



Components of Emotional Meaning: A sourcebook

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CHAPTER

21 Finno-Ugric emotions: The meaning of anger in Estonian and Finnish

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Abstract

This article compares the meaning of the emotion concept *anger* between representatives of two linguistically and culturally similar countries: Estonia and Finland. Because the term *viha* means ‘*anger*’ in Estonian but ‘*hate*’ in Finnish, a further aim of the study was to examine the extent to which the Estonian and the Finnish *viha* actually correspond to each other. The choice of term was based on previous research suggesting that *viha* is the most cognitively salient term in both languages in terms of this particular emotion concept (Tuovila, 2005; Vainik, 2002b). Results show that the meaning of the emotion term ‘*anger*’ in Estonian and Finnish is very similar but that emotion meaning profiles are even more similar for the word *viha*. We conclude that emotion concepts repertoires may vary across cultures and languages and that emotion terms in English are not always easily translatable into other languages.

Keywords: [anger](#), [hate](#), [Estonian language](#), [Finnish languages](#)

Subject: [Developmental Psychology](#), [Social Psychology](#)

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We cannot say anything about “anger” if we don’t know what we are talking about, and to know what we are talking about we must first analyse the meaning of the word anger (Wierzbicka, 1999a, p. 28).

Anger appears to be one of the most thoroughly studied basic emotions both in the field of psychology and that of cognitive linguistics. There are equivalents for the word “anger” in nearly all major languages of the world (Mesquita, Frijda, & Scherer, 1997). In a study that sought emotion nomenclature universals, it was found that emotion categories were added in a relatively similar generalized sequence in most languages, with anger being among the first labeled (Hupka, Lenton, & Hutchison, 1999). To our knowledge, there is only one society—the Utkuhikhalingmiut (“Utku”) Eskimos—that does not have a special word for anger (Briggs, 1970).

Furthermore, lexically equivalent words for anger have been shown to involve comparable appraisal patterns in languages and cultures as diverse as Dutch, Japanese, and Indonesian, which could be summarized as “the

experience of something unpleasant and that has obstructed one's reaching one's goals, which event was felt to be unfair but inevitable, and for which someone else is to blame" (Frijda, Markam, Sato, & Wiers, 1995, p. 139). If one becomes angry, one should experience body heat, internal pressure, redness in the face and neck area, agitation, and interference with accurate perception (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987). The central conceptual metaphor for "anger" appears to be that "anger is the heat of a fluid in a container" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 383; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987, p. 198). The suggestion is that we see people as containers for emotions and the process of anger as the build up of heat in a fluid in these containers, which may then explode.

However, when someone becomes angry, he or she may express anger within the limits of a variety of culturally prescribed scenarios. Cultures may differ from one another in the degree of anger that is allowed to be expressed (e.g., "anger out") compared to how much anger one is meant to keep to oneself (e.g., "anger in"). For instance, it has been suggested that the expression of anger is quite acceptable in individualist cultures but more suppressed in collectivist cultures (Chon, Kim, & Ryoo, 2000).

Situations that induce anger have also been found to be rather universal (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). Wherever and whenever something happens that is felt to be unfair and for which someone else is to blame or which keeps people from reaching their desired goal, anger is likely to occur. For instance, perceived injustice was found to play a key role in the elicitation of negative emotion, including anger, in 37 countries (Mikula, Scherer, & Athenstaedt, 1998). Furthermore, anger has a facial expression (Ekman, Sorenson, & Friesen, 1969) as well as a nonverbal emotional vocalization (Sauter, Eisner, Ekman, & Scott, 2010) that can be recognized across cultures. Thus, anger appears to be one of the most fundamental human emotions to have emerged consistently across time and culture (Chon, 2002).

In the present study, we explore differences in the meaning of anger between representatives of two linguistically and culturally similar countries, Estonia and Finland. Anger (*viha*) proved to be the most typical Estonian example for this emotion category (Vainik & Orav, 2005) and the third most frequent emotion term in Finnish (Tuovila, 2005).

