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CULTURAL MATRIX IN LANGUAGE: HOW METAPHORS REFLECT ENGLISH AND UZBEK MINDSETS

Annotation

This article explores the deep interconnection between language, culture, and conceptual systems through the lens of cognitive linguistics, specifically focusing on metaphorical expressions in English and Uzbek languages. Drawing upon Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) established by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the study examines how cultural matrices shape cognitive categorization and linguistic worldview. By analyzing parallel and divergent metaphorical conceptualizations of abstract domains such as time, emotion, human relationships, and social interaction in both cultures, the research highlights how ecological, historical, and traditional factors mold distinct national mindsets. The findings demonstrate that while universal bodily experiences underpin primary metaphors, culturally specific metonymies and metaphors reveal unique axiological orientations, value systems, and psychological paradigms inherent to English and Uzbek native speakers.

Keywords: cultural matrix, conceptual metaphor, English mindset, Uzbek mindset, cognitive linguistics, conceptual domain, worldview.

КУЛЬТУРНАЯ МАТРИЦА В ЯЗЫКЕ: КАК МЕТАФОРЫ ОТРАЖАЮТ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ И УЗБЕКСКИЙ МЕНТАЛИТЕТЫ

Аннотация

В данной статье исследуется глубокая взаимосвязь между языком, культурой и концептуальными системами через призму когнитивной лингвистики, с особым акцентом на метафорические выражения в английском и узбекском языках. Опираясь на теорию концептуальной метафоры (CMT) Джорджа Лакоффа и Марка Джонсона, в исследовании рассматривается то, как культурные матрицы формируют когнитивную категоризацию и языковую картину мира. Анализируя параллельные и расходящиеся метафорические концептуализации таких абстрактных областей, как время, эмоции, человеческие отношения и социальное взаимодействие в обеих культурах, исследование подчеркивает, как экологические, исторические и традиционные факторы формируют различные национальные менталитеты. Полученные результаты показывают, что, хотя универсальный телесный опыт лежит в основе первичных метафор, культурно специфичные метонимии и метафоры выявляют уникальные аксиологические ориентации и ценностные системы.

Ключевые слова: культурная матрица, концептуальная метафора, английский менталитет, узбекский менталитет, когнитическая лингвистика, концептуальная область, языковая картина мира.

TILNING MADANIY MATRITSASI: METAFORALAR INGLIZ VA O‘ZBEK MENTALITETINI QANDAY AKS ETTIRADI

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada kognitiv lingvistika nuqtai nazaridan til, madaniyat va konseptual tizimlar o‘rtasidagi o‘zaro bog‘liqlik ingliz va o‘zbek tillaridagi metaforik birliklar misolida tahlil qilinadi. Jorj Lakoff va Mark Jonson tomonidan ilgari surilgan Konseptual metafora nazariyasiga tayangan holda, tadqiqot madaniy matritsalar inson tafakkurini va milliy til manzarasini qanday shakllantirishini o‘rganadi. Ingliz va o‘zbek madaniyatlarida vaqt, hissiyot, insoniy munosabatlar va ijtimoiy faoliyat kabi mavhum sohalarning qiyosiy va farqli metaforik talqinlari tahlil qilinib, ekologik, tarixiy hamda an’anaviy omillarning milliy mentalitetga ta’siri yoritiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, asosiy jismoniy tajribalar universal xususiyatga ega bo‘lsa-da, milliy-madaniy xususiyatga ega metaforalar har ikki xalqning o‘ziga xos qadriyatlar tizimi va psixologik olamini ochib beradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: madaniy matritsa, konseptual metafora, ingliz mentaliteti, o‘zbek mentaliteti, kognitiv lingvistika, konseptual soha, lingvomadaniy dunyoqarash.

Modern cognitive linguistics views language not merely as a formal system of signs and grammatical rules, but as an integral reflection of human cognition, cultural experience, and societal worldview. Among various cognitive mechanisms, metaphor occupies a central position. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson famously articulated in Metaphors We Live By, metaphor is not merely a device of poetic imagination, but a fundamental cognitive instrument through which human beings conceptualize abstract domains of experience in terms of more concrete physical realities. The cultural matrix of a linguistic community-encompassing its traditions, historical background, ecological environment, and moral values directly influences how conceptual metaphors are formed, prioritized, and manifested in discourse. Comparing English and Uzbek linguistic mindsets through metaphorical analysis provides profound insights into how two distinct cultures perceive reality, time, interpersonal relations, and emotional states.

The investigation of national worldviews through linguistic conceptualization has become one of the cornerstone paradigms in contemporary linguistics. Language acts as a repository of cultural memory, crystallizing centuries of societal evolution, philosophical reflection, and adaptive strategies to the natural and social environment. While structural linguistics focused primarily on the autonomous nature of linguistic sign systems, the cognitive turn redirected

scholarly attention toward the human factor in language how cognitive structures map experiential domains onto linguistic units. In this context, English and Uzbek represent two fascinating typological and cultural traditions whose metaphorical systems offer a rich terrain for comparative cognitive analysis.

Theoretical Foundations of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in Cross-Cultural Studies

The epistemological shift from structuralism to cognitive linguistics brought a revolutionary understanding of metaphor. Traditional linguistic approaches regarded metaphor as a stylistic deviation or rhetorical ornamentation. However, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) posits that metaphor is fundamentally conceptual rather than linguistic. A conceptual metaphor involves a mapping between two conceptual domains: the source domain, typically concrete and grounded in bodily experience, and the target domain, typically abstract, complex, and intangible.

