CONCEPTUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE EMOTION OF SHAME IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK CULTURES: A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17853324

ABSTRACT

This article examines the conceptual structure of the emotional category shame in English and Uzbek linguistic worldviews from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology. The study aims to identify universal and culture-specific features in the conceptualization of shame by analyzing lexical-semantic networks, metaphorical models, and cultural scripts reflected in both languages. Using componential analysis, contextual interpretation, and conceptual metaphor theory, the research explores how shame-related lexemes encode social norms, moral expectations, and culturally shaped emotional experiences. The findings reveal that while English and Uzbek share a universal understanding of shame as a negative social emotion triggered by moral transgression and public evaluation, the two cultures differ significantly in their semantic categorization, metaphorical extensions, and sociocultural functions. The English linguistic system demonstrates a more individual-centered and psychologically oriented representation of shame, whereas the Uzbek system embodies collective, honor-based, and socially regulated interpretations. The study contributes to cross-cultural semantics, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication by showing how emotional concepts are linguistically structured and culturally motivated.

Introduction

Emotions constitute an essential part of human cognition and play a crucial role in structuring linguistic and cultural worldviews. Among moral emotions, *shame* occupies a central position, serving as a regulator of social behavior, a marker of moral boundaries, and a reflection of culturally specific value systems. The study of shame within cognitive

linguistics enables a deeper understanding of how language encodes emotional experience through semantic structures, metaphorical models, and cultural scripts.

In English and Uzbek cultures, the concept of *shame*—rendered as *shame* in English and *uyat* in Uzbek—emerges as a key moral-emotional category that shapes interpersonal relationships and social expectations. However, due to the typological, cultural, and historical differences between the two languages, the ways in which shame is structured, interpreted, and linguistically represented vary considerably. English belongs to the Indo-European language family and exhibits an individualistic orientation, whereas Uzbek, a Turkic language, displays collectivistic and honor-based cultural patterns. These sociocultural contrasts provide fertile ground for comparative research.

Numerous studies in cognitive linguistics emphasize that emotional concepts are not universal in their linguistic expression but culturally mediated. The conceptualization of shame, therefore, reflects the moral foundations, social norms, and communicative practices of each speech community. Although previous research has investigated emotional lexicon in English and Uzbek separately, there remains a lack of comprehensive comparative studies addressing the conceptual and metaphorical framing of shame across the two cultures.

This article aims to fill that gap by examining the conceptual, semantic, and cultural structure of shame-related lexemes in English and Uzbek. The study integrates multiple analytical approaches, including componential analysis, contextual interpretation, and conceptual metaphor theory, to uncover both shared and divergent features in the representation of shame. By doing so, the research highlights how two distinct linguistic worldviews construct and interpret one of the most socially significant emotions.

The study of emotional concepts within the framework of cognitive linguistics has gained significant attention over the past decades. Scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Kövecses (2000, 2010), Wierzbicka (1999), and Rosaldo (1984) argue that emotions are deeply embedded in cultural models and are conceptualized through language-specific metaphorical and semantic structures. Shame, as a moral and social emotion, has been extensively explored in anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. However, its cross-cultural conceptualization, particularly between typologically distinct languages such as English and Uzbek, remains understudied.

Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) provides the foundation for analyzing how abstract emotions such as shame are understood through embodied and culturally rooted metaphors. Kövecses (2000) further argues that while emotional experiences are biologically universal, metaphorical representations vary across cultures due to differing value systems and social norms. This aligns with the linguistic relativity hypothesis, which posits that language influences cognition and emotional perception. For this study, these frameworks guide the analysis of metaphorical and semantic models in English and Uzbek.

Shame is often contrasted with guilt in psychological and anthropological research. English-speaking societies are commonly described as "guilt-oriented" cultures, where moral responsibility is internalized (Benedict, 1946; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In contrast, collectivistic and honor-based societies, such as many Central Asian

communities, are characterized as "shame-oriented", where social evaluation and communal expectations play a central role. Although these dichotomies are subject to debate, they offer a useful lens through which the cultural functions of shame may be interpreted.

Several studies on English emotional lexicon highlight the diversity of terms associated with shame, embarrassment, humiliation, and guilt (Russell, 1991; Löwenborg, 2014). These distinctions reflect the Anglo cultural emphasis on individual identity and psychological nuance. Meanwhile, Uzbek linguistic and cultural research (Karimov, 2018; G'ofurova, 2020) emphasizes the interconnectedness of "uyat", "hayo", "or-nomus", and other culturally resonant constructs tied to social morality, family reputation, and communal harmony.