21.1 Languages studied

The Estonian and Finnish languages belong to the Finnic group of the Finno-Ugric language family.² They are the largest of the Finnic languages, with the smaller ones being Karelian, Veps, Votian, Ingrian, and Livonian. These languages are descendants of a common protolanguage probably spoken until about 2,000 years ago. Approximately one million people speak Estonian as a native language today. Most of them live in the Republic of Estonia, which lies on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland, the eastern most part of the Baltic Sea. Finnish is spoken to the north of the Gulf of Finland, in an area extending some 1,300 kilometres north from the shores of the Baltic Sea and has about five million native speakers (Abondolo, 2006; Laakso, 2001).

Metslang (2009) compared Estonian to Finnish and both languages to the Standard Average European (SAE) languages, the nucleus of which includes French and German, as well as all the Romance, Germanic, Slavic, and Baltic languages, Albanian, Greek, and Hungarian. These languages each include at least five out of twelve SAE features. The main characteristics of SAE can be said to be only modestly represented in Estonian and Finnish; with both languages revealing no more than two features, they do not really belong to the SAE language group (Haspelmith, 2001). However, in spite of the fact that the grammars of Estonian and Finnish are very similar in terms of their principal features and that they also share a great deal of lexis, Estonian—most likely due to historical twists and turns—has drifted somewhat away from Finnish and the rest of the Finnic languages (Metslang, 2009). As such, being closely related, yet somewhat different, Estonian and Finnish provide an interesting case to study in the framework of emotion analysis.

21.2 Anger in Estonian and Finnish

The English word “anger” translates into Estonian and Finnish as *viha* (Estonian) and *suuttuminen* (Finnish). However, the word “hate” translates into Estonian and Finnish as *vihkamine* and *viha*, respectively. So, one can see that the same word *viha* appears in both languages but it is used to translate different English emotion terms (i.e., “anger” in Estonian and “hate” in Finnish).

p. 330 Being close relatives, one would expect at first sight that if there are words in both languages that are etymologically of the same origin, like the word *viha*, the meaning would also be the same. Etymologically, the word *viha* came to these languages long ago from the Proto-Aryan word **viša* meaning “poison, bile.” Its meaning has actually been, until very recently, “bitter” or “acrid.” Yet, although *viha* is the most cognitively salient emotion term in both Estonian and Finnish (Tuovila, 2005; Vainik, 2002a, 2002b)—it comes up most frequently and most prominently when informants are asked to attempt free listing of some emotion category—it appears to carry somewhat different meanings in the two languages.

According to the *Dictionary of the Estonian Language* (*Eesti keele seletav sõnaraamat*), *viha* is “an intense feeling which is mixed with hostility and irritation; strong distress or intolerance.”³ However, Vainik and Orav (2005, p. 12) propose that the Estonian word *viha* could, in fact, have two meanings. The first meaning, which they translate as “anger,” they believe to be “a relatively short-term intrapersonal state of mind (not necessarily targeted at a human object, as the object might be e.g., a situation, an incidence or quasiliving).” It stands in opposition to *rõõm* “joy,” another relatively short-term and basically intrapersonal emotion, and is synonymous with *vihastamine* “growing angry” or “getting frustrated.” The second meaning of the word *viha* they translate as “anger, hate.” It is said to stand in opposition to *armastus* “love” and be synonymous with *vihkamine* “hate, hatred.” This meaning is defined as being long-term or infinite and the emotion is probably also more interpersonal, that is, targeted at or related to a live human object. In the current project, *hate* was translated as *vihkamine* in Estonian.

