineating the fluid image. As the examples above show, Arabic is multi-perspective while English seems to be only single-sided.

#### 4.3 Patience Is Spaciousness

In view of the discussion above, patience is governed by the container metaphor BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS. Physically, a wide and spacious container can allow for more liquid in or for the liquid level to go down in the container, and the more spacious the container, the more it can assimilate the fluid.

This conception is captured profusely in Arabic, where patience is depicted in “spacious terms”; the following example denotes this:

61. fasi7u ruq3ati S-Sabr (فسيح رقعة الصبر)  
wide patch the-patience  
“Lit. A man whose patience is wide-patched.”

The spaciousness of the container is captured in Arabic in terms of two main body parts, *Sadr* “breast/chest” and *qalb* “heart”. According to Maalej (2004, p. 72), in culturally specific embodiment, a particular emotion establishes a conventional cultural correlation between a body part and a certain conceptualization of an emotion concept. As our data shows, the breast, as well as the heart, plays an important role in carrying the sense of spaciousness.

*Sadr*, the breast, is highlighted in the Arabic/Islamic culture as an organ that stands for many emotions and concepts that are of particular relevance to guidance, calmness and forbearance. The concept of ?infra7u/?inqibaDu S-Sadr إنشراح/ضييق الصدر (breast expansion /constriction) is particularly significant and has been mentioned many times in the Quran to assert these concepts (Khan, 2014).

One’s breast may be expanded so that he can be prepared to receive the religion of Islam and to be obedient to Allah:

“فمن يرد الله أن يهديه يشرح صدره للإسلام و من يرد أن يضله يجعل صدره ضيقاً حرجاً كأنما يصعد في السماء كذلك يجعل الله الرجس على الذين لا يؤمنون”

“Those whom Allah (in His Plan) willeth to guide, He openeth their breast to Islam; those whom He willeth to leave straying, He maketh their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies: thus doth Allah (heap) the penalty on those who refuse to believe.” [Surat Al-An’am, 6:125; translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938]

The breast can also be expanded so that the believer is provided with Allah’s light and is walking with a bright guidance:

“فمن شرح الله صدره للإسلام فهو على نور من ربه فويل للقاسية قلوبهم من ذكر الله أولئك في ضلال مبين”

“Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he has received enlightenment from Allah, (no better than one hard-hearted)? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against celebrating the praises of Allah! They are manifestly wandering (in error)!” [Az-Zumar, 39:22; translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938].

As we see in the verse above, breast is translated as “heart” which reflects a view by some Quran interpreters that the breast can sometimes be used to refer to heart. However, what is of importance here is that the above two verses of Quran mean that breast (or heart) expansion makes the believer more comfortable with Islam.

The third mentioning of breast expansion is when Prophet Moses prayed to Allah to expand his breast; breast expansion is seen here as Allah’s providence to help him bear hardships and remain patient in the face of afflicting calamities.

قال ربي اشرح لي صدري

“(Moses) said: “O my Lord! expand me my breast.” [Surat Taha, 20:25; translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938].

In his interpretation of this verse, Khan (2014) explains that:

Prophet Musa has a stutter problem and has a strong temper, so when he calls Pharaoh/ Fir'awn to Islam, he hears many evil words from him. His chest feels constricted because he is angry and is stuttering. So he asks Allah to expand his chest for him. This means that there is an expansion of the chest required for a Messenger of Allah. This Messenger experience is emotionally draining and very tough. So they need to be given this Divine emotional and secure support from Allah to make them at ease and calmness with their role as a Messenger from Allah”.

The fourth mentioning of breast expansion asserts the importance of such an act for Allah's prophet (Muhammad) to be able to bear the hardships of the extremely demanding and tough job of conveying the message of Islam to the whole humanity up till the end of time:

ألم نشرح لك صدرك

“Have We not expanded thee thy breast?” (Surat Al-Inshirah, 94:1; translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938).

