

CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING COGNITIVE METAPHORS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Annotation: This article explores the intricacies involved in translating cognitive metaphors from English into Uzbek and vice versa. Cognitive metaphors, deeply rooted in cultural, historical, and experiential domains, often defy direct translation due to differences in conceptual framing. The study draws from cognitive linguistics and translation theory to examine metaphor types, cultural models, and conceptual mappings that underlie metaphorical expressions. Through comparative examples, the article highlights common issues such as semantic loss, cultural mismatch, and lack of equivalence, and proposes strategies for preserving conceptual integrity in translation. Emphasis is placed on culturally-loaded metaphors such as "time is money," "argument is war," and "life is a journey." The findings stress the importance of cognitive awareness and cultural competence in metaphor translation.

Keywords: Cognitive metaphor, conceptual mapping, cultural schema, metaphor translation, equivalence, source-target mismatch, Uzbek-English.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются сложности, связанные с переводом когнитивных метафор с английского языка на узбекский и наоборот. Когнитивные метафоры, глубоко укоренённые в культурных, исторических и жизненных контекстах, часто оказываются труднопереводимыми из-за различий в концептуальных моделях. Исследование опирается на когнитивную лингвистику и теорию перевода с целью анализа типов метафор, культурных моделей и концептуальных соответствий, лежащих в основе метафорических выражений. На основе сравнительных примеров выделяются распространённые проблемы, такие как утрата смысла, культурное несоответствие и отсутствие эквивалентов, а также предлагаются стратегии сохранения концептуальной целостности при переводе. Особое внимание уделяется метафорам, насыщенным культурным содержанием, таким как «время — деньги», «спор — это война» и «жизнь — это путь». Полученные результаты подчеркивают важность когнитивной осведомлённости и культурной компетентности при переводе метафор.

Ключевые слова: когнитивная метафора, концептуальное соответствие, культурная схема, перевод метафор, эквивалентность, расхождение между исходным и целевым языком, узбекско-английский.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidan o'zbek tiliga va aksincha kognitiv metaforalarni tarjima qilishdagi murakkabliklar o'rganiladi. Kognitiv metaforalar madaniy, tarixiy va tajribaviy omillarga chuqur ildiz otgan bo'lib, ko'pincha konseptual qarashlarning farqli bo'lishi sababli bevosita tarjima qilish imkonsiz bo'ladi. Tadqiqot kognitiv lingvistika va tarjima nazariyasiga asoslanib, metafora turlari, madaniy modellari va metaforik ifodalarning asosida yotgan konseptual mosliklarni tahlil qiladi. Taqqosloviiy misollar orqali semantik yo'qotish, madaniy nomutanosiblik va ekvivalentlikning yo'qligi kabi keng tarqalgan muammolar yoritiladi hamda konseptual yaxlitlikni saqlab qolish strategiyalari taklif etiladi. "Vaqt — pul", "bahs — bu urush", "hayot — bu safar" kabi madaniy jihatdan yuklangan metaforalarga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari kognitiv xabardorlik va madaniy kompetensiya metafora tarjimasida muhim ahamiyatga ega ekanini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: kognitiv metafora, konseptual moslik, madaniy sxema, metafora tarjimasi, ekvivalentlik, manba va maqsad til o'rtasidagi nomutanosiblik, o'zbek-ingliz.

Metaphor is not just a rhetorical or poetic device but a fundamental mechanism of thought and communication (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In cognitive linguistics, metaphors represent mental models through which abstract experiences are structured and understood via more concrete or familiar domains. Translating metaphors thus becomes more than a lexical operation—it is a task of transferring culturally and conceptually rich frameworks from one language to another.

This study focuses on the translation challenges of cognitive metaphors between English and Uzbek, two linguistically unrelated and culturally distinct languages. With Uzbek rooted in a Turkic linguistic heritage and English in the Indo-European family, the metaphorical expressions in each language often reflect disparate worldviews. This article investigates the degree to which metaphorical meanings can be retained, adapted, or lost in translation and what this implies for both translators and theorists.