In Finnish, however, the simple underived emotion term *viha* was chosen as the translational equivalent of the term “hate”. The *Dictionary of Modern Finnish* (*Nykysuomen sanakirja*) defines *viha* as follows: “an intense and lasting feeling of antipathy or anger toward something or someone.”⁴ This clearly approximates the second meaning given by Vainik and Orav (2005) for the Estonian word *viha*. As the word *viha* was chosen as the translational equivalent for the GRID term “hate” in Finnish, we had to find another word for the term “anger”. We chose *suuttuminen*, the exact meaning of which is “to fall into sudden and heated (sometimes unrestrained or blind) indignation or anger, to get angry”⁵ (*Nykysuomen sanakirja*). The choice of Finnish term was based on the assumption that “anger” involves a sudden release of internal pressure (Lakoff, 1987), while “hate” lasts longer and tends to be more profound.

21.3 Aims of the study

In the present paper, we compare the meaning of the emotion term “anger” (*viha* in Estonian; *suuttuminen* in Finnish) in the two languages across different components of emotions (e.g., action tendencies or emotion regulation). Because the term *viha* was the translational equivalent of “anger” in Estonian and “hate” in Finnish, another aim of the study was to examine the extent to which the Estonian and the Finnish *viha* actually correspond to each other. Finally, we are interested in finding out the emotion features most likely related to the experience of anger in both Estonian and Finnish.

21.4 Questionnaire

We used a questionnaire originally constructed in English, the GRID instrument (see Chapter 5, cf. also Fontaine, Scherer, Roesch, & Ellsworth, 2007). The GRID is based on the componential emotion theory; the basic assumption of this is that an emotion is to be conceptualized as a process that consists of a synchronization of activity in several emotion components as a response to specific events, with the aim of preparing the organism quickly for optimal reaction (Scherer, 1987). The GRID consists of 24 emotion terms and 144 emotion features. The 24 terms are prototypical emotion terms commonly used in both emotion research and daily language: being hurt, sadness, shame, guilt, compassion, disappointment, love, contentment, happiness, pride, pleasure, joy, interest, surprise, despair, stress, anxiety, fear, jealousy, hate, irritation, anger, disgust, and contempt.

The 144 emotion features operationalize activity in each of the five emotion components. Thirty-one features refer to appraisals, 18 to physiological/bodily experiences, 26 to expression, 40 to action tendencies and 22 to subjective feelings. Additional four features refer to regulation and three more (“general”) represent other qualities, such as frequency and social acceptance. The English GRID instrument was translated into Estonian and Finnish using the translation/back-translation procedure (see Chapter 6).

The GRID questionnaire was administered by way of a controlled Web study in which each participant was given four emotions randomly chosen from the set of 24 and was asked to rate each in terms of the 144 emotion features. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood that each of the 144 emotion features would be inferred when a speaker of their native language, as spoken in their country or region, uses the emotion term to describe an emotional experience, using a nine-point scale ranging from *extremely unlikely* (1) to *extremely likely* (9).

21.5 Participants

Estonian sample. The Estonian sample consisted of 179 participants (152 women and 27 men), most of whom (93%) were undergraduate or graduate students from the University of Tartu. The mean age of the participants was 22.9 years ($SD = 5.7$). One hundred and seventy participants (95%) spoke Estonian and nine participants Russian as their first language. Twenty-eight respondents (22 women and six men; mean age, 22.8 years; $SD = 4.0$) were asked to rate “anger” (*viha*) and 28 respondents (22 women and six men; mean age, 26.3 years; $SD = 8.4$) were asked to rate “hate” (*vihkamine*) in terms of the 144 emotion features.

The instructions were given in Estonian and the participants completed the Estonian version of the GRID questionnaire. The online survey was advertised via email and was posted on Internet electronic mailing lists for students of the University of Tartu. Data were collected from March until October 2008.

