



CONCEPTUALIZING EMOTIONS THROUGH METAPHOR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: *Metaphor is one of the most powerful linguistic devices through which people conceptualize and communicate emotions. Rather than describing emotions directly, speakers often rely on metaphorical expressions grounded in bodily experience, cultural beliefs, and cognitive processes. This article examines the expression of emotional meaning through metaphor in Uzbek and English from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics. Drawing upon the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), as well as the studies of Kövecses, Gibbs, and Talmy, the paper explores how universal bodily experiences interact with culture-specific conceptualizations to shape emotional language. Through a comparative analysis of metaphorical expressions related to happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and love, the article demonstrates both universal tendencies and culturally distinctive patterns in Uzbek and English.*

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor, emotional meaning, cognitive linguistics, English language, Uzbek language, conceptualization, emotion, culture.*

Emotion constitutes one of the fundamental dimensions of human cognition and communication. Since emotions are abstract psychological experiences, people often understand and describe them through more concrete physical experiences. Metaphor provides an effective cognitive mechanism that enables speakers to conceptualize abstract emotional states using familiar bodily experiences and environmental phenomena.



Traditional linguistic theories regarded metaphor merely as a stylistic ornament used in literature. However, the publication of “*Metaphors We Live By*” by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) revolutionized metaphor studies by arguing that metaphor is not simply a linguistic phenomenon but a fundamental mechanism of human thought. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), abstract concepts such as emotions are systematically understood through mappings from more concrete source domains.

Both English and Uzbek contain a rich variety of emotional metaphors reflecting universal human experiences as well as culturally specific worldviews. Comparing these metaphorical systems contributes not only to cognitive linguistics but also to intercultural communication, translation studies, and language teaching. Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains metaphor as a mapping between a concrete source domain and an abstract target domain. Emotional experiences cannot be observed directly; therefore, people conceptualize them through physical experiences such as movement, temperature, pressure, light, darkness, and spatial orientation. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that everyday language is filled with conceptual metaphors that unconsciously structure human thinking. Kövecses (2000, 2015) further demonstrates that emotions such as anger, happiness, fear, sadness, and love possess systematic metaphorical structures across languages. Culture-Specific Emotional Metaphors: Although many emotional metaphors are universal, each language also reflects its unique cultural worldview.

Uzbek emotional metaphors frequently involve the heart (yurak), soul (ruh, qalb), and liver (jigar). Examples include: Yuragi ezildi, jigarim kuyadi, ko‘ngli yorishdi. The liver “jigar” carries strong emotional significance in Uzbek culture, symbolizing affection, compassion, and deep emotional attachment. English, on the other hand, often employs metaphors involving the mind, head, or blood: *Cold-hearted, warm-hearted, hot-headed, blood boiled*. These linguistic differences demonstrate how cultural values shape metaphorical conceptualization despite shared cognitive foundations.



Embodiment and Emotional Meaning: One of the central principles of Cognitive Linguistics is embodiment. According to Lakoff and Johnson, human cognition is grounded in bodily experience. Emotional metaphors arise because physiological reactions accompany emotional states. For example:

Physical Experience	Emotional Meaning
Increased temperature	Anger
Upright posture	Happiness
Bent posture	Sadness
Increased heartbeat	Fear
Warm touch	Love

These bodily experiences motivate metaphorical language in both Uzbek and English. The comparison of Uzbek and English emotional metaphors reveals both universality and cultural specificity. Universal metaphors arise from shared human physiology, supporting Lakoff and Johnson's claim that conceptual metaphor is rooted in embodied cognition. Meanwhile, culture-specific metaphors reflect historical traditions, religious beliefs, and social values unique to each linguistic community. The findings also support Kövecses' notion that emotional metaphor operates simultaneously at universal and culture-dependent levels. English and Uzbek speakers conceptualize happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and love in remarkably similar ways, yet each language emphasizes different bodily organs and cultural symbols. These observations have important implications for translation studies. Literal translation of emotional metaphors may fail to convey intended meanings because metaphorical mappings differ across cultures. Therefore, translators should focus on conceptual equivalence rather than lexical correspondence. Furthermore, understanding emotional metaphors can enhance foreign language teaching by helping learners interpret figurative expressions naturally and appreciate the cultural dimensions of language.

Conclusion:



Metaphor serves as an essential cognitive tool for expressing emotional meaning in both Uzbek and English. Rather than functioning merely as a stylistic device, metaphor structures the way people perceive, experience, and communicate emotions. Universal metaphorical patterns, such as **HAPPINESS IS UP**, **SADNESS IS DOWN**, and **ANGER IS HEAT**, demonstrate the role of shared bodily experience in human cognition. At the same time, culturally specific metaphors reveal distinctive conceptualizations rooted in the historical and cultural traditions of each language.

The comparative study of emotional metaphors contributes significantly to cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication, translation studies, and language education. Future research may expand this comparison by incorporating corpus-based analyses, psycholinguistic experiments, and discourse studies to investigate how emotional metaphors evolve across different communicative contexts.

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