METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC APPROACH

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Abstract. *This article explores metaphorical expressions in English and Uzbek through the lens of cognitive linguistics. Metaphors are not merely poetic devices but essential tools for human thought and communication. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, the study analyzes how abstract concepts such as time, emotion, and life are metaphorically constructed in both languages. The research highlights universal and culture-specific metaphors, showing how cultural experiences shape linguistic metaphors. This comparative analysis has implications for translation, bilingual education, and intercultural understanding.*

Keywords: metaphor, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, Uzbek, English, culture-specific metaphor

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается использование метафорических выражений в английском и узбекском языках с точки зрения когнитивной лингвистики. Метафоры рассматриваются не только как поэтические средства, но и как важные инструменты мышления и коммуникации. Исследование основано на теории концептуальной метафоры Лакоффа и Джонсона и показывает, как абстрактные понятия — время, эмоции, жизнь — осмысляются через метафоры. Выявляются как универсальные, так и культурно-специфические метафоры, что важно для перевода и межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: метафора, когнитивная лингвистика, теория концептуальной метафоры, узбекский язык, английский язык, культурная специфика

Metaphors are central to how people think, not just how they speak. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of the mind that allows people to understand abstract concepts through more concrete ones. This study compares metaphorical language in English and Uzbek to identify similarities, differences, and the cultural factors that shape these expressions.

1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

CMT proposes that metaphors are systematic mappings between two conceptual domains:

Source domain: more concrete (e.g., journey)

Target domain: more abstract (e.g., life)

Example in English:

"Life is a journey" — we speak of paths, obstacles, destinations.

In Uzbek:

"Hayot bir yo'l" — similar conceptual mapping exists.

2. Common Metaphor Themes in English and Uzbek

a) Time as Money / Valuable Resource

English: I'm wasting time, Save some time

Uzbek: Vaqtimni behuda sarflayapman, Vaqtni tejash kerak

➙ Universal metaphor: TIME IS MONEY

b) Emotions as Heat or Pressure

English: She exploded with anger

Uzbek: Uning jahli chiqdi, Yuragi qizib ketdi

➙ Similar mapping: ANGER IS HEAT/PRESSURE

c) Mind as Container

English: My mind is full of ideas

Uzbek: Boshiq fikrga to'lib ketgan

➙ Both languages conceptualize the mind as a container

3. Culture-Specific Metaphors

a) Heart in Uzbek Culture

Uzbek: Ko'nglim to'ldi, Yuragim siqildi, Ko'ngli ochiq inson

These metaphors have no exact match in English.

In Uzbek, heart (yurak) and soul (ko'ngil) are deeply tied to emotional and moral qualities.

English equivalents may require paraphrasing or cultural adaptation.

b) Nature-Based Metaphors

Uzbek: Hayot daraxti, Yaproqlari to'kildi

Reflect strong connection with agrarian culture

English may use Tree of Life, but less commonly in daily speech.

4. Implications for Translation

Literal translation of metaphors can lead to confusion or misinterpretation. For example:

Uzbek: Ko'nglim cho'kdi

→ Literal: My heart sank (may match, but context is vital)

English: He hit rock bottom

→ Needs cultural explanation in Uzbek

Translators must decide whether to use equivalent metaphors, paraphrase, or annotate.

5. Teaching Implications

Language teachers should include metaphorical competence in curriculum design. Learners benefit from understanding both the universal metaphors and culture-bound expressions.

Strategies include:

Comparative metaphor lists

Visual metaphors and mapping exercises

Authentic usage examples in literature and conversation

Conclusion

Metaphorical language reflects both universal human cognition and specific cultural worldviews. English and Uzbek share many metaphorical structures but also show unique cultural metaphors rooted in their traditions, environment, and beliefs.

A cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor analysis offers deeper insight into how languages encode experience and can enhance translation, teaching, and cross-cultural understanding.

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