Thus in view of the meaning of breast expansion/ constriction as cited above in the Quran, breast expansion is a true sign of calmness, guidance and a good preparation for standing up to hardships and remaining patient.

The following Arabic idiomatic expressions show that indeed there is always association between abundant patience and breast expansion; a tolerant person is someone whose breast is broad:

62. waasi3u finaa?i S-Sadr (واسع فناء الصدر)

wide space the-breast

“Lit. A body whose breast is wide.”

63. waasi3u S-Sadr (واسع الصدر)

broad the- breast

“Lit. broad- breasted person”

In actual daily dealings, a person is able to face up to difficulties when he/she challenges them with a “broad breast”:

64. talaqqaa l-?amra bi-ra7bi Sadri-h (تلقى الأمر برحب صدره)

received the-issue with-broad breast-his

“Lit. He received it with a broad breast.”

65. nazala haa?a l-?amru min-hu fii ?ar3in fasii7 (نزل منه هذا الأمر في ذرع فسيح)

descended this the issue from -him in breast broad

“Lit. He received it with a broad breast.”

As indicated above, breast is not the only organ that has to be wide in order to put up with life sufferings; spaciousness of heart is very important, too.

It is known that heart means a lot to human existence. It is generally considered to be the seat of emotions as attested in many cultures (e.g., Chinese (Yu, 1998, 2003), English (Niemeier, 1997, 2000), Hungarian (Kövecses, 2002), hence the prevalence of HEART AS A CONTAINER metaphor. As is the case for Tunisian Arabic (Maalej, 2008), heart is actually a very productive source domain in Arabic in general (not only for Tunisian Arabic) for the conceptualization of emotions and feelings. The data in hand is in agreement with Maalej's Tunisian Arabic data in the sense of heart being the seat of emotions rather than a bearer of the mental faculty. According to the Quranic verses (quoted in Maalej, 2008, p. 398), the heart is sometimes used as the instrument of understanding:

“ولقد ذرأنا لجهنم كثيرا من الجن و الإنس لهم قلوب لا يفقهون بها و لهم أعين لا يبصرون بها و لهم آذان لا يسمعون بها”

a. Many are the Ginn and men we have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. (Surat Al-A'raaf, or Heights, 7:179, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938).

“أفلم يسيروا في الأرض فتكون لهم قلوب يعقلون بها”

b. Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom. (Surat Al-Hajj, or The Pilgrimage, 22:46, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938.)

“إن في ذلك لذكرى لمن كان له قلب أو ألقى السمع وهو شهيد”

c. Verily in this is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ear and earnestly witnesses (the truth). (Sura L (qaf, or The Matter has been decreed), translated by Abdullah Y. A, 1938, p. 1417)

In the verses above, as explained by Maalej, and also based on the interpreter's notes, the heart has a meaning that is close to "mind". Our data suggests that the heart as a container intended here has to do more with emotions and the ability to withstand provocations than being an instrument of thought.

The Arabic data denotes that in order for somebody to be able to remain calm and patient in the face of calamities he needs to have a large, spacious, heart as (66-67) show:

66. nazala min-hu haa ċa l-?amru fii baalin waasi3 (نزل منه هذا الأمر في بال واسع)  
descended from -him this the issue in heart wide  
"Lit. He received it with a large heart."

67. nazala haa ċa l-?amru min-hu fii lababin raxii (نزل هذا الأمر منه في لبب رخي)  
descended this the-issue from-him in heart large  
"Lit. He received it with a spacious heart."

Spaciousness is sometimes depicted in general terms, away from the container image. As the following example shows, patience is set in dimensional aspects; a forbearing person is someone with "long patience":

68. ?i7tamala-hu bi-Tuuli ?anaati-h (احتمله بطول أناته)  
he-bore-it with-length patience-his  
"Lit. He bore it with his long patience."

