

THE LINGUISTIC EXPRESSION OF METAPHORICAL THINKING IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *This article investigates the linguistic expression of metaphorical thinking in the Uzbek language from the perspective of modern cognitive linguistics and the linguocognitive approach. The study argues that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device used for artistic expression but also one of the fundamental cognitive mechanisms of human thought. Furthermore, it examines the conceptual structure of metaphorical expressions in Uzbek, their national and cultural characteristics, semantic and pragmatic potential, and their functional roles in discourse. The findings demonstrate that metaphorical thinking constitutes an important linguistic phenomenon reflecting the worldview, cultural values, and conceptual system of the Uzbek people.*

Keywords: *metaphor, metaphorical thinking, cognitive linguistics, concept, conceptual metaphor, linguocognitive analysis, semantics, pragmatics, Uzbek language, national mentality.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the anthropocentric paradigm has become one of the leading approaches in modern linguistics, placing particular emphasis on studying language in close connection with human cognition. As a result, metaphor is no longer viewed solely as a stylistic device but is increasingly interpreted as a cognitive mechanism through which people perceive, understand, and conceptualize reality.

The development of cognitive linguistics has provided new perspectives on the nature of metaphor. According to this approach, metaphor is an integral component of human cognition that enables individuals to comprehend abstract concepts through concrete and familiar experiences. Everyday communication, scientific reasoning, and cultural knowledge are largely organized through metaphorical models. The Uzbek language is exceptionally rich in metaphorical expressions that embody the historical experience, traditional way of life, customs, religious beliefs, and national values of the Uzbek people. Metaphors are widely employed in literary works, journalistic discourse, and everyday speech to enhance imagery, expressiveness, and aesthetic value. In the context of globalization, investigating the linguocognitive characteristics of metaphors in the Uzbek language is of considerable theoretical and practical significance. Metaphorical expressions

serve as important linguistic means for representing national mentality, conceptual structures, and cultural memory.

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to identify the linguistic characteristics of metaphorical thinking in the Uzbek language and to provide a scientific explanation of the cognitive, semantic, and pragmatic potential of metaphors.

Research Objectives

- to examine the theoretical foundations of metaphor and metaphorical thinking;
- to analyze the cognitive nature of metaphor;
- to identify the linguistic characteristics of metaphorical expressions in the Uzbek language;
- to describe the national and cultural foundations of metaphors;
- to evaluate the functional potential of metaphorical expressions in discourse.

Research Object

Metaphorical expressions in the modern Uzbek language.

Research Subject

The linguistic expression of metaphorical thinking in the Uzbek language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs descriptive, comparative-typological, semantic, componential, cognitive, conceptual, pragmatic, and contextual analysis methods. The research material consists of metaphorical expressions collected from Uzbek literary works, journalistic texts, folklore, and contemporary mass media.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF METAPHORICAL THINKING

Metaphor has long been regarded as one of the principal objects of linguistic research. While traditional linguistics interpreted metaphor as the figurative use of words, modern cognitive linguistics considers it a conceptual mechanism underlying human thought. Metaphorical thinking enables people to understand abstract concepts through concrete experiences.

For example, Uzbek metaphorical expressions such as **“Time is more precious than gold,” “Life is a journey,” “Knowledge is light,”** and **“The mirror of the soul”** illustrate the conceptual models through which individuals structure and interpret reality. Metaphors are inseparably connected with national culture and reflect the worldview, historical experience, and values of a particular people. In the Uzbek language, metaphorical expressions embody such national values as diligence, hospitality, kindness, patience, perseverance, and humanism. Thus, metaphor should be regarded not only as an artistic and aesthetic device but also as a significant linguistic phenomenon that shapes human cognition and represents the national conceptual worldview.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that metaphor in the Uzbek language is not only a means of artistic representation but also an important cognitive mechanism that shapes

the conceptual system of human thought. Through metaphorical expressions, perceptions of the world, nature, society, and human beings are represented figuratively, revealing the ways in which language users perceive and evaluate reality. In this regard, metaphor is a significant linguistic phenomenon that highlights the inseparable relationship between language and cognition. The analysis reveals that metaphors in the Uzbek language are closely connected with the historical experience, national values, traditions, culture, and mentality of the Uzbek people. They play an important role in shaping the conceptual worldview of the nation, expressing cultural values, and transmitting them from one generation to another. The extensive use of metaphors in literary works, folklore, journalistic texts, and everyday communication confirms their high communicative and aesthetic potential.

The results of the cognitive analysis demonstrate that metaphorical thinking is structured through conceptual metaphors. Human beings comprehend and express abstract concepts through images associated with concrete experiences and everyday life. Therefore, conceptual metaphors such as **“life is a journey,” “knowledge is light,”** and **“time is wealth”** occupy an important place in the semantic system of the Uzbek language and reflect the distinctive features of national thinking. Furthermore, the study reveals that the semantic and pragmatic potential of metaphors varies depending on the context of use, communicative purpose, and speech situation. Metaphorical expressions perform important functions such as enhancing the expressiveness of speech, presenting complex concepts in a simple and figurative manner, conveying evaluation, and strengthening emotional attitudes.

The findings of this research confirm that the study of metaphorical thinking in the Uzbek language from linguocognitive and linguocultural perspectives contributes to a deeper understanding of the national identity, conceptual system, and cultural memory embedded in the language. The theoretical conclusions of the study enrich research in cognitive linguistics, semantics, and linguoculturology, while the practical implications can be effectively applied in Uzbek language teaching methodology, translation studies, text analysis, and speech culture. Future research may focus on the corpus-based statistical analysis of metaphors in the Uzbek language, comparative studies of metaphorical models across Turkic languages, and the application of artificial intelligence technologies for the automatic identification and semantic classification of metaphorical expressions. These directions represent promising areas for further investigation in this field.

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