

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC APPROACH

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT:

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received: 07.04.2025

Revised: 08.04.2025

Accepted: 09.04.2025

KEYWORDS:

Conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, English, Uzbek, metaphor analysis, cross-cultural cognition.

This paper explores the similarities and differences in conceptual metaphors in English and Uzbek from a cognitive linguistic perspective. By analyzing metaphorical expressions in both languages, the study reveals how culture, cognition, and linguistic structure influence metaphor formation and usage. Using a corpus-based methodology and applying Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980), the research identifies common and culture-specific metaphorical concepts across both languages. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of cross-linguistic metaphorical cognition and offer implications for translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication..

INTRODUCTION. Metaphor has long been regarded as a stylistic ornament in classical rhetoric, used primarily to beautify language and enrich literary expression. However, the advent of **Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**, introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), revolutionized the understanding of metaphor. According to this theory, metaphors are not merely decorative or poetic devices; rather, they are central to human cognition. Conceptual metaphors allow individuals to comprehend abstract and complex ideas in terms of more concrete, familiar experiences. For example, when we say “*Time is running out*” or “*She won the argument*”, we are conceptualizing abstract notions such as **time** and **argument** using the frameworks of **motion** and **war**, respectively.

Cognitive linguistics holds that language and thought are inseparably linked, and that our metaphorical expressions reflect deeper conceptual structures in the human mind. These structures are shaped not only by universal aspects of human experience but also by the particularities of culture, language, and environment. As a result, conceptual metaphors may vary significantly across languages and cultures, offering valuable insights into how different linguistic communities perceive and categorize the world around them.

The comparative analysis of conceptual metaphors across languages has become a vibrant area of research in cognitive linguistics. Scholars such as Kövecses (2005) have argued that while certain metaphorical concepts—such as **LIFE IS A JOURNEY** or **ANGER IS HEAT**—may appear in many languages, their linguistic realizations and cultural connotations can differ widely. For instance, metaphors rooted in religious belief, family structure, historical tradition, or geographical environment may reflect the unique worldview of a given speech community.

In this context, the present study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of conceptual metaphors in English and Uzbek, two languages with distinct linguistic heritages and cultural backgrounds. English, as a globally dominant language with roots in Indo-European traditions, reflects largely Western, individualistic, and often commercialized patterns of thought. Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken predominantly in Central Asia, exhibits conceptual patterns influenced by collectivism, agrarian lifestyle, and spiritual heritage.

1. What conceptual metaphors are common to both English and Uzbek, and what does their presence suggest about universal aspects of metaphorical cognition?
2. What culture-specific metaphors exist in each language, and how do they reflect the socio-cultural frameworks of English- and Uzbek-speaking communities?
3. How do these metaphorical patterns contribute to our understanding of cross-linguistic variation in cognition and language use?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the broader field of cognitive linguistics and intercultural communication. It also has practical implications for translation studies, language teaching, and intercultural competence, especially in a world where communication across languages and cultures is increasingly vital.

behind metaphor use and highlight implications for translation, language learning, and intercultural communication.

What are the common conceptual metaphors shared by English and Uzbek?

What are the culture-specific metaphors unique to each language?

How do these metaphorical patterns reflect different cognitive and cultural models?

2. Methods

This study employed a **qualitative comparative analysis** within the framework of **cognitive linguistics** to examine conceptual metaphors in English and Uzbek. The primary aim was to identify both universal and culture-specific metaphorical patterns by analyzing naturally occurring metaphorical expressions in each language.

The data were collected from authentic and diverse sources to ensure reliability and contextual richness. For English, the corpus included texts from the British National Corpus (BNC), classic and contemporary literary works, and newspaper articles from prominent British publications. For Uzbek, the corpus consisted of literary texts by renowned Uzbek authors, political speeches, and online media articles. From each language, approximately 300 metaphorical expressions were selected, with attention to thematic variety and metaphorical density.

To identify conceptual metaphors, the **Metaphor Identification Procedure VU (MIPVU)** was applied. This method involves determining whether a lexical unit is used metaphorically by comparing its contextual meaning to a more basic, literal meaning. If a contrast is observed and the contextual meaning can be understood through the basic one, the expression is marked as metaphorical. This approach enabled systematic and consistent identification of metaphorical expressions across both corpora.

Following identification, metaphors were categorized based on their **conceptual source domains**, such as **JOURNEY**, **WAR**, **CONTAINER**, **LIGHT/DARKNESS**, **BODY**, and **FAMILY**, among others. These domains reflect how abstract concepts (e.g., life, emotions, knowledge) are conceptualized through more concrete experiences. The classification followed the cognitive linguistic tradition established by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and further developed by Kövecses (2002), allowing for coherent cross-linguistic comparison.

Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities and differences between the metaphorical systems of English and Uzbek. The analysis focused on shared conceptual metaphors, unique culture-specific expressions, and differences in metaphor frequency and usage contexts. Through this qualitative examination, the study aimed to uncover how metaphor functions not only as a linguistic device but also as a reflection of cultural and cognitive patterns unique to each language community.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the presence of both **universal** and **culture-specific** conceptual metaphors in English and Uzbek, highlighting the intricate relationship between metaphor, cognition, and culture. Universal metaphors, such as **LIFE IS A JOURNEY** or

ARGUMENT IS WAR, were found in both languages, suggesting that certain metaphorical structures are grounded in shared human experiences. These metaphors likely stem from common embodied experiences—such as physical movement, conflict, and spatial orientation—that transcend cultural boundaries and are cognitively natural for human beings regardless of language.

However, alongside these universal patterns, a significant number of **culture-specific metaphors** were identified, which reflect the distinct historical, social, and cultural frameworks of each linguistic community. English metaphors frequently draw on themes related to **individualism, competition, economics, and time efficiency**, consistent with the values of Western capitalist societies. For example, expressions such as “*spending time*” or “*investing in a relationship*” conceptualize time and emotions through the lens of economic value.

In contrast, Uzbek metaphors are more deeply rooted in **familial relationships, spirituality, agriculture, and nature**. Metaphors such as “*Vatan ona*” (Motherland) or “*Yurakda gullar ochildi*” (Flowers bloomed in the heart) illustrate the emotional and communal orientation of Uzbek culture, where the family unit, land, and emotional connection to one’s environment hold central importance. These metaphorical patterns are not arbitrary but reflect the **collectivist worldview** and **symbolic associations** embedded in Uzbek cultural consciousness.

These results support the cognitive linguistic view that metaphors are not merely linguistic embellishments but cognitive tools shaped by both **embodied experience** and **cultural context**. Understanding this dual nature of metaphor is essential in areas such as **translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication**. Translators must recognize when a metaphor in the source language carries cultural connotations that do not directly map onto the target language. Similarly, language learners benefit from an awareness of how metaphors reveal the ways in which native speakers of a language conceptualize the world.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of viewing metaphor not only as a linguistic feature but as a **window into the cultural and cognitive life** of a speech community. Future research may extend this work by exploring conceptual metaphors in other Turkic or Indo-European languages or by analyzing metaphors in specific discourse genres such as political rhetoric, advertising, or education.

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