Although it appears from the data above that spaciousness is set in physical terms and the idiomatic metaphors seem to be motivated by the primary metaphor QUANTITY IS SIZE where much patience is associated with spacious terms such as fasii7 (wide-patched), waasi3 (broad) ra7b (broad), Tuul (long), raxii (large), its basis is psychological in general. It is generally believed, according to some theories of contemplation, that experiencing one's spaciousness, which is easily ignored and difficult to focus on or describe, is a positive act and one way of recognizing the true nature of one's soul (Brown, 1999). According to John Barter (2004), spaciousness of mind, together with stillness and silence is the spontaneous natural state of our mind. When we are removed from the inner true nature of the mind, we start to lose balance, harmony, peace and well-being in our life; then, we start to suffer more stress and illness. Spaciousness is one of the aspects that lead to greater personal health, better proficiency, and enhancement of our human capacity.

As spaciousness is associated with tolerance, patience and a positive view of life, narrowness is connected with lack of patience. As Hollis (1994, p. 56) explains, the Indo-European word *angh* which means "to constrict" is the etymological basis for the English words "anxiety", "anger", and "angina". A close look at the Arabic data shows the association between impatience and narrowness; people are always fed up with strictures that box them into narrowness; an impatient person is represented, as the following Arabic idioms show, as someone whose breast is "too narrow":

69. Daaqa bi-hi ċar3-uh (ضاق به ذرعه)  
narrow with-it breast-his  
"Lit. His breast is too narrow to bear it."

70. Daaqa Sadru-h (ضاق صدره)  
narrow breast-his  
"Lit. His breast became too narrow."

However, narrowness goes beyond mere association with the breast; a person lacking patience would find narrowness in many things. His "capacity" (*Tawq* in Arabic) to face difficult situations would be too narrow:

71. Daaqa 3an-hu Tawqu-h (ضاق عنه طوقه)  
narrow with-it capacity-his  
"Lit. His capacity was too narrow to bear it."

He would also find his "roads", "paths" and "courses" too narrow:

72. Daaqat bi-hi l-ma ċaahib (ضاقت به المذاهب)  
narrowed with-it the-roads  
"Lit. His roads became too narrow."

73. Daaqa bi-hi s-subul (ضاقت به السبل)  
narrowed with-him the-paths  
"Lit. His paths became too narrow."

74. Daaqat 3alay-hi l-masaalik (ضاقت عليه المسالك)

narrowed on-him the-courses  
 “Lit. His courses became too narrow.”

The circle of narrowness would even get more widened so that the person lacking patience would find the whole world too constricted:

75. Daaqat 3alayhi l-?arDu bi-ra7bi-haa (ضاقت عليه الأرض برحبها)  
 narrowed on-him the-earth with-vastness-its  
 “Lit. The earth with all its vastness became too narrow.”

76. Daaqati d-dunya fii 3ayna-yh (ضاقت الدنيا في عينيه)  
 narrowed the-world in eyes-two  
 “Lit. The world narrowed in his two eyes.”

Narrowness can take different figurative environmental/cultural incarnations. Sometimes it is depicted in “hunting” terms so that distress might cause the afflicted to find himself/herself in a situation narrower than the “meshes of hunter’s net”,

77. ?amsaa mina l-karbi fii ?aDyaqi min kaffati 7aabil. (أمسى من الكرب في أضيق من كفة حابل)  
 became from the-grief in narrower from mesh hunter  
 “Lit. Grief landed him in a situation narrower than the meshes of hunter’s net.”

Sometimes narrowness is compared to the “the eye of a needle”:

78. ?aDyaqau min sammi l-xyaaT (أضيق من سم الخياط)  
 narrower from eye the-needle  
 “Lit. in a situation narrower than the eye of the needle.”