In cross-cultural linguistic studies, comparing Western and Eastern conceptual systems reveals both universal cognitive patterns and culturally specific variations. While primary metaphors rooted in universal human physiology are shared across languages, complex cultural metaphors are deeply embedded in the historical and social frameworks of a specific speech community. Zoltán Kövecses notes that metaphor variation across cultures is driven by several major factors: differential experience, cognitive style, cultural priorities, and historical developments. The Uzbek cultural matrix, shaped by traditional hospitality, collectivism, agrarian heritage, and spiritual heritage, generates distinct metaphorical projections compared to the English matrix, which reflects industrial heritage, individualism, precision, and efficiency.

Furthermore, conceptual blending theory (Fauconnier and Turner) extends CMT by showing how mental spaces interact dynamically during metaphorical projection. In both English and Uzbek discourse, speakers invoke complex blended spaces where cultural symbols—such as the British emphasis on fair play, punctuality, and institutional order versus the Uzbek emphasis on mahalliychilik, mahalla, oqibat, andoza, and respect for elders-permeate everyday metaphorical expressions.

The Concept of “Cultural Matrix” in Cognitive Linguistics

The term "cultural matrix" refers to the multifaceted network of beliefs, values, historical memories, ecological conditions, social norms, and behavioral patterns that form the matrix within which a linguistic community interprets reality. Language is both molded by this matrix and serves as its primary transmission vehicle. In the English-speaking cultural matrix, shaped significantly by the Industrial Revolution, Enlightenment philosophy, maritime trade, and modern capitalism, time, efficiency, and individual autonomy occupy paramount axiological positions. Concepts are frequently spatialized, quantified, and mechanized. Conversely, the Uzbek cultural matrix is deeply rooted in Central Asian agrarian civilizations, Silk Road trade intersections, Islamic ethical traditions, and community-centric social structures. Here, relational harmony, spiritual depth, collective responsibility (jamoatchilik), and respect for generational wisdom (kattalarga hurmat, kichiklarga izzat) govern cognitive categorization. Consequently, abstract concepts such as social status, time, morality, and inner states are mapped onto concrete domains derived from nature, agriculture, familial relationships, and spiritual traditions.

Conceptualization of Time in English and Uzbek Linguistic Worldviews

To illustrate the interaction between the cultural matrix and metaphorical framing, we can examine several core conceptual domains, beginning with time. In the English linguistic mindset, time is predominantly conceptualized as a physical commodity or resource, reflecting a capitalist and industrialized worldview. Expressions such as:

save time spend time waste time time is running out invest time budget your time

These conceptualize time as money or a valuable currency that can be accumulated, traded, expended, or exhausted. This commodification of time underscores the cultural imperative of productivity and temporal economy.

Conversely, in the Uzbek linguistic mindset, time is often perceived through a more cyclical, relational, and philosophical lens. Time is frequently viewed as a living entity, a flowing river, or a divine allocation beyond strict human control. This is reflected in idioms and proverbial expressions such as:

Vaqt oqar daryo (Time is a flowing river) Vaqt – o‘tkinchi shamol (Time is a passing wind) Sabr tagi oltin (The foundation of patience is gold – emphasizing temporal endurance over rushing)

While modern Uzbek has adopted economic metaphors of time due to globalization and urbanization, traditional idioms and discourse patterns continue to prioritize patience (sabr), spiritual readiness, and interpersonal harmony over strict clock-driven urgency. The Uzbek conceptualization aligns time with human destiny (qismat) and relational events rather than abstract ticking seconds.

Metaphorical Mapping of Emotional Domains: Heart, Soul, and Mind

Emotional domains exhibit equally striking cultural nuances across English and Uzbek. In English, anger and emotional intensity are frequently conceptualized as a heated fluid in a container, evidenced by expressions such as:

boil with anger lose one's temper blow off steam

These metaphors emphasize internal pressure control, containment, and thermodynamic equilibrium.

In Uzbek, emotional states are deeply intertwined with the physical heart (yurak) and soul/inner self (ko‘ngil), representing the spiritual and emotional center of human existence. Expressions such as:

ko‘nglim qoldi (my heart/soul stayed behind – meaning I was disappointed or disillusioned) yuragi yorilib ketdi (his heart split – meaning he was terrified or shocked) ichim qoraydi (my interior darkened – meaning sorrow, grievance, or resentment) ko‘ngli ochiq (open-hearted – generous, sincere) bag‘ri keng (wide-bosomed – tolerant, magnanimous)

These somatomorphic and spiritual metaphors reveal an axiological orientation where emotions are experienced holistically within the spiritual-corporeal unity of the person. The heart and ko‘ngil serve not merely as biological pumps, but as cognitive and emotional organs capable of holding sorrow, joy, purity, and malice.

In conclusion, while universal cognitive structures govern basic human experiences, culturally specific metaphors act as linguistic keys to understanding the distinct values, worldviews, and psychological frameworks of English and Uzbek speakers. Conceptual Metaphor Theory confirms that metaphor is not a mere rhetorical flourish but the primary mechanism of human thought. Further interdisciplinary research in cognitive ethnolinguistics, contrastive phraseology, and cross-cultural pragmatics will continue to enrich our understanding of how language bridges diverse cultural horizons, offering deeper insights into the intricate relationship between linguistic expression and national consciousness.

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