

## THE CONCEPT OF “MOUTH” IN COGNITIVE AND LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES

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**Abstract.** *This article explores the cognitive and linguistic aspects of the concept “mouth” in English, Uzbek, and other languages. The study defines “mouth” as a universal concept reflecting both objective reality and social consciousness. It examines the structure of the concept, including its macro- and micro-fields, verbal and non-verbal attributes, as well as its semantic richness and multifunctionality. Special attention is given to the linguistic realizations of “mouth” in explanatory dictionaries, phraseological units, idioms, proverbs, and wise sayings. The article also analyzes derivative and compound forms of the lexeme, as well as its representation in word combinations, sentences, and texts. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of non-verbal expressions associated with the mouth (such as gestures and facial expressions) as integral components of communication.*

**Key words:** *mouth, concept, cognitive linguistics, verbalization, idioms, proverbs, phraseological units, English, Uzbek.*

The value of surrounding reality is primarily measured through a person — his body, feelings, needs, and interests. Human perception interprets the world as if it were created “in his own image and likeness,” making the individual both an observer and interpreter of reality. As a conscious subject, a person possesses knowledge, ideas, and a system of thoughts about objective reality, which guide his understanding and interactions with the environment. This system, referred to in different disciplines as a worldview, conceptual system, model, or image of the world, can be analyzed from multiple perspectives, including philosophical, linguistic, and cognitive approaches. In the process of cognition, a person actively observes phenomena, identifies their distinguishing traits, and compares or contrasts them with other objects or experiences. Such cognitive operations, including analysis, classification, and analogical reasoning, form the basis of acquiring knowledge about the world, illustrating that human understanding fundamentally begins with processes of comparison, contrast, and parallelism.

Within this framework, the concept of “mouth” can be defined as a structured set of positive, negative, or neutral evaluations that reflect both essential and secondary features of objective reality, preserved in the collective memory of language speakers, and represented as an emotional and conceptual image. This concept functions as a mental unit with significant status in the conceptual spheres of English, Uzbek, German, Russian, and other languages. Like other cognitive constructs, the concept of “mouth” possesses an internal organization composed of macro- and micro-fields. Its attributes, as held in individual or collective consciousness, are regarded as non-verbal conceptual attributes, while the communicatively relevant and language-expressed components are

treated as verbal conceptual attributes. This dual nature underscores the intricate relationship between cognition, language, and social-cultural context in shaping human understanding of concrete and abstract phenomena.

The linguistic features of the concept “mouth” — its content, communicative distinctiveness, and degree of expressiveness — vary across national languages. This is natural, as O.Q. Yusupov notes: “the nomenclature and content of concepts differ among nations depending on the development of the language (especially its lexical system and speech styles), culture, customs, and way of life.” Since the concept “mouth” is part of the conceptual world picture in English, Uzbek, and other languages, it shows both similarities and differences in terms of cognitive features, composition, distinctiveness, and its relations with other concepts. These differences become particularly clear when studied from a linguistic perspective. Therefore, it is important to group the defining features of the concept into a single nominative field and to determine the scope of its verbalizers and their distribution within the field.

The mouth, being essential for eating, drinking, and verbal communication, holds a special role among other organs (lips, tongue, teeth, palate, uvula). Its multifunctionality and semantic richness give it particular significance. The somatism “mouth” constitutes a fundamental part of this concept. From this perspective, the concept “mouth” has a universal status, reflecting key features of reality and conveying how social consciousness interprets and relates to it. In English and Uzbek explanatory dictionaries, the word “mouth” is defined and described differently. For instance, the *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Third edition) defines the noun “mouth” as follows:

1. Body part - the opening in the face of a person or animal, consisting of the lips and the field between them, or the field behind containing the teeth and the tongue: Open your mouth wide and say "Ah". You shouldn't put so much food in your mouth at once.
2. Opening - the opening of a narrow container, the opening of a hole or cave, or the place where a river flows into the sea: Quebec is at the mouth of the St Lawrence River. The mentioned dictionary provides verbal characteristics of the word —mouth||.
3. Verb [T]: to form words with the lips without making any sound: It looks to me as if the singers are only mouthing the words. [+speech] "Can we go?" mouthed Mary. I don't want to stand here listening to you mouthing (= saying in a way that is not sincere) excuses. The dictionary provides 22 idioms containing the word —mouth||as a noun and their meaning. Some of the examples below are taken from respective web-sites. For example: 1. born with a silver spoon in your mouth - to have a high social position and be rich from birth. (This expression is usually used to show resentment or disapproval) -Samantha was born with a silver spoon in her mouth; there's always someone to pay her bills if her inheritance isn't enough. 2. butter wouldn't melt in sb'smouth - when someone looks as if they would never do anything wrong, although you feel they might: -Tommy looked as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. 3. be foaming at the mouth - to be extremely angry: -The Almeida theatre's recent staging of the opera had critics foaming at the mouth. 4. put yourfoot in it( MAINLY US put yourfoot in yourmouth)

