

A COGNITIVE-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF METAPHORS AND
PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH
O'ZBEK VA INGLIZ TILLARIDA METAFORA VA FRAZEOLOGIZMLARNING
KOGNITIV-LINGVISTIK TAHLILI
КОГНИТИВНО-ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ МЕТАФОР И
ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЗМОВ В УЗБЕКСКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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ABSTRACT. This paper explores the cognitive-linguistic mechanisms underlying metaphors and phraseological units in Uzbek and English. Drawing on conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and cognitive semantics, it examines how culturally grounded conceptualizations shape metaphorical and idiomatic expressions in both languages. While metaphors are based on thinking habits that all people have in common, they are also influenced by the traditions, past events, and worldview of a particular culture. The study focuses on qualitative examples to demonstrate similarities and divergences between Uzbek and English metaphorical thought, with particular attention to how phraseological units encapsulate collective cognition. The findings highlight the interplay between universal human experience and local cultural meaning-making, suggesting that metaphor and idiom studies are a key lens for understanding linguistic relativity.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, metaphor, phraseology, Uzbek, English, conceptual metaphor theory, idiomatic expression

ANNOTATSIYA. Ushbu maqola o'zbek va ingliz tillaridagi metafora hamda frazeologik birliklarning kognitiv-lingvistik mexanizmlarini o'rganadi. Konseptual metafora nazariyasi (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) va kognitiv semantikaga tayangan holda, unda madaniyatga asoslangan konseptuallashtirishlar ikki tildagi metaforik va idiomatik ifodalarni qanday shakllantirishi tahlil qilinadi. Metaforalar barcha odamlar uchun umumiy bo'lgan fikrlash odatlariga asoslangan bo'lsa-da, ular ma'lum bir madaniyatning an'analari, o'tmish voqealari va dunyoqarashidan ham shakllanadi. Tadqiqot sifatli misollarga tayangan holda o'zbek va ingliz metaforik tafakkuridagi o'xshashliklar va farqlarni ko'rsatadi, ayniqsa frazeologik birliklar jamoaviy tafakkurni qanday ifodalashiga alohida e'tibor qaratadi. Xulosalar universal insoniy tajriba va mahalliy madaniy ma'no yaratish o'rtasidagi o'zaro ta'sirni yoritadi hamda metafora va idiomalarni o'rganish tilning nisbiyligini tushunishda muhim vosita ekanini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: kognitiv lingvistika, metafora, frazeologiya, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, konseptual metafora nazariyasi, idiomatik ifoda

АННОТАЦИЯ. Данная статья рассматривает когнитивно-лингвистические механизмы, лежащие в основе метафор и фразеологических единиц в узбекском и английском языках. Опираясь на теорию концептуальной метафоры (Лакофф и Джонсон, 1980) и когнитивную семантику, исследуется, как культурно обусловленные концептуализации формируют метафорические и идиоматические выражения в обоих языках. Хотя метафоры основаны на привычках мышления, общих для всех людей, они также находятся под влиянием традиций, прошлых событий и мировоззрения конкретной культуры. Исследование сосредоточено на качественных примерах, демонстрирующих сходства и различия между

узбекским и английским метафорическим мышлением, с особым вниманием к тому, как фразеологические единицы воплощают коллективное познание. Полученные результаты подчеркивают взаимодействие между универсальным человеческим опытом и локальным культурным осмыслением, что позволяет рассматривать изучение метафор и идиом как важный инструмент понимания лингвистической относительности.

Ключевые слова: когнитивная лингвистика, метафора, фразеология, узбекский язык, английский язык, теория концептуальной метафоры, идиоматическое выражение.

INTRODUCTION.

Metaphors and phraseological units are fundamental linguistic phenomena that reveal how humans conceptualize and verbalize the world. In cognitive linguistics, metaphors are not seen merely as ornamental features of language, but as cognitive tools that structure thought and communication (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Phraseological units, encompassing idioms, proverbs, and set expressions, serve as linguistic embodiments of shared cultural knowledge, often containing metaphorical components.

In both Uzbek and English, metaphors and idioms are pervasive across domains such as emotions, social relations, morality, and the natural world. Yet, while certain metaphorical structures are grounded in universal human experience — for example, conceptualizing "life as a journey" — others are deeply rooted in socio-historical contexts. This paper compares and analyses such expressions in Uzbek and English, focusing on cognitive-linguistic principles and the role of culture in shaping meaning.