*sammi l-xyaaT* “the eye of the needle” in the expression above symbolizes a very narrow passage someone has to go through. *sammi l-xyaaT* is mentioned in the Quran to refer to a narrow passage that is impossible to pass through:

"إن الذين كذبوا بآياتنا واستكبروا عنها لا تفتح لهم أبواب السماء ولا يدخلون الجنة حتى يلج الجمل في سم الخياط وكذلك نجزي المجرمين."

To those who reject Our signs and treat them with arrogance, no opening will there be of the gates of heaven nor will they enter the garden, until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle: such is Our reward for those in sin. [Surat Al-Araf, 7:40; translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938].

Another form that the image of narrowness can take is interestingly the shape of the white circle of the Arabic letter “meem”(م):

79. ?aDyaqau min bayaaDi l-miim (أضيق من بياض الميم)  
 narrower from whiteness the- miim  
 “Lit. ...in a situation narrower than the white circle of the Arabic letter ‘meem’(م).”

My data does not include many English idiomatic expressions that associate patience with spaciousness; however, it is not possible to ignore expressions such as the following:

- 80. He is a big-hearted man.
- 81. We all need largeness of heart.
- 82. He is a narrow-minded and narrow-hearted person.

The data above is straightforward and bears the same relations indicated for Arabic between patience and spaciousness on the one hand, and narrowness and lack of patience on the other. However, we see some differences between English and Arabic in terms of range, figurativity and manipulation of ecological items.

As we see above, while English sets spaciousness in very general terms, i.e., “big” and “largeness”, spaciousness is set in various terms in Arabic. It is set in terms of “wide-patched”, “wide-area”, “broad” breast; “wide” and “large” heart. The same goes for “narrowness”, which is set in elaborate characterizations and is pictured from various angles. Arabic offers considerable details of the perspectives of narrowness, e.g., “narrow paths”, “narrow earth”, “narrow world”.

Also, the figurativeness of English spaciousness/narrowness expressions is too limited, referring only to the vastness of the heart, while Arabic is more figurative than English in delineating vivid images of what spaciousness as well as narrowness is.

Moreover, while English does not seem to employ cultural artifacts in delineating the spaciousness/narrowness image, Arabic sets in explicit visualizations many cultural issues of particular relevance to narrowness: “narrow

meshes of the hunter's net", "narrower than the eye of the needle" and "narrower than *meem* space". Arabic thus provides a considerable array of cultural entities, which the English data does not seem to display.

In addition, in terms of manipulating body organs, English focus only on the heart, unlike Arabic proves to be richer than Arabic since it handles both the breast and the heart; Arabic is even more figurative and elaborate in addressing the body organs concerned.

Thus, as the data above shows, whereas English generally resembles Arabic in the same generic images of spaciousness and narrowness, it offers only scanty detail compared to Arabic which is extensively elucidated and more figurative.

## 5. Discussion and Implications for Language Learning

Based on the analysis above, it appears that both Arabic and English share the universal human experience of patience, as reflected in the primary body-based metaphors and the main difference lies in the cultural/linguistic substantiation.

PATIENCE IS HARDNESS metaphor is based on mainly, among others, the primary metaphor DIFFICULTY IS HARDNESS. Arabic sets forbearance in more physical terms, e.g., Salbu l-3uud (صلب العود) (Lit. A man of powerful physique), Salbu l-mu3jam (صلب المعجم) (Lit. A man of powerful body); laa yaliinu janbu-hu li-7aadie (لايلين جنبه لحادث) "lit. His sides are never softened by incidents". Furthermore, Arabic stresses the importance of psychological resilience in bearing the hardships of remaining patient: muTTali3un bi-ffadaa?id (مضطلع بالشدائد) "Lit. a bearer of hardships"; 7amuulun l-innaa?ibaaat. (حمول للنائبات) "lit. a bearer of misfortunes"; muqrinun li-xuTubi d-dahr (مقرن لخطوب الدهر) "lit. a bearer of calamities of the time". In addition, Arabic depicts the hardness of patience in more environmental images of "mountain" and "fortress"; e.g., Tawdun mina l-?aTwaad (كانه طود من الأطواد) "lit. He is like one of the mountains"; fii f-fadaa?idi Saxratu waad (في الشدائد صخرة واد) "lit. At hardships he is as hard as the rock of the valley"; tadaa3a-t 7uSunu Sabri-h (تداعت حصون صبره) "Lit. The fortress of his patience fell"; dukka-t ?aswaari Sabri-h (دكت أسوار صبره) "lit. The fences of his patience were pounded". The same images that manifest patience as hardness are mirrored in showing impatience as a sign of weakness: wahana bi-hi Sabru-h (وهن به صبره) (lit. His patience weakened). wahaa jaladu-h (وهي جلده) (lit. His patience weakened) (lit. His patience weakened); Da3ufa 7timaalu-h (ضعف احتماله). The expressions above also demonstrate a high degree of figurativeness.