INFORMAL - to say something by accident which embarrasses or upsets someone: -I really put my foot in it with Alison. I had no idea she was divorced. 5. live (from) hand to mouth - to have just enough money to live on and nothing extra: -My father earned very little and there were four kids, so we lived from hand to mouth. 6. yourheart in yourmouth - If your heart is in your mouth, you are feeling extremely nervous: -My heart was in my mouth when I opened the letter. 7. (straight) from the horse's mouth - If you hear something (straight) from the horse's mouth, you hear it from the person who has direct personal knowledge of the matter: -If you don't believe me, go talk to him and hear it straight from the horse's mouth. It's true. 8. leave a bad taste in your mouth - If an experience leaves a bad taste in your mouth, you have an unpleasant memory of it: -I think we all felt he'd been treated very unfairly and it left a bad taste in our mouths. 9. Never look a gift horse in the mouth. Saying: said to advise someone not to refuse something good that is being offered. 10. put your money where your mouth is, informal: to show by your actions and not just your words that you support or believe in something. -The government might be obliged to put its money where its mouth is to prove its commitment. 11. be all mouth( UK also be all mouth and no trousers ) *informal*: to talk a lot about doing something but never do it: -He says he's going to complain to the manager, but I reckon he's all mouth. 12. be down in the mouth, Informal: to be sad, dejected; depressed; disheartened. -Ever since you lost your job, you have been looking very down in the mouth. 13. keep your mouth shut, Informal: to not talk about something: -I don't know whether to tell him what I know or keep my mouth shut. 14. make sb's mouth water - If the smell or sight of food makes your mouth water, it makes you want to eat it: -The smell of that bacon cooking is making my mouth water. 15. mouth to feed - someone, especially a new-born baby, who you must provide food for: -They've got three kids and the husband's just lost his job - the last thing they need is another mouth to feed. 16. open your mouth - to speak or start to speak: -Don't look at me - I never opened my mouth. 17. shoot your mouth off, informal: to talk too much in a loud and uncontrolled way: -It's just like Richard to go shooting his mouth off about other people's affairs. 18. shut yourmouth/face ( UK also shut your gob ) Slang: a rude and angry way of telling someone to stop talking: -He told me to shut my mouth or there'd be trouble. "You're a lazy slob!" "You shut your mouth (=Don't talk to me like that)!" 19. wash yourmouth out: Someone who has used a swear word might be told, humorously, to wash their mouth out (with soap, soapy water, etc.). 20. by word of mouth - in speech but not in writing: -All the orders were given by word of mouth so that no written evidence could be discovered later. 21. put words in/into sb's mouth - to suggest that someone meant one thing when really they meant another: - Stop putting words in my mouth - I didn't say you looked fat in the red dress - I merely said you looked very slim in the black! 22. take the words out of sb's mouth - to say something which another person was just about to say or which they were thinking: - "What a rude and obnoxious man!" "You took the words right out of my mouth!"

The analyses showed that besides basic words belonging to the noun and verb, there are compound and derivative words belonging to the noun, adjective and verb. Derivative

words belonging to the parts of speech: noun and adjective: 1) mouthful: (noun: 1. an amount of food or drink which fills your mouth, or which you put into your mouth at one time:-He only ate a few mouthfuls of meat. 2. a word or phrase that is difficult to pronounce or that has a lot of syllables): - I've always called myself Henny because it's less of a mouthful than Henrietta. 2) mouthing: N+ing (noun); 3) mouthy: N+Suff (adjective: inclined to talk a lot, especially in a cheeky way): - I swear, that's the mouthiest kid I've ever seen - he talks back to everybody! 4) mouthlike: N+Suff(adjective: of an opening that resembles a mouth): -A greenish fire burned in the mouthlike fireplace, and thirteen men sat at a long table, each staring at her. 5) mouthless: N+Suff (adjective: having no mouth or mouthlike opening): -Then there are tapeworms: eyeless, mouthless creatures that live in the intestines, stretching as long as sixty feet, made up of thousands of segments, each with its own male and female sex organs.

The word "mouth" in prepositional verb, in the function of adverb and adjective: mouth off -He's always mouthing off about the state of the roads. The analysis of factual materials showed that the concept of mouth is also verbalized through word combinations:-to close / shut one's mouth, to open one's mouth, to cram / stuff one's mouth (with food), rinse one's mouth, large mouth, mouth of hook, mouth of pipe, bell mouth, hole mouth, mouth of womb, cell mouth, crushing mouth, grasping mouth, imbibing mouth, inferior mouth, protractile mouth, shell mouth, subterminal mouth, superior mouth, terminal mouth, upward-pointing mouth, mouth of a bottle, mouth of the river, mouth of working, bell mouth, canal mouth, fish mouth, hook mouth, shaft mouth and etc. Russian linguist A.V. Kunin's dictionary Comprehensive English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary shows that the number of phraseological units with the "mouth" exceeds 50. Here are some examples:-The sight of the groaning board made his mouth water; -There was a strong wind yesterday and the yachts in the bay carried bones in their mouths; - "Come off the car, pardner," said one of the men in a voice meant to be conciliatory. \_You don't want to take the bread out of another man's mouth, do you?'-If she was my daughter I'd turn her up and tan her bottom for her' said Jessie indignantly. \_All that filthy language she uses. And she looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth'-Most of the young men and women had moved away. But the children and older people remained, moving, it seemed to me, like ghosts, wresting a hand-to-mouth existence from the sea with their patched-up boats and mended nets.