The aim is to contribute to cross-linguistic cognitive studies by:

- Identifying conceptual metaphors common to both languages;
- Highlighting culturally specific metaphorical and phraseological expressions in Uzbek and English;
- Demonstrating the implications of these findings for linguistic relativity and intercultural communication.

METHODOLOGY. This study adopts a qualitative, comparative approach rooted in Cognitive Linguistics, with emphasis on:

- Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980): understanding metaphors as mappings between conceptual domains;
- Cognitive Semantics: focusing on meaning construction through mental imagery and conceptualization;
- Phraseological Analysis: identifying idiomatic expressions, fixed collocations, and proverbs in each language and examining their conceptual underpinnings.

The data were collected from:

- Published Uzbek and English dictionaries of idioms and phraseology.
- Academic literature on Uzbek and English metaphorical language.
- Examples from everyday usage and literary sources.

All Uzbek examples are provided in Latin script, accompanied by English translations and, where appropriate, explanations of their conceptual basis. The analysis prioritizes theoretical discussion over quantitative measurement.

RESULTS

1. *Universal conceptual metaphors in Uzbek and English*

Across both languages, several conceptual metaphors recur, reflecting shared embodied experience:

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

Uzbek: Hayot yo‘l, unda o‘nqir-cho‘nqirlar bor — "Life is a road with bumps."

English: We've come a long way; He's at a crossroads in life.

→ Both conceptualize life as movement along a path, with obstacles and direction changes.

TIME IS MONEY

Uzbek: Vaqt oltindan qadrli — "Time is more precious than gold."

English: Don't waste my time.

→ Economic value metaphor applied to time management.

EMOTIONS ARE HEAT

Uzbek: G‘azabdan qizishmoq — "To heat up from anger."

English: She was boiling with rage.

→ Physiological effect of emotions conceptualized as temperature change.

2. Culture-specific metaphorical and phraseological units

Some metaphors and idioms are rooted in unique cultural, historical, or environmental contexts.

Uzbek-specific examples:

Qo‘ydek yuvosh — "Meek as a sheep" (sheep as symbol of gentleness in agrarian culture).

Boshini yegan — "He ate his head" (meaning "he caused trouble for himself" — linked to idiomatic metaphor not found in English).

Oltin beshik — "Golden cradle" (symbolizing privilege from birth).

English-specific examples:

Kick the bucket — meaning "to die," with obscure historical origins unrelated to Uzbek idioms.

Silver spoon in one's mouth — similar to Uzbek oltin beshik, but metal and cradle symbolism differ culturally.

The ball is in your court — rooted in sports metaphors, uncommon in Uzbek phraseology.

3. Phraseology as a window into collective cognition

Phraseological units often compress cultural values into memorable, fixed expressions:

Uzbek proverbs:

Yaxshilik qil — dengizga tashla — "Do good, throw it into the sea" (value of altruism without expectation).

Erta turgan — ishni bitirgan — "He who wakes early finishes the work" (work ethic and diligence).

English proverbs:

A stitch in time saves nine (value of timely action).

Don't count your chickens before they hatch (prudence and patience).

These proverbs reflect shared human experiences but also culture-specific imagery.

DISCUSSION. The comparative analysis reveals both convergence and divergence in metaphorical thinking between Uzbek and English. The convergence stems from shared human embodiment — spatial orientation, sensory experience, and biological universals — which give rise to similar conceptual metaphors such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY or EMOTIONS ARE HEAT.

The divergence lies in cultural grounding:

Uzbek metaphor and idiom often draw on agrarian, pastoral, and Islamic cultural references.

English metaphor and idiom frequently derive from industrial, maritime, and sporting contexts.

These differences can create challenges in translation and intercultural communication, as literal equivalents often fail to capture cultural resonance. For example, translating *boshini yegan* as he ate his head would confuse English speakers unless explained as a metaphor for self-inflicted trouble.

From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, such idioms illustrate how language encodes cultural models — mental representations shaped by collective history, environment, and values.

CONCLUSION. Metaphors and phraseological units in Uzbek and English reflect a dynamic interplay between universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific conceptualizations. While both languages share foundational conceptual metaphors based on human embodiment, their idiomatic and metaphorical expressions diverge in ways that mirror historical experience, cultural priorities, and environmental realities.

This qualitative, theory-based analysis underscores the importance of studying metaphor and phraseology within a cognitive-linguistic framework to understand both the universality and diversity of human thought. It also highlights the necessity for culturally informed approaches to translation and language teaching, especially in cross-linguistic contexts involving Uzbek and English.

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