

NATIONAL-CULTURAL FEATURES THROUGH METAPHOR IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK CORPORA

Hazratqulova Muborak Rajabovna

Assistant teacher, University of Economics and Pedagogy

hzzratkulovamuborak@gmail.com

Abstract: This article examines how national-cultural features are expressed through metaphor in English and Uzbek corpora. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, corpus-based metaphor studies, and the Metaphor Identification Procedure, the article argues that metaphor is not only a linguistic ornament but also a culturally shaped cognitive and pragmatic mechanism. English and Uzbek metaphors share many embodied source domains such as body, movement, space, light, growth, and construction. However, they differ in frequency, lexical realization, grammatical packaging, evaluative force, and discourse function. English corpus data often show metaphors organized around system, mechanism, competition, architecture, and individual agency, whereas Uzbek corpus evidence frequently foregrounds path, foundation, heart, moral purity, social harmony, light, and collective value. These differences reveal that metaphor reflects both universal bodily experience and culturally specific models of life, emotion, education, morality, and social relations.

Keywords: metaphor, corpus linguistics, national-cultural features, English, Uzbek, conceptual metaphor, cultural linguistics.

Introduction

Metaphor has traditionally been understood as a figure of speech, but modern cognitive linguistics treats it as a basic mechanism of thought. Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor allows people to understand abstract domains through more concrete areas of experience, such as space, movement, body, force, and object manipulation. Their work changed the study of metaphor by showing that metaphor is deeply connected with everyday reasoning, not only poetic language. ([University of Chicago Press](#))

From this perspective, metaphor is especially important for the study of national-cultural features. A culture does not simply use metaphors randomly; it selects, repeats, stabilizes, and evaluates certain images. For example, when English discourse describes policy as an *architecture*, society as a *system*, or debate as a *battle*, these metaphors organize abstract social life through technical, structural, and competitive frames. In Uzbek discourse, metaphors such as *hayot yo'li* "the path of life," *bilim poydevori* "the foundation of knowledge," *qalb nuri* "the light of the heart," or *iliq munosabat* "warm relations" often express moral, emotional, and social meanings.

The aim of this article is to analyze how national-cultural features are represented through metaphor in English and Uzbek corpora. The article focuses on three questions: first, which source domains are common in both languages; second, which metaphors reveal culturally specific values; and third, how corpus-based analysis helps make metaphor research more reliable.

Theoretical Background

Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains metaphor as a mapping between a source domain and a target domain. The source domain is usually more concrete, while the target domain is more abstract. For example, in the metaphor **LIFE IS A JOURNEY**, the concrete

experience of movement along a road is used to understand life, goals, difficulties, and progress.

Kövecses develops this view further by emphasizing that metaphor is both universal and culturally variable. Human beings share bodily experience, so many metaphors are similar across languages. At the same time, cultures differ in social history, religion, values, environment, and communicative habits, so metaphorical systems may vary from one language community to another. His book *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation* directly addresses how conceptual metaphors are shaped by culture and social experience.

Corpus linguistics gives metaphor research empirical support. Instead of relying only on intuition, researchers can examine repeated metaphorical patterns in large collections of texts. Stefanowitsch notes that corpus-based methods have become a major empirical paradigm in linguistics and are useful for studying metaphor and metonymy in real language use. (Stefanowitsch) The Metaphor Identification Procedure proposed by the Pragglejaz Group is also important because it gives researchers a systematic method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse.

For Uzbek, electronic corpus resources such as Uzbekcorpus.uz provide search options by token, lemma, concordance, parallel corpus, educational corpus, and other linguistic tools. This makes it possible to study Uzbek metaphor not only through selected literary examples but also through broader corpus evidence.

Methodological Approach

A comparative corpus-based study of English and Uzbek metaphors may follow four steps.

First, the researcher selects comparable corpora. For English, possible sources include COCA, BNC, media corpora, academic texts, or literary texts. For Uzbek, possible sources include Uzbekcorpus.uz, Uzbek media texts, literary works, educational discourse, and self-compiled corpora. The corpora should be comparable by genre, period, and topic.

Second, metaphorical units are identified. The researcher can use MIP or MIPVU principles: the contextual meaning of a lexical unit is compared with its more basic meaning. If there is contrast between the contextual and basic meanings, and the contextual meaning can be understood through comparison with the basic meaning, the word may be marked as metaphorical.

Third, metaphors are grouped according to source domains. Common source domains include journey, body, building, light, growth, war, machine, disease, container, and natural force.

Fourth, metaphors are interpreted functionally. In this article, four major functions are considered: nominative, evaluative, expressive, and argumentative. The nominative function names or conceptualizes abstract phenomena. The evaluative function gives positive or negative judgment. The expressive function intensifies emotional meaning. The argumentative function frames reasoning and makes certain conclusions appear natural.

English and Uzbek share many embodied metaphors because both languages are grounded in human physical experience. People in both cultures understand abstract states through body, movement, space, heat, weight, and force.

For example, emotional difficulty may be conceptualized as heaviness. English expressions such as *a heavy heart*, *burdened by responsibility*, or *weighed down by sadness* show that emotional pressure is understood through physical weight. Uzbek has similar expressions such as *yuragi og'ir*, *ko'ngli g'ash*, or *dard yukini ko'tarmoq*. In both languages, emotion is not presented as a purely mental event; it is embodied as something felt, carried, pressed, or located inside the person.