Finnish sample. The Finnish sample consisted of 120 respondents (101 women and 19 men) with a mean age of 32.8 years ($SD = 11.6$). The youngest respondent was 19 and the oldest was 68 years old. The questionnaire was sent to as many university email lists as possible. These included lists for students at various departments and two for research units (The Research Unit for Variation, Contacts, and Change in English and the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies) at the University of Helsinki, a list for psychology students at the University of Tampere, and a domestic “Linguist List” called Kitu. The questionnaire was advertised until 120 people had completed it. The data were collected from April to June 2008. Fourteen respondents (12 women and two men; mean age, 33.6 years; $SD = 13.7$) were asked to rate “anger” (*suuttuminen*) and 23 respondents (21 women and two men; mean age, 27.7 years; $SD = 7.3$) were asked to rate “hate” (*viha*) in terms of the 144 emotion features.

21.6 Results

How similar are the meanings of the emotion terms “anger” (*viha* vs *suuttuminen*) and “hate” (*vihkamine* vs *viha*) in Estonian and Finnish? To answer this question, we calculated profile agreements between the Estonian and Finnish samples for both emotion terms across five emotion components: appraisal, physiological/bodily experiences, expression, action tendencies, and subjective feeling.

Profile agreement was calculated as the intraclass correlation (ICC) across category items, using the double entry method (Griffin & Gonzalez, 1995). Double-entry intraclass correlations are similar to Pearson correlations, but they are sensitive to differences in profile elevation as well as shape (McCrae, 2008). The *p* value is based on the nondoubled *n*.

For the emotion term “anger,” intraclass correlations (ICCs) between the Estonian and Finnish samples were all positive, ranging from 0.77 (action tendencies) to 0.94 (subjective feeling), with a median value of 0.86. In the case of “hate,” ICCs ranged from 0.85 (bodily experiences and action tendencies) to 0.91 (subjective feeling), with a median value of 0.86. All ICCs were statistically significant at *p* < 0.001. For both “anger” and “hate,” the differences between the Estonian and Finnish samples appear to be biggest for the emotion component action tendencies and smallest in the case of subjective feeling (see Table 21.1; first two columns).

Table 21.1 Anger and hate: Profile agreement (ICC) between Estonian and Finnish Samples

	n	Anger	Hate	Viha vs viha
Appraisal	31	0.86	0.90	0.94
Bodily reaction	18	0.91	0.85	0.97
Expression	26	0.87	0.87	0.89
Action tendency	40	0.77	0.85	0.87
Feeling	22	0.94	0.91	0.94
Median		0.87	0.87	0.94

Note: ICC = Intraclass correlation (double entry method). *n* = number of individual features in an emotion component. All correlations are significant at *p* < 0.001. “Anger” – *viha* (in Estonian), *suuttuminen* (in Finnish). “Hate” – *vihkamine* (in Estonian), *viha* (in Finnish).

However, ICCs between the Estonian and Finnish samples for *viha* (“anger” in Estonian vs “hate” in Finnish) were even higher, ranging from 0.87 (action tendencies) to 0.97 (bodily experiences), with a median value of 0.94. These high correlations show that profiles of emotion meanings in Estonian and Finnish are indeed very similar for the word *viha*. Ratings of the word *viha* in Estonian and Finnish across the most similar (i.e., bodily experiences) and most different (i.e., action tendencies) emotion categories are depicted in Figure 21.1 and Figure 21.2, respectively.