English on the other hand does not seem to be very detailed and figurative in showing the hardness of bearing patience, focusing only on the external aspects of how a patient person should be as well as the agony of having to control one's anger and remain patient, e.g., "grin and bear it"; "grit one's teeth"; and the external appearance as reflected in, e.g., "sweat it out"; "ride it out" or remaining steadfast in the face of provocations, e.g., "keep your shirt on"; "sit tight".

The fluid image in both languages seems to be almost identical in relating lack of patience to liquid exhaustion. The difference between conceptualizing patience as being liquid in both languages seems to lie in English having more attributes of patience than Arabic, e.g., "little", "great", "infinite". Arabic, however, is more exhaustive than English in delineating the fluid image, adopting a figurative multi-perspective orientation.

As for PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS, it appears that this metaphor is mainly Arabic. English data is not comparable to its Arabic counterpart whether in terms of range or figurativeness. The meaning of spaciousness is extended in Arabic; many references associate more patience with spaciousness of the body organs of "breast", and "heart", e.g., fasii7u ruq3ati S-Sabr فسيح رقعة الصبر "Lit. A man whose patience is wide-patched"; waasi3u finaa?i S-Sadr (واسع فناء الصدر) "lit. The body breast area is wide", waasi3u ð-ðar3 (واسع الذرع) baalin waasi3 (بال) lababin raxii (لبب رخي). The Islamic concept of shar7u S-Sadr (breast expansion) is highly prominent in the Arabic data.

Arabic also presents a panoramic view of the relation between lack of patience and narrowness. Narrowness goes beyond "breast" and "heart" to encompass "abilities" (Tawq), "roads" (l-maāahib, l-masaalik, s-subul), and the whole earth (?al-?arDu). Furthermore, Arabic is more figurative and pictorial in relating impatience to narrowness so that narrowness is portrayed in various culture-specific expressions, such as "?aDyaqu min kaffati 7aabil (أضيق من كفة حابل)", "?aDyaqu min sammi l-xyaaT (أضيق من سم الخياط)", and "?aDyaqu min bayaaDi l-miim (أضيق من بياض الميم)".

Explaining patience idioms within CMT as done above shows that idioms of patience in both languages emanate from identical conceptual metaphors (primary metaphors) and the differences can be explained in terms of exhaustiveness, figurativeness as well as the cultural elements employed by both languages. For example, while PATIENCE IS HARDNESS is set in Arabic in physical terms denoting physical power of body, mountains and

fortresses, English focuses on showing the stoical features of forbearance. Also, for the fluid image, it is worth noting that despite the parallel images in both languages, English gives more attention to attribution (having many attributes) while Arabic is highly figurative and multi-perspective. The close similarity between English and Arabic in terms of fluid image can be exploited to save the time of learning/teaching these fluid-related idioms. While the difference is only minimal for the fluid image, much variance is observed for PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS, which requires much work pedagogically; since this metaphor is minimally attested in English, it requires planning increased awareness-raising activities.

