

METAPHOR AND IMAGERY IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Abstract: *This article analyzes metaphorical expressions and imagery in Uzbek and English languages from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. The aim of the research is to identify the conceptual structure of metaphors in the cultures of both languages, their national characteristics, and universal patterns. The role of metaphor in linguistics, its various types, and functions in artistic text are examined. Using the comparative analysis method, the similarities and differences of metaphorical models in Uzbek and English languages are revealed. As a result, the importance of metaphor not only as an artistic device but also as a cognitive process was confirmed.*

Keywords: *Metaphor, imagery, cognitive linguistics, concept, national mentality, comparative analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

In the modern stage of linguistics, the issue of metaphor is studied not merely as an artistic stylistic device, but as a fundamental mechanism of human cognition. Metaphor (Greek *metaphora* – transfer) is the expression of one object or phenomenon by transferring the name of another based on similarity [1]. While traditional linguistics considered metaphor to be exclusive to poetic speech, the «Conceptual Metaphor Theory» developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson in the 1980s fundamentally changed these views.

Uzbek and English belong to different language families (Uzbek – Turkic, English – Germanic), and their cultural, historical, and geographical conditions differ sharply. Consequently, the metaphorical systems formed in these languages possess unique characteristics. While metaphors related to nature, farming, and human relations predominate in the Uzbek language, images pertaining to industry, maritime affairs, and individualism are more frequent in English.

The relevance of this article lies in the fact that in the era of globalization, cross-linguistic communication is intensifying, and accurately understanding and conveying metaphorical meanings in translation processes is becoming crucial. Studying the national characteristics of metaphorical images provides valuable material not only for linguistics but also for cultural studies and psycholinguistics.

The main object of the research is metaphorical expressions in Uzbek and English literary texts and phraseological units in general use. The subject is the cognitive nature and national identity of these metaphors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of metaphor has been at the center of philosophy and linguistics since ancient times. Aristotle, in his work *Poetics*, defined metaphor as «giving the thing a name

that belongs to something else» and considered it a sign of genius [2]. Later, during the Renaissance and subsequent eras, metaphor was viewed merely as a tool for decorating speech.

In the 20th century, interest in metaphor grew with the development of semantics and pragmatics. I.A. Richards (1936), in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, explained metaphor as an interaction between the tenor (meaning) and the vehicle (medium). However, a true revolution occurred in 1980 with the publication of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By*. They declared metaphor not as a linguistic phenomenon, but as a phenomenon of thought [3].

In Uzbek linguistics, metaphor issues have been studied by scholars such as A. Kayumov, U. Normatov, Sh. Rahmatullayev, and others. For instance, A. Kayumov analyzed the metaphorical nature of phraseological units in the Uzbek language and revealed their national characteristics. In modern research, the cognitive approach is gaining momentum. D. Qodirov and others have attempted to analyze conceptual metaphors in the Uzbek language.

In English linguistics, scholars like A. Wierzbicka and Z. Kövecses have deeply studied the connection between culture and metaphor. Z. Kövecses, in his work *Metaphor and Culture*, demonstrated how metaphors are dependent on cultural models [4].

However, comprehensive studies directly comparing the metaphorical systems of Uzbek and English from a cognitive perspective are still insufficient. Most works are limited to translation perspectives or artistic styles. This article aims to fill that gap.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A complex methodological approach was used in this study. The primary methods consist of:

Cognitive Analysis: Used to identify the conceptual structures underlying metaphors. Through this method, universal and national schemas such as «Life is a Journey» and «Love is Fire» were studied.

Comparative Analysis: Metaphorical models in Uzbek and English were compared to identify similarities and differences.

Contextual Analysis: Metaphorical expressions were analyzed within their context of use (literary works, press, colloquial speech).

Statistical Method: Calculations were performed on selected text corpora to determine the frequency of certain metaphorical groups.

Research materials included excerpts from the poems of Alisher Navoi, Abdulla Oripov, and Z.M. Babur, as well as works by W. Shakespeare, R. Frost, and T.S. Eliot, alongside stable idioms (phraseologies) in both languages.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In cognitive linguistics, metaphors are classified based on the mapping between the source and target domains. The following universal conceptual metaphors are widespread in both Uzbek and English:

- Time is money

This metaphor is characteristic of industrial societies.

English: “You are wasting my time”, “Invest your time”, “Time is precious”.

Uzbek: “Vaqt – oltin” (Time is gold), “Vaqtni boy berma” (Do not lose/waste time), “Vaqt qadrini bil” (Know the value of time).

Analysis shows that while time is viewed more as a resource or capital in English, it is perceived as a value and wealth in Uzbek. In Uzbek, expressions like “vaqt o'tmoq” (time passes) and “vaqt yetmoq” (time arrives) also perceive the flow of time as a natural phenomenon [5].

- Life is a journey

This is one of the most common metaphors.

English: “He is at a crossroads”, “She went through a lot”, “Life path”.

Uzbek: “Hayot yo'li” (Life path), “Oq yo'l” (White path/Safe journey), “To'g'ri yo'ldan ozmoq” (To stray from the right path).

In Uzbek, the “path” metaphor signifies not just life experience but also moral direction (The Right Path). In English, it often relates to career and personal development (Career path). For example, in Alisher Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr*, the metaphor of the seven valleys represents a spiritual journey, whereas in English literature (e.g., Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*), it is a journey based on Christian values.

- Love is fire

English: “Burning desire”, “Spark of love”, “Flame out”.

Uzbek: “Ishq olovi” (Fire of love), “Yurak yonmoq” (Heart burning), “O'rtanmoq” (To be consumed by internal fire).