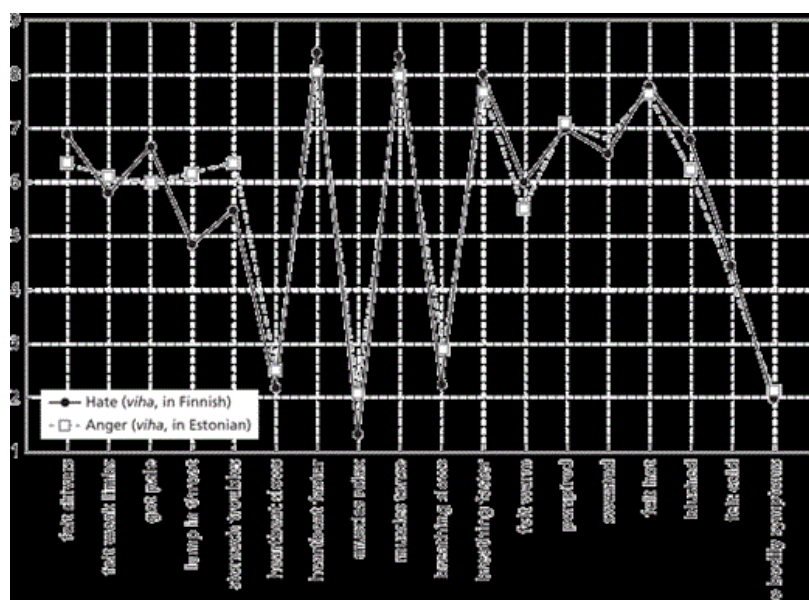


Figure 21.1 Ratings of the word *viha* across the emotion component “Bodily experiences” in Estonian and Finnish. Solid lines show the profile of the emotion term “hate” (*viha* in Finnish); dotted lines show the profile of the emotion term “anger” (*viha* in Estonian). The ICC between the Estonian and the Finnish ratings = 0.97 ($p < 0.001$).

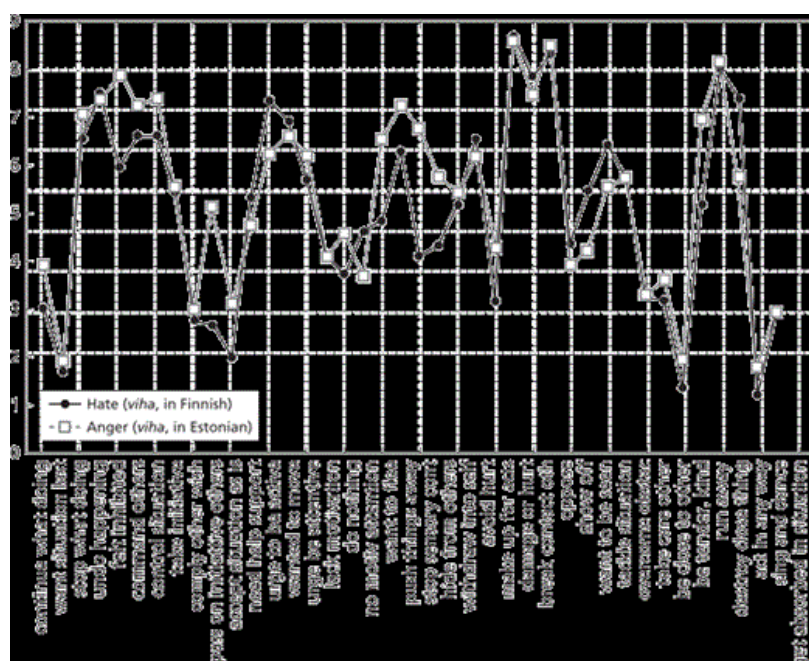


Figure 21.2 Ratings of the word *viha* across the emotion component “Action tendencies” in Estonian and Finnish. Solid lines show the profile of the emotion term “hate” (*viha* in Finnish); dotted lines show the profile of the emotion term “anger” (*viha* in Estonian). The ICC between the Estonian and Finnish ratings = 0.87 ($p < 0.001$).

To investigate the differences between the words we used visual hypothesis testing with confidence intervals as described in Chapter 5. For both the words for “anger” (*viha* in Estonian and *suuttuminen* in Finnish) and for *viha* (“anger” in Estonian and “hate” in Finnish), there were only seven ratings out of 144 for which the confidence intervals for the Finnish and Estonian means did not overlap. In other words, there were only seven rating features for both emotion terms for which the means were different at the $p < 0.01$ level. The means of those features are shown in Table 21.2. Five of the seven features overlapped for the comparison of *viha* vs *suuttuminen* and *viha* vs *viha*. If an Estonian-speaking person uses the word *viha* to describe his/her emotional