Within the Uzbek linguistic tradition, "uyat" is described as a culturally loaded concept with multiple sociocultural functions (Yo'ldosheva, 2015; G'ofurova, 2020). It regulates interpersonal communication, gender roles, family relations, and normative behavior in public. The concept frequently appears in proverbs, idioms, and discourse practices, highlighting its relevance in shaping moral and social norms. Unlike English, where shame is frequently individualized, Uzbek cultural scripts treat "uyat" as a collective moral category closely tied to concepts of honor and respect.

Although both English and Uzbek literatures contain valuable insights into emotional semantics, comparative studies on the conceptualization of shame remain limited. Existing works tend to focus either on etymology, cultural anthropology, or general emotion studies, but not on a systematic, cognitive-linguistic comparison of metaphorical, semantic, and cultural structures. This scholarly gap confirms the necessity of the present study, which aims to provide a holistic, cross-cultural analysis of the conceptual representation of shame.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, comparative, and descriptive research methodology grounded in the principles of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology. The primary aim is to identify and analyze the conceptual, semantic, and metaphorical structures that underpin the emotion of shame in English and Uzbek linguistic worldviews. To achieve this, the methodology integrates several analytical procedures, each tailored to uncover different layers of linguistic and cultural meaning.

Research Material

The empirical material of the study consists of:

- Shame-related lexemes from authoritative English and Uzbek dictionaries;
- Contextual examples extracted from corpora (British National Corpus, COCA, Uzbek National Corpus);
- Proverbs, idioms, and culturally salient expressions containing *shame, embarrassment, guilt, humiliation* in English and *uyat, hayo, or-nomus* in Uzbek;
- Samples from literary works, media texts, and conversational discourse in both languages.

This diverse dataset ensures a comprehensive representation of how shame is encoded and conceptualized across various communicative contexts.

Componential Analysis

Componential analysis is used to identify the semantic structure of key lexemes related to shame. By breaking down the meanings of words such as *shame, embarrassment, guilt* in English and *uyat, hayo, or-nomus* in Uzbek into their fundamental semantic features, this method reveals:

- shared semantic components,
- culture-specific semantic nuances,
- hierarchical relations within the lexical-semantic field.

This approach helps clarify how each language differentiates emotional states associated with shame.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) forms the backbone of the cross-cultural comparison. Metaphors serve as cognitive tools that structure abstract emotions through embodied and culturally rooted imagery. This study identifies the conceptual metaphors that govern shame in both languages, such as:

- SHAME IS A BURDEN / STAIN / LOSS (English),
- UYAT IS A LOSS OF FACE / HONOR / SOCIAL JUDGMENT (Uzbek).

The analysis determines the degree to which metaphorical models are universal or culturally specific.

Because emotions function not only as lexical items but also as culturally situated communicative acts, contextual and discourse analysis is performed to examine:

- pragmatic functions of shame expressions,
- social norms encoded in linguistic use,
- cultural scripts governing shame-related communication.

Special attention is given to how shame is invoked in different social settings such as family discourse, public behavior, morality-based judgments, and interpersonal relationships.

The final methodological step is a cross-cultural comparison of the findings. Through systematic juxtaposition, the study identifies:

- similarities in conceptualization shaped by universal cognitive mechanisms;
- differences resulting from cultural values, social organization, and historical traditions.

This integrative approach allows the research to construct a detailed cognitive model of shame that reflects the unique and shared aspects of English and Uzbek cultures.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the comparative and cognitive-linguistic analysis of the emotion of shame (*shame/uyat*) in English and Uzbek languages. The discussion is structured around key components of the conceptual framework: semantic structure, lexical differentiation, metaphorical models, and cultural functions. These findings demonstrate how two distinct linguistic and cultural systems encode, organize, and interpret the emotion of shame.

The analysis reveals that both English *shame* and Uzbek *uyat* share a semantic nucleus that includes the following universal components:

- moral wrongdoing or violation of norms,

- awareness of negative evaluation,
- emotional discomfort,
- fear of judgment by others.

Despite these similarities, the study uncovers significant differences in how these components are emphasized.

