METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Shomurodova Nilufar Alisher qizi
Teacher, Denov Specialized School No. 2,
Email: shomurodovanilufar@7991.com
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Abstract

Metaphors play a significant role in everyday communication, literature, and thought. They are not only linguistic expressions but also cognitive tools that shape our perception of reality. This paper explores the metaphorical systems in English and Uzbek, focusing on the similarities and cultural differences in conceptual metaphors. Through qualitative comparison, it highlights how languages encode human experiences such as emotions, time, and social relations differently, yet often share universal cognitive patterns. The findings underscore the importance of metaphor in cross-cultural understanding and second language acquisition.

Keywords: metaphor, conceptual metaphor theory, English, Uzbek, cross-cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, metaphorical mapping.

1. Introduction

Metaphor is a pervasive phenomenon in all languages, functioning not only as a rhetorical device but also as a fundamental mechanism of human cognition. According to Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980), we understand abstract domains through more concrete, embodied experiences. For example, we say “time is money” or “heart is heavy” to express ideas using metaphorical mappings.

Uzbek and English, belonging to two different language families (Turkic and Germanic respectively), offer rich metaphorical traditions rooted in their cultural and historical backgrounds. This article examines the metaphorical systems in both languages, focusing on commonly used expressions related to emotions, time, and social status.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study relies on **Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**, which proposes that metaphors are not confined to language, but reflect conceptual structures in the human mind. Metaphors consist of a **source domain** (concrete concept) and a **target domain** (abstract concept). For instance:

- *Life is a journey* – “journey” is the source domain, and “life” is the target.

The study classifies metaphors into three broad categories:

- **Structural metaphors**: where one concept is structured in terms of another (e.g., *argument is war*)
- **Orientational metaphors**: based on spatial orientation (e.g., *happy is up*)
- **Ontological metaphors**: assigning substance or boundaries to abstract concepts (e.g., *inflation is a monster*)

3. Methodology

The study uses a qualitative method involving:

- Collection of metaphorical expressions from bilingual dictionaries, corpora, and literary texts.
- Categorization into conceptual metaphor types.
- Cultural and semantic analysis to compare metaphorical patterns in English and Uzbek.

A dataset of 60 metaphors from each language was selected and analyzed according to their conceptual mappings.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Emotion Metaphors

Both languages metaphorize emotions in terms of physical states or forces:

Concept	English	Uzbek
Anger	*He blew his top*	**Uning jahli osmonga chiqdi** (His anger rose to the sky)
Love	*He fell in love*	**Sevgi domiga tushdi** (He fell into the trap of love)

These metaphors show that emotions are often understood as spatial movements or containment in both cultures, although imagery may differ slightly.

4.2 Time and Life Metaphors

Time is conceptualized linearly in both languages:

- English: *Time flies*, *Wasting time*
- Uzbek: **Vaqt uchadi**, **Vaqtni isrof qilmoq**

Similarly, life is often seen as a journey or road:

- English: *He's on the wrong path*
- Uzbek: **U noto'g'ri yo'ldan ketmoqda**

Despite lexical differences, the **journey** metaphor is culturally universal.

4.3 Socio-Cultural Metaphors

Some metaphors are deeply rooted in specific cultural knowledge:

- English: *Glass ceiling* (unseen barrier in career advancement) – No direct equivalent in Uzbek.
- Uzbek: **Ko'z ostida tutmoq** (To keep someone under the eye) – indicates control/suspicion, not common in English metaphorical use.

These differences illustrate the need for cultural context in metaphor interpretation.

4.4 Body and Nature Imagery

Both languages utilize human anatomy and natural phenomena metaphorically:

- English: *Cold feet* (fear or hesitation)
- Uzbek: **Qo'li sovuq** (cold-handed – unskilled or unlucky)
- English: *Stormy relationship*
- Uzbek: **Ko'kka chiqdi-yu, yerga tushdi** (He went up to the sky and fell down – emotional highs and lows)

The body and nature serve as **universal source domains**, yet the mappings reflect **language-specific associations**.

5. Pedagogical and Translational Implications

Metaphors are challenging for language learners and translators due to their non-literal nature. Understanding conceptual mappings helps in:

- Improving metaphor comprehension and usage
- Enhancing intercultural communication
- Avoiding literal translation errors

Example:

- *He has skeletons in the closet* → literal translation in Uzbek would lose the metaphorical meaning of "hidden secrets."

Instead, **functional equivalents** like **"Uning yashirin sirlari bor"** (He has hidden secrets) should be used.

6. Conclusion

This comparative study shows that English and Uzbek metaphorical systems share common cognitive frameworks, particularly in universal domains like emotion, time, and life. However, cultural differences influence metaphor selection, imagery, and usage. Raising awareness of these patterns enhances both linguistic and cultural competence, especially for learners, translators, and intercultural communicators.

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