experience, she or he is more likely than a Finnish-speaking person who uses either the word *viha* (“hate”) or *orsuuttuminen* (“anger”) to have an assertive voice (expression), to feel inhibited or blocked, to hand over the initiative to someone else, to stop sensory contact (action tendencies), and to feel at ease (feeling). When experiencing *viha*, Estonian-speaking persons are also believed to have the urge to run away in whatever direction (action tendency) and to be changed in a lasting way (general) compared to Finns experiencing *suuttuminen*. Finally, if a Finnish-speaking person uses the word *viha* to describe his/her emotional experience, she or he is more likely than an Estonian-speaking person experiencing *viha* to speak more slowly (expression) and to control the intensity of one’s emotional feeling (regulation).

Table 21.2 Mean scores of the different emotion features of the emotion terms “anger” and “hate” for the Estonian and Finnish samples

No	Emotion Component	Anger						Hate							
		Finnish (<i>suuttuminen</i>)						Estonian (<i>viha</i>)							
		LCI	M	UCI					LCI	M	UCI	LCI	M	UCI	
Expression															
#67	had an assertive voice	2.79	4.36	6.07	6.63	7.63	8.41	4.26	5.52	6.65					
#74	spoke slower				1.84	2.50	3.16	3.13	4.26	5.22					
Action Tendency															
#80	felt inhibited or blocked	3.71	5.00	6.43	7.41	7.84	8.28	4.48	5.91	7.26					
#85	wanted to hand over the initiative to someone else	1.64	2.86	4.00	4.03	5.09	6.16	1.78	2.65	3.83					
#96	wanted to prevent or stop sensory contact	3.00	4.00	4.86	5.59	6.72	7.66	2.61	4.09	5.30					
#111	wanted to run away in whatever direction	3.07	4.43	5.71	5.91	6.91	7.78								
Feeling															
#121	felt at ease	1.14	1.50	1.93	1.94	2.72	3.69	1.13	1.39	1.78					
Regulation															
#138	tried to control the intensity of the emotional feeling				3.97	5.09	6.00	6.00	7.13	8.04					
General															
#142	will be changed in a lasting way	2.21	3.21	4.14	4.28	5.22	6.16								

Note: *LCI* = lower confidence interval; *UCI* = upper confidence interval. Means are different at the $p < 0.01$ level.

21.7 What is anger?

p. 334 What are the most likely emotion features related to the experience of anger in Estonian and Finnish? Across all 144 features, the Spearman R between the mean ratings of “anger” and *viha* in Estonian and Finnish were $R = 0.85$ and 0.89 , respectively (both correlations significant at $p < 0.01$). Table 21.3 shows the 15 most characteristic features of the emotion term “anger” for Estonians (*viha*) and Finns (*suuttuminen*) as well as for the emotion term “hate” in Finnish (*viha*). For *viha* vs *suuttuminen* and *viha* vs *viha*, there are 7 and 11 overlapping features in the list of the 15 most frequently associated emotion features in Estonian and Finnish, respectively. This and the abovementioned Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients confirm earlier findings that the meaning of the emotion term *viha* in Estonian and Finnish is more similar than the meaning of the word “anger” (*viha* vs *suuttuminen*) in the two languages.

Table 21.3 Means of the 15 most frequently mentioned emotion features for “anger” and “hate” in Estonian and Finnish