The similarity here is high, but in Uzbek, the concept of “Ishq” (divine/deep love) carries a Sufi meaning, seen as a force leading to human perfection. In English, “love” typically remains within the scope of romantic and emotional relationships.

National-Cultural Features of Imagery

The living environment of the Uzbek and English peoples has directly influenced their metaphorical systems.

Sun and Moon: In Uzbek folklore, the Sun (*Quyosh bobo*) is a life-giving force and a symbol of justice. Expressions like «Shining like the sun» are positive. In English, “Sunshine” is also positive (“You are my sunshine”), but the “Moon” can sometimes be associated with mystery or hidden forces (*Moonlighting*). In Uzbek, “shining like the moon” (*Oydek yarqiramoq*) is a symbol of beauty, whereas in English, “Once in a blue moon” means very rarely [6].

Nature and Plants: In Uzbek, metaphors like “drying from the root” (*tubidan qurimoq*) or “spreading branches” (*shox-butoq yozmoq*) relate to lineage and family. In English, “Family tree” is similar, but “Roots” often refers specifically to one's place of origin. In Uzbek, “Flower” (*Gul*) symbolizes youth and beauty, while in English, “Blossom” is also used for development and success (“Business is blossoming”).

Animals: Metaphorical transfers regarding animals reflect national mentality.

Lion: In Uzbek, it represents bravery and courage (*Sher yurak*). In English, “Lionheart” similarly symbolizes bravery.

Dog: In English, expressions like “Lucky dog” (someone fortunate) or “Top dog” (the leader/boss) are positive or neutral. In Uzbek, the word “It” (dog) is most often used as an insult (Itday yugurmoq – to run like a dog/work like a slave), with few exceptions like “Vafodor it” (faithful dog). This highlights a significant cultural divergence.

Fish: In English, “A fish out of water” refers to being in an uncomfortable or alien environment. In Uzbek, the phrase “Baliq suvda yaxshi” (A fish is good in water) emphasizes being in one’s rightful place or element.

Metaphorical Density in Literary Texts

Analysis of literary texts indicates that metaphorical density (the number of metaphors per stanza) in Uzbek poetry tends to be higher than in English poetry. This is rooted in the Eastern tradition of “wordplay” and “multi-layered meaning” (ma’no qatlamligi).

For example, in a single couplet by Alisher Navoi, one can find several layers of metaphor:

Ko’ngul ayni safo baxsh etdi, dilni xunob etdi,
Yuzim gul, ko’nglim xazon, holim harob etdi.

Here, the mapping is complex: Heart is a vessel/surface, Purity (Safo) is a liquid, Blood-red tears (Xunob) is a mixture, Face is a flower, and the Soul is autumn leaves (xazon). In contrast, English classical poetry (e.g., Wordsworth) often uses simpler, nature-centric imagery:

“I wandered lonely as a cloud...”

In this instance, a single, clear metaphor (Human – Cloud) expresses the state of being.

Somatic Metaphors (Body Parts)

Metaphors involving body parts are largely universal, based on “embodied cognition” - the way humans perceive the world through their physical existence.

Heart (Heart / Ko’ngil / Yurak): In English, “Heart” is used for both emotions and the physical organ (“Heartbroken”, “Learn by heart”). In Uzbek, a distinction is made: “Yurak” often relates to fear or courage (“Yuragi yorilmoq” – heart bursting from fear, “Yurakli” – brave), while “Ko’ngil” refers to the spiritual state and intention (“Ko’ngli to’q” – satisfied/at peace, “Ko’ngil so’rash” – to console). This reflects a nuanced division of the inner world in the Uzbek mentality [7].

Hand (Hand / Qo’l): Common metaphors include “Giving a hand” (help) and “Hand in hand”. The difference lies in the Uzbek use of “Qo’l” to signify authority or capability (“Qo’li baland” – having the upper hand/advantage, “Qo’liga quvvat” – power to one’s hand). In English, these are often expressed through specific terms like “Power” or “Authority”.

Head (Head / Bosh): Both languages use “Head” for thinking (“Bosh qotirmoq” – to rack one’s brain) and leadership (“Head of department”, “Boshliq”).

This similarity is high because the association of intellect with the head is a universal human trait.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The comparative-cognitive analysis of metaphors and imagery in Uzbek and English leads to the following conclusions:

Universal and National: Metaphorical systems contain universal patterns (Time-Money, Life-Journey) alongside national specifics unique to each language.

Universal metaphors are based on biological and physical experiences, while national ones are rooted in cultural and historical contexts.

Cognitive Nature: A metaphor is not just a linguistic ornament but a tool for perceiving the world.

The richness of the “ko‘ngil” concept in Uzbek demonstrates a subtle differentiation of emotional states within the national mentality.

Cultural Code: Metaphors involving animals, natural phenomena, and colors act as cultural codes. Accounting for these codes during translation is essential to prevent the loss of meaning.

Artistic Value: The high metaphorical density in Uzbek poetry is a testament to the aesthetic traditions of the East.

Special attention should be given to metaphorical analysis within the subjects of “Cognitive Linguistics” and “Intercultural Communication” in higher education.

Future research should focus on emerging metaphors in modern Uzbek journalism and internet discourse. Compiling bilingual metaphorical dictionaries would help language learners gain a deeper understanding of the national mentality.

In conclusion, metaphor is the heart of language and the mirror of culture. Studying the metaphorical differences between Uzbek and English allows us to understand not only the languages themselves but also the worldviews of the people who speak them.

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