The research confirms the embodiment view of language, the premise that we experience and construe our world through our bodies. It also proves the centrality of our cultural experience in shaping our conception of the world, which is inevitably reflected in terms of language.

The analysis of idioms along the lines described above is likely to make it easier for students to learn idioms. Metaphorical analysis enhances language learning since it involves comparing one's native idioms to their target counterparts, which has proven to be empirically valid based on previous studies (e.g., K  m  r &   imen, 2009) that demonstrated that students are likely to be more motivated to learn idioms when they discover the similarities and differences between source and target languages and cultures, and that CMT-based awareness-raising activities can enhance the use of idiomatic expressions in terms of production (productive capacity) and reception (reading/listening comprehension).

What our analysis does is that it illustrates the primary cognitive basis for this group of idioms is very similar and the main difference is based on some cultural and linguistic nuances. Familiarization with the conceptual system of each language is made possible through the explanation of the conceptual metaphors above. Based on our analysis, the following table can show L2 syllabus designers and curriculum developers a flavor of the conceptual, cultural and linguistic similarities and differences between Arabic and English, illustrating the primary basis of the conceptual metaphor and how this is permeated by culture and language (cultural/linguistic differences) and examples of the resulting output idioms.

Table 1. Summary of the conceptual metaphors of patience in English and Arabic

Conceptual Metaphor	Primary Basis	Cultural/Linguistic Differences	Output Idioms (Illustrative Examples)
<b>PATIENCE IS HARDNESS</b>	DIFFICULTY IS HARDNESS; HARDSHIP IS HEAVINESS; DIFFICULTIES ARE OPPONENTS; FUNCTIONALITY/VIABILITY IS ERECTNESS	Arabic: more physical terms; environmental images of "mountain" and "fortress", "rock".  English: not very detailed and figurative; agony of having to control; up position for endurance	Salbu l-3uud (صـلب العـود) (Lit. A man of powerful physique); huwa Salbu l-mu3jam (هو صـلب المعـجم) (Lit. He is of powerful body); ka?anna-hu Tawdun mina l-?aTwaad (كـأنه طـود من الأطـواد) (Lit. He is like one of the mountains); huwaa fii f-jadaa?idi Saxratu waad (هو في الشـدائد صـخرة واد) (Lit. At hardships he is as hard as the rock of the valley)  grin and bear it; grit your teeth; sit tight; stand for it.
<b>PATIENCE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER</b>	BODY IS A CONTAINER; EMOTION IS FORCE; EMOTIONS ARE FLUIDS	Arabic: relate enough patience to an adequate supply of fluid; no overflowing of the "vessel" of anger fluid; multi-perspective image of exhaustion.	nafida Sabru-h (نفـد صـبره) (Lit. His patience ran out); nazafa Sabru-h (نزف صـبره) (Lit. His patience drained"); naDaba S-STibaru-h (نـضب اصـطباره) (Lit. his great patience seeped away)  faaDa l-kayl (فاض الكـيل) (Lit. the vessel overflowed).



<b>PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS</b>	<b>BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS; QUANTITY IS SIZE</b>	English: relate lack of patience to liquid exhaustion; no overflowing of anger liquid; has more attributes of patience.	His patience is <i>exhausted</i> ; they have had it <i>up to here</i> ; <i>great/endless/infinite patience</i> .
		Arabic: wider range and more figurative; expanded/constricted breast; heart; ways; paths; earth; world; environmental/cultural images	waasi3u finaa'i S-Sadr (واسع فناء الصدر) (Lit. His body breast area is wide); baalin waasi3; lababin raxii (بال واسع) (a large heart); Daaqa Sadru-h (ضاق صدره) (Lit. His breast became too narrow); Daaqat bi-hi l-ma āahib (ضاقت به المذاهب) (Lit. His roads became too narrow); Daaqat 3alayhi l-?arDu ضاقت عليه الأرض (Lit. The earth with all its vastness became too narrow); ?aDyaqi min kaffati 7aabil (أضيّق من كفة حابل) (Lit. narrower than the meshes of hunter's net); ?adyaqau min sammi l-xyaaT (أضيّق من سم الخياط) (Lit. narrower than the eye of the needle).
		English: since <b>PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS</b> is not as detailed and figurative as in Arabic, full awareness has to be raised to the cross-linguistic differences.	He is a big-hearted man; a narrow-minded and narrow-hearted person.