No	Anger				Hate							
	#	Cat	Finnish (suuttuminen)	M	#	Cat	Estonian (viha)	M	#	Cat	Finnish (viha)	M
1	38	BR	heartbeat getting faster ^{EV}	8.50	101	AT	wanted to do damage, hit, or say something that hurts ^{FS, FV}	8.56	101	AT	wanted to do damage, hit, or say something that hurts ^{EV}	8.65
2	123	F	felt negative ^{EV}	8.50	103	AT	wanted to oppose ^{FV}	8.44	123	F	felt negative ^{EV}	8.44
3	42	BR	breathing getting faster	8.21	59	E	produced abrupt body movements	8.28	38	BR	heartbeat getting faster ^{EV}	8.40
4	64	E	increased the volume of voice ^{EV}	8.07	64	E	increased the volume of voice ^{FS, FV}	8.22	29	A	treated unjustly ^{EV}	8.39
5	40	BR	muscles tensing (whole body) ^{EV}	8.07	29	A	treated unjustly ^{FS, FV}	8.13	40	BR	muscles tensing (whole body) ^{EV}	8.35
6	29	A	treated unjustly ^{EV}	8.07	112	AT	wanted to destroy whatever was close ^{FV}	8.13	103	AT	wanted to oppose ^{EV}	8.26
7	116	F	was in an intense emotional state ^{EV}	8.00	116	F	was in an intense emotional state ^{FS, FV}	8.13	116	F	was in an intense emotional state ^{EV}	8.13
8	14	A	caused by somebody else's behavior	7.93	71	E	changed the melody of her or his speech ^{FV}	8.06	42	BR	breathing getting faster	8.00
9	8	A	in itself unpleasant for the person	7.86	38	BR	heartbeat getting faster ^{FS, FV}	8.03	112	AT	wanted to destroy whatever was close ^{EV}	7.96
10	1	BR	blushed	7.64	40	BR	muscles tensing (whole body) ^{FS, FV}	7.97	46	BR	felt hot	7.78
11	54	E	frowned	7.64	123	F	felt negative ^{FS, FV}	7.94	54	E	frowned	7.78
12	46	BR	felt hot	7.64	73	E	spoke faster	7.94	64	E	increased the volume of voice ^{EV}	7.78
13	27	A	suddenly	7.64	136	F	felt nervous	7.88	52	E	pressed lips together ^{EV}	7.78

14	47	A	violated laws or socially accepted norms	7.64	52	E	pressed lips together ^{FV}	7.88	102	AT	wanted to break contact with others	7.78
15	101	AT	wanted to do damage, hit, or say something that hurts ^{EV}	7.64	80	AT	felt inhibited or blocked	7.84	71	E	changed the melody of her or his speech ^{EV}	7.67

Note: Cat = Emotion Category; A = Appraisal; AT = Action Tendency; BR = Bodily Reaction; E = Expression; F = Feeling. ^{EV} = Same feature as for the Estonian “anger” (*viha*); ^{FS} = Same feature as for the Finnish “anger” (*suuttuminen*); ^{FV} = Same feature as for the Finnish “hate” (*viha*).

If an Estonian or Finnish-speaking person uses the word *viha* to describe his or her emotional experience, what feelings, bodily expressions, or action tendencies are most likely to occur? As can be seen from Table 21.3, when experiencing *viha*, both Finns and Estonians are likely to have an urge to do damage, hit, or say something that hurts; to feel that he or she is treated unjustly; to have an urge to oppose; to be in an intense emotional state; to feel negative; to have an increasing heartbeat; to speak in a louder voice and have (whole body) muscle tension; to have an urge to destroy whatever is close; to press their lips together; and to change the melody of her or his speech. Finnish “anger” (*suuttuminen*), however, is much milder in its meaning. The things Finnish speakers report are most likely to occur when they feel *suuttuminen* are basically the same as what Estonians report when using the word *viha* but not as intense. This also supports the interpretation that dictionaries give about the meaning of these words.

21.8

Discussion

Although anger is allegedly recognized in nearly all cultures, both facially and vocally, and there are equivalents for the word “anger” in most languages of the world, the term “anger” is still a cultural artefact of one particular language and it may carry different meanings across different languages and cultures (Wierzbicka, 1999). As argued above, some languages do not have lexical and conceptual equivalents of the English term “anger” (e.g., Briggs, 1970) whereas, in other languages, there is more than one term which corresponds to “anger” in English. For instance, in Samoan, there are two terms which denote anger whereas Biblical Hebrew has seven such terms (Pavlenko, 2005). At the same time, there are languages (e.g., Ilongot and Ifaluk) where the same term is used to refer to both “anger” and “sadness” (Lutz, 1988; Rosaldo, 1980). This tells us that the repertoire of emotion concepts may vary across cultures and languages and that English emotion terms are not always easily translatable into other languages. Therefore, when we talk about emotion terms cross-culturally, it is crucial to describe what they actually mean for representatives of a different cultural or linguistic group—or, more specifically, what kind of appraisals, subjective experiences, action tendencies, expressions, and bodily changes accompany them.

