COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract

This article compares metaphorical expressions in English and Uzbek within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory. It shows that the two languages share a large core of universal, body-based metaphors (LIFE IS A JOURNEY, TIME IS MONEY, ANGER IS HEAT, MORE IS UP), but realise them through different images that reflect national culture, everyday life, religion and natural environment. The analysis covers metaphors based on the human body, animals, food, nature and the heart and liver as seats of emotion. Particular attention is paid to full, partial and zero equivalence and to the strategies of translating metaphors between the two languages.

Keywords: metaphor, conceptual metaphor, source domain, target domain, linguoculture, equivalence, translation, English, Uzbek.

Introduction

Metaphor was long treated as an ornament of poetic speech. Since the publication of Metaphors We Live By (1980) by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, it has been understood as a basic mechanism of human thinking: we understand abstract concepts such as time, emotion or life through more concrete experience. Everyday language is therefore full of metaphors that speakers hardly notice: to spend time, a warm welcome, prices are rising.

Comparing metaphors across languages reveals both what is common to human cognition and what is specific to each culture. English and Uzbek are genetically and typologically unrelated, belong to different civilisational traditions and developed in very different natural environments. This makes them a productive pair for comparison.

The aim of the article is to identify shared and culture-specific metaphorical models in English and Uzbek, to describe the degree of equivalence between them and to outline practical implications for translation and language teaching.

Theoretical background and methodology

In conceptual metaphor theory, a metaphor is a mapping from a concrete **source domain** onto an abstract **target domain**. In the expression he is at a crossroads in his life, the source domain JOURNEY structures the target domain LIFE. Lakoff and Johnson distinguish structural, orientational and ontological metaphors. Later work by Z. Kövecses showed that many metaphors are near-universal because they rest on shared bodily experience, while their concrete linguistic realisation varies with culture.

In Uzbek linguistics, metaphor has been studied mainly as a stylistic and semantic phenomenon, in works on lexicology and stylistics (for example, by M. Mukarramov and A. Shomaqsudov), and more recently from a cognitive and linguocultural perspective.

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The material includes about 400 metaphorical expressions selected from English and Uzbek phraseological and explanatory dictionaries, fiction, journalism and everyday speech. The methods are conceptual analysis, comparative-typological analysis and the analysis of translation equivalents. Each expression was classified by its source domain and by its degree of equivalence: full, partial or zero.

Shared metaphors in English and Uzbek

A large share of everyday metaphors coincide in both languages, because they rest on common bodily and social experience. These form the zone of full or near-full equivalence.

Conceptual metaphor	English	Uzbek
LIFE IS A JOURNEY	the path of life, at a crossroads, to lose one's way	hayot yo'li, hayot chorrahasida, yo'ldan adashmoq
TIME IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE	to spend / waste / save time	vaqt sarflamoq, vaqtni behuda o'tkazmoq, vaqtni tejamoq
ANGER IS HEAT	my blood is boiling, hot-headed	qoni qaynamoq, jahli chiqmoq, o't bo'lib yonmoq
MORE IS UP	prices rose / fell	narxlar ko'tarildi / tushdi
HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN	in high spirits, feeling down	ko'ngli ko'tarilmoq, ruhi tushmoq
THE HEART IS A FRAGILE OBJECT	a broken heart, heart of stone	ko'ngli sinmoq, yuragi ezilmoq, tosh yurak
ARGUMENT IS WAR	to attack / defend a position	fikrini himoya qilmoq, hujumga o'tmoq
UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING	to see the point, an eye-opener	ko'zi ochilmoq, aniq ko'rinib turibdi

These parallels confirm that orientational and body-based metaphors are largely universal. Some coincidences, however, are the result of later contact: expressions such as sovuq urush (cold war), temir parda (iron curtain) or bozor iqtisodiyoti entered Uzbek as calques, mostly through Russian.

Culture-specific metaphors and partial equivalents

The differences between the two languages lie less in the conceptual models than in the images chosen to express them. Four groups are especially revealing.

1. The body and the seat of emotions. In English, the heart is almost the only organ of feeling. Uzbek divides this role between yurak, ko'ngil, jigar (liver) and bag'ir (the chest or liver). A beloved child is jigarim or jigargo'sham; deep grief is bag'ri qon; a generous person is bag'ri keng. English renders these with heart images: my dear, heartbroken, big-hearted. The image changes while the concept stays.

2. Animals. Some animal metaphors coincide: the fox is sly (tulki), the lion is brave (sher yurak / lionhearted). Others diverge. The English owl symbolises wisdom, while the Uzbek boyo'g'li is associated with ruin and bad luck. English to work like a horse corresponds to Uzbek eshakdek ishlamoq (to work like a donkey). The dog is often neutral or positive in English (lucky dog, top dog), but mostly negative in Uzbek comparisons (itdek), despite its image as a loyal guard.

3. Food and hospitality. Bread (non) is sacred in Uzbek culture, and salt symbolises shared hospitality. Ingratitude is expressed as tuzini yeb, tuzlug'iga tupurmoq (to eat someone's salt and spit into the salt cellar), while English uses to bite the hand that feeds you. English food metaphors are often

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casual and evaluative: a piece of cake, not my cup of tea, bread and butter, which have no direct Uzbek image.

4. Nature and beauty. Uzbek, shaped by classical Persian-Turkic poetry, describes beauty through nature: oy yuzli (moon-faced), sarvqomat (cypress-tall), qoshi kamon (bow-browed). In English, moon-faced means round-faced and carries no praise. English, as the language of a seafaring nation, has many sea metaphors (all at sea, a sea of troubles, to know the ropes), while Uzbek prefers images of mountains and land: tog'dek suyanchiq (support like a mountain). Hard times are a rainy day in English but qora kunlar (black days) in Uzbek.

Structural and translation aspects

Structurally, English metaphors are often built on phrasal verbs and nouns used attributively (to bottle up feelings, a glass ceiling). Uzbek metaphors are typically verb-centred idioms with a body-part noun and a possessive suffix (ko'ngli sinmoq, boshi qotmoq), or comparisons with the suffix -dek / -day (tog'dek, sherday). The Uzbek comparative suffix makes simile and metaphor closely linked, while English separates them more clearly (like a lion versus a lion of a man).

By degree of equivalence, three groups can be distinguished:

- **Full equivalents** share both concept and image: heart of stone – tosh yurak; to lose one's way – yo'ldan adashmoq.
- **Partial equivalents** share the concept but use a different image: to work like a horse – eshakdek ishlamoq; a rainy day – qora kunlar; heartbroken – bag'ri qon.
- **Zero equivalents** have no metaphorical counterpart and must be explained: not my cup of tea, sarvqomat, jigargo'sha.

Accordingly, translators use three main strategies: keeping the same image when it exists in both languages; replacing the image with a culturally familiar one; or converting the metaphor into a literal description. Literal translation of partial equivalents is a frequent error among learners and can produce unintended meanings, as with moon-faced used as praise.

Conclusion

English and Uzbek share a common core of conceptual metaphors grounded in bodily experience: life as a journey, time as a resource, anger as heat, and emotional states as up and down. The languages differ mainly in the images that realise these models. Uzbek locates emotions in the heart, liver and chest, draws on bread, salt and hospitality, and describes beauty through classical poetic images of the moon and the cypress. English draws more on the sea, everyday consumer life and informal evaluation.

These results show that metaphor is both a universal cognitive tool and a mirror of national worldview. For translators and teachers, the key practical task is to recognise partial equivalents, where a shared concept hides a different image, and to avoid literal transfer. Further research could compile a bilingual dictionary of conceptual metaphors with corpus frequency data.

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