The table above asserts Boers' observation that the notion of conceptual metaphor can help explain and motivate figurative idioms which may appear to be arbitrary and incomprehensible (2003, p. 231). It shows how patience idioms can all be subsumed under two or three secondary metaphors (i.e., **PATIENCE IS HARDNESS**, **PATIENCE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER**, and **PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS**) and how they relate to each other.

The table above, as well as the whole study, elucidates fully the physical basis of idioms, the correspondence between the source domain and the target domain, and how they culturally interact. This is likely to help make classes more interactive and more efficient, as was evident elsewhere (cf. Cooper, 1998). It also asserts basic facts in Boers' review study (2011) in which he concluded that CMT and subsequent literature:

demonstrated that a lot of so-called idiomatic language was actually far less random and less arbitrary than had long been assumed... The idea that the semantics of idioms, phrasal verbs and figuratively used words in general might be explainable with reference to general conceptual metaphors held a certain promise for language pedagogy, because it suddenly looked as though great chunks of language which had hitherto seemed un-teachable could be made easier to learn after all. (p. 227-228)

The analysis given in the study can enable language teachers to teach the unteachable by finding ways to explain the previously unanalyzeable idioms; it may guide teachers to take into account that **PATIENCE IS HARDNESS**, for example, is basic to both languages, and that while the English experience of hardness is to "bite the bullet", "grit one's teeth", etc, the Arabic experience of hardness is to "grit one's two molars" and to be "like a mountain" (Tawdun mina l-?aTwaad), etc. Also the same holds true for **PATIENCE IS LIQUID IN A CONTAINER** within which the idioms of patience is *exhausted*, *keep* patience, *lose* patience, *have had enough*, can be explained.

By explaining the motivation behind idiomatic expressions and recognizing the underlying conceptual metaphors, it is possible to induce insightful learning, which is more outstanding than rote learning; this method of idiom presentation can even empower students to work out more readily the meaning of newly L2 figurative phrases (Kovecses & Szabo, 1996, p. 351). For instance, by conceptually explaining idioms such as “sweat it out!” learners can more readily guess the meaning of “ride it out”. Likewise, “grin and bear it” can give learners some hints about the possible significance of “give me strength” since they belong to the same conceptual domain. Also, for students of Arabic as a second or a foreign language (ASL/AFL), understanding the mountainous image of “Tawdun mina l-ʔaTwaad” (he is like one of the mountains) can help students to have access to other similar idioms, e.g., huwaa fii adaaidi Saxratu waad (هو في الشدائد صخرة واد) (At hardships he is as hard as the rock of the valley); waqratur fii Saxrah (وقرة في صخرة) (a small rift in a rock); furthermore understanding “tada3a-t 7uSunu Sabri-h” (تداعت حصون صبره) (The fortress of his patience fell) is likely to offer learners some clues to grasp such figurative idioms as “dukka-t ʔaswaari Sabri-h” (دكت أسوار صبره) (The fences of his patience were pounded) and “muzziqat kataaʔibu Sabri-h” (مزقت كتائب صبره) (His battalions of patience were destroyed). The nice match that we observe in this analysis between Arabic and English as regards PATIENCE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor can be of great assistance in teaching these idioms to ESL/EFL and AFL/ASL students.