Our results showed that the conceptual grid for describing the meaning of “anger” in two closely related Finno-Ugric languages—Estonian and Finnish—is in fact very similar. When feeling anger, both Finns and Estonians are likely to experience an intense negative emotional state, to feel that they have been treated unjustly, and to experience a variety of physiological changes, such as increasing heartbeat, muscle tension, and louder volume of voice. This is consistent with previous results which have shown that increased heartbeat and tense muscles are among the most frequently reported symptoms of anger (for 49% and 43% of anger episodes, respectively) in 27 different countries (Wallbott & Scherer, 1988).

Yet, as shown by our analyses, the meaning of the emotion term *viha* (“anger” in Estonian, “hate” in Finnish) is even more similar than the meaning of the translation of the word “anger” (*viha* in Estonian and *suuttuminen* in Finnish) in the two languages. The most frequently mentioned emotion feature for experiencing *viha* in both Estonian and Finnish is an urge to do damage, hit, or say something that hurts. This finding corresponds well to the cognitive linguistic view of anger, according to which anger needs to be vented or released in order to reduce the intensity of the inner negative emotional pressure (Lakoff, 1987). Thus, our findings seem to suggest that the word *viha* in Finnish may be a conceptually closer equivalent to the English term “anger” than the term *suuttuminen*, which was chosen as the linguistic equivalent for the current study. More specifically, it appears that the Finnish term *suuttuminen* refers to a milder emotion (such as irritation, for instance) than the Finnish or the Estonian *viha*.

In line with previous findings (see Pavlenko, 2005, for more information), our results show that anger, which is referred to with a single term in English, may be lexically differentiated in other languages, such as Estonian and Finnish. In other words, our results show that the semantic field of emotions appears to be differently divided up in English, Estonian, and Finnish. In two closely related languages—Estonian and Finnish—the boundary between the close emotions anger and hate is not drawn in exactly the same place as in English nor is it even in the same place in Finnish and Estonian. In Estonian, only *viha* could be used as a conceptual and lexical equivalent to the English term “anger”. In Finnish, however, both “anger” and “hate” could be translated as *viha*. Yet, the common linguistic heritage of Estonian and Finnish can be seen in the meaning of the words—in this case, the word *viha*—even though the languages and the meanings have drifted apart somewhat in the course of the history. Thus, as argued by Wierzbicka (1999a), even an “apparently basic and innocent concept like anger is in fact linked with a certain cultural model and so cannot be taken for granted as a ‘culture-free’ analytical tool or as a universal standard for describing ‘human emotions’ ” (p. 32). Our findings illustrate how important it is for psychologists to take into account the richness and variability of word meaning. They also show that psychology in general, and the GRID paradigm in particular, may help linguists achieve a fuller understanding of emotion terms.

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Notes

- 1 Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Anu Realo, Department of Psychology, University of Tartu, Tiigi 78, Tartu 50410, Estonia. email: anu.realo@ut.ee.
- 2 There are three other language groups in Finno-Ugric family, one being Ugric, in which the biggest language is Hungarian.

- 3 The translation is ours, the original being “vaenulikkuse ja ärritusega seotud tugev tunne, äge pahameel v. sallimatus.”
- 4 The translation is ours, the original being “jotakuta tai jotakin kohtaan tunnettu voimakas ja kestävä vastenmielisyyys tai suuttumus.”
- 5 The translation is ours, the original being “joutua äkillisen, kiivaan (joskus hillittömän, silmittömän) pahastuksen, suuttumuksen valtaan, suutuksiin.”