Proverbs and wise words or sayings are also included in the range of linguistic means of the concept of "mouth", as can be seen in the following examples: -The morning hour has gold in its mouth. -The mouth of an elderly man is without teeth, but never without words of wisdom.-The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.-We rest our legs, but never our mouths.-A closed mouth catches no flies.-Never look a gift horse in the mouth.-A filthy mouth will not utter decent language.-A silent mouth is sweet to hear.-Bees that have honey in their mouths have stings in their tails. Based on our observations, we came to the conclusion that simple, compound, complex sentences are among the verbalizers of the

concept of "mouth": For example, -He noticed again the set of her mouth. -It seemed that he had several times opened his mouth when alone with Richard after dinner, as if he had something on his mind, but had always shut it again, to Richard's extreme confusion, without saying anything. -He had pulled his pipe out of his mouth to say all this, and he now turned over on his other side and smoked again. [12, 165].-In her refusal to be enslaved to the species, her refusal to be –mother of human race,|| she closes her mouth on emptiness as, in Plath's words, –on a communion tablet. -Quiescent as he now sat, there was something about his nostril, his mouth, his brow, which, to my perceptions, indicated elements within either restless, or hard, or eager. -Oliver lay, covered with mud and dust, and bleeding from the mouth, looking wildly round upon the heap of faces that surrounded him, when the old gentleman was officiously dragged and pushed into the circle by the foremost of the pursuers. -The eyes, the head, the mouth; every feature was the same. -You shouldn't put so much food in your mouth at once.

A text, a higher syntactic unit, can also be a verbalizer of the concept of "mouth". In such cases, the composition of the text consists of at least two or more meaningfully connected sentences. For example, -I never said you should leave – don't put words in my mouth; -He has never worked hard for anything; he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His parents brought everything to him instead. -Somebody produced a quart bottle of beer and passed it round; it travelled from mouth to mouth to mouth, everyone taking a swig. -The words poured from his mouth. –You want to know why? Well so do I. –Jacobi'll be reassigned. I've got a plum job for him and his big mouth. -The old woman's mouth widened into a malicious smile as she looked at Raymond. His face flushed. He turned his head away and muttered something. "What's that you say, son?" "I don't want to speak to her." -There was a pause. Mrs. Boynton had frozen into a deadly immobility. At last she passed her tongue over her dry lips, her mouth opened. . . . Still for a moment no words came. "Go on," said Sarah encouragingly. "Say it! It doesn't matter what you say to me. But think over what I've said to you." -The sun was setting when Sarah came once more in sight of the camp. As she came nearer in the dim light, she could make out the grim figure of Mrs. Boynton still sitting in the mouth of the cave. Sarah shivered a little at the sight of that grim motionless figure.

At this point, it should be noted that there are also meanings expressed through different movements or states of the mouth (lips, tongue) (non-verbally) and that they are important as an important component of verbal communication: mouth shrug, down-mouth expression, upper lip biting, mouth stretching, mouth wide open, one side of mouth raised. The mouth shrug is basically the upside-down smile that nonverbally says, –I have nothing to say about this.|| And in close quarters, it may be used by itself and then carries the same message as the full shoulder shrug. The message is –I don't know, –It's nothing to do with me, or –I don't understand. A more permanent version of the mouth shrug is a way people may show they're unhappy, despondent, depressed, angry, or tense. *Upper lip biting* could indicate nervousness or anxiety. When we mouth stretch, we expose the bottom row of our clenched teeth while the corners of our mouth

stretch downward and to the side. We do this when we feel afraid or realize that we've made a mistake. It's often seen when someone forgets to bring something important, like when someone forgets to bring the power cable for their dead laptop for an important presentation. Mouth wide open: our lips tend to form a huge oval shape, similar to the letter O, when we feel surprised or are in agony. This behavior is universal across cultures, possibly shared with primates when they are alarmed. When someone raises one side of their mouth, it could indicate contempt.

The concept of "mouth" occupies a central place in human cognition and communication, reflecting both physical and social dimensions. Its significance is seen in its multifunctionality, semantic richness, and presence across languages and cultures. The study demonstrates that the concept has a structured internal organization with macro- and micro-fields, including verbal and non-verbal attributes. Linguistic expressions, idioms, proverbs, and texts reveal how the concept is verbalized and culturally interpreted. Non-verbal features, such as mouth gestures and facial expressions, further enrich its communicative role. Overall, understanding the concept "mouth" provides insight into the interaction between cognitive processes, language, and social consciousness, highlighting its universal and culture-specific characteristics.

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