The CMT analysis given above has the value of explaining the metaphorical nature of idioms and drawing attention to the concrete meaning of words and stimulating mental imagery and making vocabulary more memorable (Boers, 2000a, p. 563). For example, patience in Arabic can be thought of in terms of physical power as represented by the expressions Salbu l-3uud (صلب العود), Salbu l-mu3jam (صلب المعجم), or in terms of mountains Tawdun mina l-ʔaTwaad (هو كأنه طود من الأطواد) or to think of patience as being a fortress tada3a-t 7uSuunu Sabri-h (تداعت حصون صبره), dukka-t ʔaswaari Sabri-h (دكت أسوار صبره); in English we can invoke the images associated with patience as somebody gritting his teeth, ginning in the face of hardships or sitting tight or keeping his shirt on. The same holds good for PATIENCE IS A FLUID and PATIENCE IS SPACIOUSNESS.

The CMT analysis is also capable of raising awareness of some cultural explanation connected with some idioms, which is a necessary part of pedagogical planning relevant to idiom teaching. For example, the English expression “bite the bullet” sheds light on a certain practice that is used in the English culture; the expressions related to rock, mountains, fortresses, knots, fences equally refer to specific cultural realities in Arabic. This CMT-based analysis, thus, opens a window into language culture and unravels mysteries behind expressions that have long been seen to be arbitrary by language learning specialists.

This type of conceptual analysis of idiom is likely to enhance what has been referred to as *conceptual* fluency (Danesi, 1995; Samani & Hashemian, 2012). Many researchers (Boers, 1999; Lazar, 1996; Liu, 2008) present multiple activities that can raise L2 learners’ metaphoric awareness which would translate comparisons and correspondences like the ones included in this study into practical classroom activities, e.g., association of idioms with mental images; idiom notebooks and flashcards; idiom games; illustrated story-telling involving conceptual metaphors, origin-of-the-idiom exercises, etc.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the preceding discussion has led us to support the view that indeed metaphors are rife in our everyday language and that conceptual metaphors are the outcome of the interaction between body and culture. The paper supports the cultural embodied cognition position. While the universality principle generically manifests itself at one level of conceptualization, there exist some cultural/language-specific construals stemming from cultural particularities. As we have found out, Arabic and English patience idioms emanate from almost identical primary bases; however, idioms might differ based on varying cultural assumptions and language-specific variations which result in diverse idiomatic expressions. The conceptual analysis of patience idioms within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory has proven this theory to be an effective tool for language analysis and learning. The CMT-based analysis presented in the study validates the claims of the conceptual account of idioms versus the traditional linguistic account, and offers great potential for enhancing language learners’ conceptual fluency and explaining language chunks that have long been assumed to be random and arbitrary.

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## Appendix

### List of the Phonemic Symbols Used In the Study

#### I. CONSONANTS

b	voiced bilabial stop
t	voiceless dental stop
T	voiceless (emphatic) dental stop
d	voiced dental stop
D	voiced (emphatic) dental stop
k	voiceless velar stop
q	voiceless uvular stop
ʔ	voiceless glottal stop
j	voiced palatal affricate
ʒ	voiced pharyngeal fricative
ʁ	voiced velar fricative
f	voiceless labio-dental fricative
θ	voiceless inter-dental fricative
ð	voiced inter-dental fricative
ḏ	voiced (emphatic) inter-dental fricative
s	voiceless dental fricative
S	voiceless (emphatic) dental fricative
z	voiced dental fricative
ʃ	voiceless palatal fricative
x	voiceless uvular fricative
ħ	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
h	voiceless laryngeal fricative
r	voiced dental trill
l	voiced lateral dental
m	voiced bilabial nasal
n	voiced dental nasal
w	voiced bilabial glide

y      voiced palatal glide

## **II. VOWELS**

i      short high front unrounded vowel

ii     long high front unrounded vowel

a      short central unrounded vowel

aa     long low central unrounded vowel

u      short high back rounded vowel

uu     long high back rounded vowel

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