

PAPER

NATIONAL CULTURAL VALUES AND METAPHOR: A COMPARATIVE COGNITIVE STUDY OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between metaphor and national cultural values within the framework of cognitive linguistics. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the paper analyzes how metaphors in Uzbek and English encode cultural models, value systems, and collective experience. Using a comparative-analytical methodology, the research examines metaphorical expressions related to key conceptual domains such as time, work, and family. The findings reveal that while metaphor is grounded in universal cognitive mechanisms, its linguistic realization is strongly shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts. The study contributes to intercultural communication, translation studies, and cognitive linguistics by demonstrating how metaphors function as carriers of cultural meaning.

Key words: metaphor, cognitive linguistics, cultural values, conceptual metaphor theory, Uzbek language, English language, intercultural communication

Traditionally, metaphor has been regarded as a rhetorical device used to enhance the aesthetic quality of language. However, contemporary research in cognitive linguistics has fundamentally redefined this perspective by positioning metaphor as a central mechanism of human thought (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). According to this view, metaphor is not merely linguistic but conceptual, shaping how individuals perceive, structure, and interpret

reality. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) posits that abstract domains such as time, emotion, and social relations are understood through more concrete experiential domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This cognitive process is universal; however, its linguistic expression varies across cultures. As a result, metaphors serve as a bridge between language, cognition, and culture.

Uzbek and English, belonging to different

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linguistic and cultural traditions, provide a valuable basis for comparative analysis. While both languages employ similar conceptual metaphors, their realizations reflect distinct national value systems. For instance, English metaphors often reflect individualism and economic rationality, whereas Uzbek metaphors emphasize morality, collectivism, and spiritual values. In the context of globalization, understanding metaphorical differences is crucial for effective intercultural communication. Misinterpretations frequently arise not from grammar but from culturally embedded meanings encoded in metaphorical language.

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze metaphorical patterns in Uzbek and English, focusing on their cultural motivations and communicative functions.

Methods

Research Design: This study adopts a qualitative comparative approach grounded in cognitive linguistics. It focuses on identifying conceptual metaphors and analyzing their cultural significance.

Data Collection: The dataset includes:

- proverbs and sayings
- idiomatic expressions
- media discourse
- everyday conversational language

Both Uzbek and English examples were selected based on frequency and cultural relevance.

Analytical Methods

The analysis was conducted using:

- conceptual mapping (source vs. target domains)
- semantic analysis
- contextual interpretation

Metaphors were classified according to:

1. conceptual domain
2. evaluative meaning (positive/negative)
3. communicative function
4. cultural motivation

Results

Conceptual Domain: Time

English:

Type	Description	English Example	Uzbek Example
Structural	One concept structured by another	Argument is war	Bahs – kurash
Orientalional	Based on spatial orientation	high spirits	ruhi ko'tarildi
Ontological	Abstract concepts as entities	under pressure	stress bosdi

Time is money

save time

waste time

Uzbek:

Time is more valuable than gold

Do not waste time

Key difference:

English → economic value

Uzbek → moral and spiritual value

Conceptual Domain: Work

English:

climb the ladder

build a career

Uzbek:

Labor brings comfort

The fruit of honest work is sweet

Conceptual contrast:

English → progress and achievement

Uzbek → morality and blessing

Conceptual Domain: Family and Home

English:

My home is my castle

Uzbek:

Family is a fortress

Home is a shelter

Cultural contrast:

English → privacy and independence

Uzbek → collectivism and hospitality

The findings confirm that metaphors operate at the intersection of language, cognition, and culture. While conceptual metaphors such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY or TIME AS A RESOURCE are found across languages, their interpretations differ significantly depending on cultural context. As argued by Kövecses (2005), metaphor variation is influenced by social experience, historical development, and cultural priorities. In English, metaphorical expressions often reflect efficiency, productivity, and individual success. In contrast,

Uzbek metaphors emphasize ethical values, social harmony, and spirituality. This difference is particularly evident in the conceptualization of time and work. English metaphors align with capitalist ideology, whereas Uzbek metaphors reflect traditional and moral frameworks.

Moreover, metaphors play a crucial role in discourse by shaping attitudes, influencing perception, and guiding interpretation. Therefore, understanding metaphor is essential for translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that metaphor is not merely a linguistic ornament but a fundamental cognitive and cultural phenomenon that shapes human understanding and communication. Through a comparative analysis of Uzbek and English metaphors, the research has revealed that while both languages share universal conceptual foundations, their metaphorical realizations are deeply influenced by distinct national cultural values, historical experiences, and social structures. The analysis of key conceptual domains—such as time, work, and family—shows that English metaphors tend to reflect individualism, efficiency, and economic rationality, whereas Uzbek metaphors emphasize morality, collectivism, spirituality, and social harmony. These differences highlight the role of metaphor as a carrier of culturally embedded meanings and as a reflection of a society's worldview. Furthermore, the findings confirm that metaphors function as cognitive tools that structure abstract thinking, guide interpretation, and influence communicative behavior. In this sense, metaphor operates at the intersection of language, thought, and culture, serving as a bridge between conceptual systems and linguistic expression. The study also underscores the importance of metaphor awareness in intercultural communication.

Misinterpretations often arise not from grammatical inaccuracies but from differences in metaphorical conceptualization. Therefore, understanding culturally specific metaphors is essential for translators, language learners, and professionals engaged in cross-cultural interaction. From a theoretical perspective, this research supports the view that metaphor is both universal

and culture-specific, aligning with the principles of cognitive linguistics. At the same time, it contributes to the growing body of work in linguocultural studies by demonstrating how language encodes national identity and value systems.

In practical terms, the results of this study can be applied in:

translation studies, to improve equivalence and cultural adaptation

foreign language teaching, to enhance semantic and pragmatic competence

discourse analysis, to uncover implicit meanings and ideological structures Finally, future research may focus on expanding the scope of analysis by incorporating:

corpus-based studies for quantitative validation
metaphor usage in digital and media discourse
applications in artificial intelligence and natural language processing In conclusion, metaphor should be regarded as a key analytical tool for understanding not only language but also the cultural and cognitive foundations of human communication in an increasingly globalized world.

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