Another shared source domain is movement. English uses expressions such as *move forward*, *reach a goal*, *fall behind*, and *take a new direction*. Uzbek also uses movement metaphors: *oldinga siljimoq*, *maqsad sari intilmoq*, *yo'l topmoq*, *hayot yo'li*, *taraqqiyot yo'li*. These expressions show the conceptual metaphor **PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT**.

However, the cultural emphasis is not identical. English movement metaphors often foreground individual progress, planning, and measurable achievement. Uzbek movement metaphors often carry collective, moral, and social meanings. For example, *to'g'ri yo'l* "the right path" may refer not only to practical success but also to moral correctness.

English corpus data often show a strong tendency to conceptualize abstract domains through technical, structural, and competitive metaphors. In academic, political, and educational discourse, words such as *framework*, *mechanism*, *structure*, *platform*, *engine*, *architecture*, and *network* are frequent. These metaphors present institutions, policies, and social processes as designed systems.

For example, *policy architecture* conceptualizes policy as a constructed object with parts, levels, and design. *Educational framework* suggests that education has a stable structure. *Economic engine* presents the economy as a machine that produces movement and growth. These metaphors are not neutral; they shape how people reason. If education is a system, then it can be managed, measured, repaired, and optimized.

English public discourse also frequently uses competition and conflict metaphors. Phrases such as *fight poverty*, *battle misinformation*, *win the debate*, *campaign against disease*, or *frontline workers* frame social problems as opponents. This creates an argumentative structure: there is an enemy, a strategy, a struggle, and a desired victory.

Such metaphors reveal cultural values connected with efficiency, control, agency, institutional planning, and competition. They do not mean that English culture is only technical or competitive, but they show that these frames are highly available in English public language.

Uzbek Corpus Patterns: Path, Foundation, Heart, Light, and Moral Evaluation

Uzbek metaphorical discourse often foregrounds social harmony, moral evaluation, emotional sincerity, respect, and collective development. One of the most productive Uzbek metaphorical domains is the path. Expressions such as *hayot yo'li*, *ilm yo'li*, *taraqqiyot yo'li*, *to'g'ri yo'l*, and *yo'l-yo'riq* show that life, knowledge, development, and morality are understood as movement along a path.

The foundation metaphor is also important. Uzbek expressions such as *bilim poydevori*, *tarbiya poydevori*, *kelajak poydevori*, and *mustahkam asos* conceptualize education, upbringing, and social development as a building. The idea is not only structural but also moral: if the foundation is strong, the future will be stable.

The heart and inner world are especially important in Uzbek metaphor. Expressions such as *qalbi toza*, *ko'ngli ochiq*, *yuragi keng*, *ko'ngli sinmoq*, and *qalb nuri* show how personality and emotion are evaluated through inner moral space. In English, *heart* is also frequent, but in Uzbek, *qalb*, *yurak*, and *ko'ngil* often carry strong ethical and cultural meanings.

Light metaphors are also culturally significant. Words such as *nur*, *ziyo*, *yorug' kelajak*, and *ma'rifat nuri* connect knowledge, goodness, and hope with illumination. This reflects the cultural value of enlightenment, education, and moral clarity.

The comparison shows that English and Uzbek metaphors are both universal and culturally specific. They share embodied metaphors because human beings have similar

bodies and physical experiences. Both languages use journey, building, body, light, and force metaphors. But the same source domain may carry different cultural weight.

For example, the building metaphor in English often has institutional and technical meaning: *policy architecture, legal framework, social structure*. In Uzbek, building metaphors often have educational and moral meaning: *tarbiya poydevori, bilim asosi, kelajak poydevori*. English tends to highlight design and function; Uzbek tends to highlight stability, upbringing, and social responsibility.

The journey metaphor also differs. English examples often emphasize progress, success, and goal achievement. Uzbek examples often combine progress with moral direction: *to'g'ri yo'l, ezgulik yo'li, ilm yo'li*. Therefore, the journey is not only practical movement but also ethical orientation.

The body metaphor reveals another difference. English often presents emotion dynamically through pressure, impact, heat, or burden: *anger boiled over, grief hit him, stress weighed on her*. Uzbek often places emotional and moral states in the *ko'ngil, qalb*, or *yurak*. This shows a culturally strong connection between emotion, sincerity, respect, and moral character.

Conclusion

Metaphor is one of the most powerful linguistic means for expressing national-cultural features. English and Uzbek corpora show that metaphor is not simply decorative language. It names abstract concepts, evaluates social reality, intensifies emotion, and frames arguments.

English metaphorical patterns often highlight system, mechanism, architecture, competition, and individual agency. Uzbek metaphorical patterns frequently highlight path, foundation, heart, light, morality, and social harmony. These tendencies should not be treated as absolute oppositions, because both languages contain many overlapping metaphors. However, corpus-based comparison makes it possible to see which metaphorical models are more prominent, more conventionalized, and more culturally loaded in each language.

A corpus-based approach is especially useful because it allows researchers to move from isolated examples to repeated patterns. For future research, English and Uzbek metaphor analysis should combine large electronic corpora with carefully selected media, literary, and educational texts. This will help reveal not only what metaphors exist in both languages, but also how they function pragmatically in real discourse.

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