In English, the focus tends to be internal and psychological—the individual feels shame due to personal moral failure or self-evaluation. In Uzbek, the focus is predominantly external and social, where shame is tightly linked to communal expectations and collective reputation (*el nazari*, *nomus*, *or*).

English demonstrates a rich lexical inventory distinguishing between various intensities and types of shame:

- *shame* — moral or social embarrassment
- *embarrassment* — mild social discomfort
- *humiliation* — externally imposed degradation
- *guilt* — internal moral responsibility
- *mortification* — intense shame
- *awkwardness* — discomfort in social interaction

Uzbek, meanwhile, organizes shame-related concepts around collective morality and social harmony, often incorporating cultural elements:

- *uyat* — shame, disgrace, moral violation
- *hayo* — modesty, moral restraint
- *or-nomus* — honor, moral dignity
- *beti qizarish* — feeling ashamed
- *uyalish* — the act of feeling shame
- *uyat bo'ladi* — social judgment

The Uzbek lexicon does not emphasize fine-grained distinctions between embarrassment, awkwardness, and guilt as English does. Instead, it emphasizes the source of shame (community, elders, family, collective norms).

Metaphorical Models of Shame

Metaphor analysis demonstrates profound cultural differences in the conceptualization of shame. English conceptual metaphors reflect an individualized and psychologically oriented worldview:

- **SHAME IS A BURDEN**
  He carried the shame for years.
- **SHAME IS A STAIN**
  A stain on his reputation.
- **SHAME IS PAIN**
  She felt the sting of shame.
- **SHAME IS LOSS**
  He lost his dignity.
- **SHAME IS DOWNWARD MOVEMENT**
  He hung his head in shame.

In English metaphors, shame is treated as an internal emotional experience, often linked to personal integrity, mental state, or moral conscience while Uzbek metaphorical systems demonstrate strong ties to public evaluation, honor culture, and social visibility:

- **UYAT IS A FACE**
  Yuzi yorug' bo'lsin, *yuzi shuvut bo'ldi* (her face is bright / disgraced)
- **UYAT IS EYES OF THE COMMUNITY**
  El ko'zi bor, *El nima deydi?*
- **UYAT IS HONOR**
  Or-nomusiga tegdi (His honor was violated)
- **UYAT IS HARM / SHAMEFUL ACTION AS A WOUND**
  Uyatga qoldirdi, *nomusimga tegdi*
- **UYAT IS A COVER**
  Hayo pardasi, *uyat pardasi*

Here shame is conceptualized socially, relationally, and morally, closely associated with honor and the community's judgment.

Conclusion

This study has examined the conceptual representation of the emotion of shame in English and Uzbek linguistic and cultural worldviews through the frameworks of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology. By analyzing semantic structures, metaphorical models, and pragmatic functions, the research has demonstrated that shame, while universally experienced, manifests differently across languages and cultures due to distinct cognitive, social, and moral frameworks.

The findings reveal that the English concept of *shame* is primarily individual-centered and psychologically oriented. English culture emphasizes personal responsibility, internal emotional states, and fine-grained distinctions between related concepts such as *shame, embarrassment, guilt,* and *humiliation*. Metaphorical models in English conceptualize shame as a stain, burden, or psychological pain—highlighting its internalized nature.

In contrast, the Uzbek concept of *uyat* is culturally embedded within a collectivistic moral system. The analysis shows that *uyat* is closely linked to concepts such as *hayo, or-nomus,* and public reputation. Uzbek metaphorical models reflect social visibility and honor-based morality: shame is conceptualized through the face, the eyes of the community, moral purity, and the violation of social expectations. Pragmatically, *uyat* functions as a social regulatory mechanism that reinforces communal norms, family honor, and culturally prescribed behavior.

The comparative analysis underscores that while both cultures recognize shame as a negative moral emotion triggered by social or moral violations, English foregrounds personal emotional self-awareness whereas Uzbek foregrounds communal perception and social conformity. These differences align with broader distinctions between individualistic and collectivistic societies.

Overall, the study contributes to cross-cultural semantics, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication by showing how emotional concepts are linguistically structured and culturally motivated. The findings have implications for translation

studies, emotion research, anthropological linguistics, and cross-cultural education. Future research may expand this analysis by incorporating corpus-based quantitative methods, conversational analysis, sociolinguistic interviews, and comparative studies involving additional cultures.

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