Literature Review

The foundations of cognitive metaphor theory (CMT) were laid by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), which argued that metaphor is a tool for understanding the world, not merely adorning language. Lakoff later elaborated on conceptual metaphors such as "Life is a journey," where life is understood through the more tangible experience of movement along a path.

Zoltán Kövecses (2005) has argued that while some conceptual metaphors are universal due to shared human embodiment, many are culture-specific. For instance, the metaphor "The mind is a container" is widespread, yet the way it is expressed varies

by culture. Mona Baker (1992) discussed translation strategies to deal with idiomatic and metaphorical language, noting that literal translation can often distort the intended conceptual meaning.

Recent research by Sharipova (2021) and Karimov (2023) investigates the Uzbek context specifically, highlighting metaphors grounded in local customs, collectivist norms, and family structures. Similarly, Al-Zoubi and Al-Hassnawi (2001) examine metaphor translatability and argue that translators must possess not only bilingual proficiency but bicultural cognition. Schäffner (2004) points out that metaphor translation is inherently interpretive and subjective, demanding flexible strategies based on context.

1. Conceptual Mismatch in Metaphor Translation

Cognitive metaphors function at the level of conceptual mapping. A metaphor such as “Time is money” presupposes a capitalist, time-conscious culture, where time is quantifiable and tradable. In Uzbek, a collectivist and relational culture, time is often perceived as cyclical or contextual. The equivalent idea may be expressed as “vaqtning qadriga yet” (appreciate time), which lacks the transactional connotation. This mismatch can result in partial or misleading translations unless contextualized properly.

2. Cultural Load and Semantic Shift

Some metaphors are tightly bound to cultural imagery. Consider “Cold feet” (loss of nerve) or “The ball is in your court” (responsibility now lies with you). Such expressions, when literally translated into Uzbek, either make no sense or invoke unintended imagery. In Uzbek, the concept of indecision may be expressed through entirely different metaphors, such as “qadam tashlashga jur’at yetmaslik” (lack the courage to step forward).

3. Idiomatic and Proverbs-Based Metaphors

Proverbs in Uzbek often encapsulate metaphoric wisdom, such as “Ona yurtning – oltin beshiging” (Your homeland is your golden cradle). While conveying emotion and patriotism, such expressions may require full paraphrasing when translated into English to maintain their figurative strength. The translator must decide whether to preserve the metaphor, neutralize it, or find a similar target-language equivalent.

4. Non-equivalence and Translator Intervention

A major challenge in metaphor translation is non-equivalence, where the source-language metaphor has no target-language counterpart. For example, “He’s skating on thin ice” implies danger and recklessness. Uzbek may render this as “U xavfli yo‘lda ketmoqda” (He is walking a dangerous path), which reflects the same conceptual domain (movement), but the imagery is modified. In such cases, creative intervention is necessary to preserve pragmatic force.

5. Strategies for Translating Metaphors

Scholars such as Newmark (1988) and Dickins et al. (2017) have proposed several approaches:

Literal Translation: Retaining the source metaphor when it is understandable in the target culture.

Substitution: Replacing with a culturally appropriate metaphor.

Paraphrasing: Explaining the metaphor's meaning without figurative language.

Deletion: Removing the metaphor if untranslatable and non-essential.

The choice of strategy depends on context, genre, audience, and purpose.

Results: Translating cognitive metaphors requires deep understanding of the conceptual structures underlying both source and target languages. The translator must go beyond surface-level equivalence to preserve cognitive and emotional resonance. In cases of cultural disparity, metaphors should be adapted rather than translated literally. This process involves identifying the metaphor's underlying conceptual schema, locating target-language equivalents (if they exist), and ensuring that communicative intent is not compromised. Cognitive awareness, linguistic flexibility, and cultural insight are therefore essential translator competencies.

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