



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK BODY METAPHORS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines body-based metaphors in Uzbek and English, focusing on how body parts like the heart, head, and hand are used to express ideas such as emotion, intelligence, morality, and social values. The results show that both languages use similar metaphors for some body parts, however, there are important cultural differences. For example, in Uzbek, the liver "jigar" is used to show love and affection, which is not common in English.

Keywords: metaphor, cognitive linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, embodiment, body-based metaphors, cultural linguistics, cross-cultural comparison.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of how we perceive and understand of the world around us. One of the necessary stylistic device of linguistics is metaphor. The relationship between human experience and linguistic expression can be better understood through body-based metaphors, which use the parts of the human body to represent emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and other abstract concepts. For instance, the Uzbek phrase "Ko'ngli toza" (literally, "his heart is clean") describes morally truthworthy person, whereas the English phrase "He has a big heart" suggests kindness or generosity. Despite these similarities, cultural, historical, and cognitive factors can greatly influence how body parts are metaphorically used in different languages. This study looks into and compares how body parts are used metaphorically in English. Study's main objectives are to categorise and identify common body-based metaphors in English and Uzbek. By addressing these problems, the thesis contributes to the developing disciplines of cognitive linguistics and cross-cultural metaphor studies.

Lakoff and Johnson argue that abstract domains (such as time, emotion, morality) are often understood through more concrete, embodied experiences, such as movement, force, or physical objects. Key to this theory is the idea of **source and target domains**: the source domain (often bodily or physical experience) helps us understand the target domain (often abstract). Lakoff and Johnson emphasize that these mappings are **systematic and grounded in bodily experience**, a concept known as **embodiment**. Since all humans share similar biological experiences (having a head, hands, heart, etc.), many body-based metaphors are **cross-linguistically common**, though their cultural elaborations may differ [4]. Embodiment is a central notion in cognitive linguistics that

forms the basis of metaphorical thinking, meaning our bodies are the primary source of metaphorical concepts. In this view, parts of the body like the heart, head, hands, and stomach are frequently used metaphorically across languages because they are central to physical and emotional experiences.[3] Metaphors involving the **heart, head, hands,** and **stomach** are particularly common and reveal how deeply ingrained bodily experience is in English-speaking cognition. For example: “Think with your head” “Have a gut feeling”, “Warm-hearted person”. While research on metaphor in Uzbek is less widespread in the international literature. [1] Uzbek folk sayings, proverbs, and idioms contain a rich source of body-based metaphors. For instance: “Ko’ngli toza” (clean-hearted) → Heart is morality, “Qo’li ochiq” (open-handed) → Hand is generosity. “Ko’zi yoridi” (she gives a birth). Uzbek metaphors mostly tend to reflect values rooted in **Islamic tradition, social customs, and oral folklore**. Some metaphors also highlight body parts that are less emphasized in English, such as the **liver (jigar)**, which in Uzbek symbolizes affection and closeness (“Jigarim” can be used to mean “my dear”). [2]. Even when metaphors are based on common bodily experiences, their cultural elaboration can vary greatly. [8]. For instance, some cultures attribute emotional depth to the liver, stomach, or soul, even though the heart is commonly linked to emotions. [7] Comparing the metaphorical use of body parts in Uzbek and English can highlight underlying cultural values as well as cognitive patterns. For example, English metaphors may stress individual emotion or reason, whereas Uzbek metaphors frequently reflect collectivist values, family ties, and hospitality.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative, comparative linguistic methodology used in this study is based on Cognitive Linguistics, specifically Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which was created by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. Finding and contrasting conceptual metaphors involving body parts in Uzbek and English is the aim. Since metaphors are influenced by both culture and cognition, the study also includes aspects of cross-cultural pragmatics. Thus, the method integrates cultural-linguistic analysis cultural-reflected metaphors and cognitive analysis thought-reflected metaphors.

RESULTS

According to the analysis, body-based metaphors are widely used in both Uzbek and English to convey abstract ideas like emotion, morality, power, relationships, and thought. Stomach, liver, foot, hand, eye, head, and heart were used to categorise the metaphorical expressions that were found in both languages. According to the analysis; hand, head, and heart were the most commonly used as a component of metaphor body parts in both languages. Some body parts, like the liver in Uzbek, however, were more common in one language than the other metaphorical meanings.

DISCUSSION

From findings it can be seen that there are numerous similarities using body-based metaphors in both languages. For example, both languages use the heart as a symbol of emotion or morality, and the head as a symbol of intellect. While there are many similarities, certain metaphors are unique to one culture, reflecting cultural values

and traditional worldviews. In Uzbek, the liver (jigar) plays a significant metaphorical role. It is associated with love, closeness, and emotional attachment, as seen in expressions like: “Sen mening jigarimsan” – You are my liver (You are dear to me). In contrast, the liver rarely appears in English metaphors. But in Uzbek language this highlights a culture-specific mapping Liver is love, dearness. This metaphor may be linked to traditional Central Asian beliefs and the symbolic significance of internal organs in folk medicine and oral literature. Another interesting cultural difference is the metaphor “Ko’ngli toza” in Uzbek, meaning someone is morally pure. While English uses “pure-hearted” or “kind-hearted,” the emphasis on inner cleanliness is more culturally marked in Uzbek. This reflects how Uzbek culture emphasizes moral purity, often expressed through metaphors involving cleanliness or clarity. A notable difference was in the frequency of metaphorical usage: In English, metaphors involving emotion heart, thought head, and communication mouth were dominant. In Uzbek, alongside similar uses of heart and head, liver, eyes, and stomach were more metaphorically active. This difference may stem from cultural storytelling traditions, where the body is often used symbolically in proverbs and idioms. These findings suggest that while the human body provides a shared source domain, the target domain can be shaped by culture, values, and tradition. In order to grab connotative meaning of the phrases learners need cultural awareness to understand metaphorical expressions.[5]

CONCLUSION

Metaphor is a cultural construct that is influenced by linguistic traditions, social norms, and historical values. The study advances our knowledge of the interconnectedness of language, cognition, and culture and has applications in language instruction, translation, and intercultural communication. The results demonstrate that both languages display culturally specific mappings even though they share metaphorical patterns based on universal embodied experience, such as using the head for intellect and the heart for emotion.

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