COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ZOONYAMIC SMILES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. This thesis examines similes containing zoonymic (animal-name) components in English and Uzbek from a comparative linguistic and cultural perspective. The study aims to identify semantic similarities and differences in the use of animal imagery and to reveal how zoonymic similes reflect national mentality and cultural values. The analysis shows that while some similes are based on universal human experience, others are culture-specific and shaped by historical, social, and environmental factors.

Keywords: Similes, zoonyamic components, animal metaphors, English similes, Uzbek similes, comparative linguistics, paremiology.

Introduction. Figurative language plays a crucial role in human communication, enabling speakers to express ideas more vividly and emotionally. Among various figurative devices, similes occupy a special place due to their comparative nature and expressive power. Similes allow speakers to describe objects, phenomena, and human qualities by comparing them with more familiar or striking images. In many languages, including English and Uzbek, similes are widely used in both literary texts and everyday speech.

A particularly important group of similes consists of those that include zoonymic components, that is, animal names used as the basis of comparison. Animals have always been closely connected with human life, serving as sources of food, labor, protection, and symbolic meaning. As a result, people have long observed animal behavior and attributed certain qualities to different animals. These observations have been reflected in language through stable similes that compare human traits with animal characteristics.

Zoonymic similes are not random linguistic constructions. They are culturally and cognitively motivated units that reflect how speakers of a language perceive the surrounding world and conceptualize human behavior. Through animal imagery, abstract qualities such as courage, cunning, patience, laziness, or cruelty become more concrete and understandable. Therefore, the study of zoonymic similes contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and cognition.

In linguistic research, zoonymic similes are often studied within the framework of phraseology, semantics, and cultural linguistics. Scholars emphasize that such similes serve as carriers of cultural knowledge and collective experience. Comparative analysis of zoonymic similes in different languages allows researchers to identify universal patterns of metaphorical thinking as well as culture-specific features influenced by history, lifestyle, and environment.

In English, zoonymic similes are typically formed using explicit comparative markers such as as and like. These grammatical structures clearly signal comparison and make the meaning easily accessible to speakers. In Uzbek, by contrast, animal-based similes are frequently found in fixed expressions, proverbs, and folklore, where the comparative relationship may be expressed implicitly. This difference reflects typological distinctions between the two languages as well as differences in cultural tradition.

English zoonymic similes often focus on individual personality traits and psychological characteristics. Animals are used to describe intelligence, bravery, weakness, or emotional

states. Such similes are common in fiction, journalism, and spoken discourse, where they function as expressive stylistic devices. Many of these similes have become conventionalized and are understood without conscious reference to the original animal image.

Uzbek zoonymic similes, on the other hand, are closely connected with moral and social evaluation. They frequently appear in folk speech and proverbs, serving a didactic function. Through animal imagery, socially approved behavior is encouraged, while undesirable traits are criticized. Animals that have played an important role in traditional Uzbek life, such as horses, camels, and wolves, are particularly prominent in such similes. These animals symbolize endurance, strength, vigilance, and other culturally valued qualities.

A comparative analysis reveals both similarities and differences in the use of zoonymic similes in English and Uzbek. Some animal symbols are shared across cultures due to universal human observation of animal behavior. In such cases, similar qualities are associated with the same animals in both languages. However, there are also significant differences. Certain animals that are culturally important in Uzbek may have limited metaphorical significance in English, while some English animal images may not be equally productive in Uzbek.

These differences demonstrate that zoonymic similes are shaped not only by universal cognitive mechanisms but also by specific cultural and historical conditions. The environment in which a speech community lives, its economic activities, and its traditional values all influence the selection of animals and the meanings associated with them.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, zoonymic similes illustrate how abstract human qualities are understood through concrete and embodied experience. Animals function as source domains that provide structured knowledge for interpreting human behavior. Through repeated use, these metaphorical associations become stable and conventionalized, forming part of a language's figurative system.

The study of zoonymic similes is also important for translation and intercultural communication. Literal translation of such similes may not always convey the intended meaning, especially when cultural associations differ. Therefore, translators and language learners must take into account both linguistic form and cultural background to achieve accurate interpretation.

Conclusion. This thesis demonstrates that similes with zoonymic components constitute a significant part of both English and Uzbek linguistic systems. They reflect universal patterns of human cognition as well as culture-specific values shaped by historical and social experience. English zoonymic similes tend to emphasize individual characteristics and psychological traits, whereas Uzbek similes often carry moral and social evaluation rooted in folk tradition.

The comparative analysis confirms that animal imagery serves as an effective means of conceptualizing human behavior in both languages. At the same time, differences in the choice of animals and their symbolic meanings highlight the role of cultural environment in shaping figurative language. The study underscores the importance of considering both linguistic and cultural factors in the analysis of zoonymic similes and contributes to a broader understanding of language as a reflection of culture and cognition.

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