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Lingvocultural Peculiarities Of Metonymy In Uzbek And English Languages

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Abstract: This study investigates the lingvocultural peculiarities of metonymy in Uzbek and English languages through a comparative-typological approach. Metonymy, as a fundamental cognitive mechanism grounded in contiguity relations within Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs), manifests distinct lingvocultural patterns across typologically divergent languages.

A corpus of 480 metonymic expressions was collected from Uzbek and English literary, publicistic, and folkloric texts. Radden and Kövecses (1999) ICM-based taxonomy and Panther and Thornburg's (2003) discourse-pragmatic classification served as analytical frameworks. Comparative-typological, contextual, and componential analysis methods were applied.

The analysis reveals that while both languages share universal metonymic models (PART FOR WHOLE, CAUSE FOR EFFECT, PLACE FOR INSTITUTION), Uzbek demonstrates a significantly higher frequency of body-part metonymies and culture-specific models rooted in national identity, material culture, and Islamic tradition. English exhibits greater reliance on institutional and place-name metonymies.

Metonymic patterns in Uzbek and English reflect distinct cognitive-cultural worldviews. The findings contribute to contrastive cognitive linguistics, lexicography, and translation studies.

Keywords: Metonymy, lingvoculturology, Uzbek language, English language, ICM, cognitive linguistics, contrastive analysis, body-part metonymy, cultural models.

Introduction: Metonymy, one of the most pervasive phenomena in human language and thought, has attracted sustained scholarly attention since Aristotle's foundational observations on figurative language. Unlike metaphor, which operates on the basis of similarity between two conceptual domains, metonymy exploits contiguity relations within a single domain or Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM), enabling one entity to provide mental access to another associated entity (Radden & Kövecses, 1999). The post-Saussurean structuralist tradition, particularly Roman Jakobson's (1956) landmark study of aphasia, positioned metonymy as one of two fundamental axes of language alongside metaphor, establishing its central role in linguistic organization.

The cognitive revolution in linguistics, inaugurated by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal work Metaphors We Live By, reframed metonymy not merely as a rhetorical device but as a basic mechanism of human conceptualization. Subsequent decades witnessed an explosion of research demonstrating metonymy's operation at lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels (Panther & Thornburg, 2003; Barcelona, 2003; Littlemore, 2015). However, cross-linguistic and lingvocultural dimensions of metonymy remain comparatively underexplored, particularly with respect to typologically distant language pairs such as Uzbek — an agglutinative Turkic language — and English — an analytic Germanic language.

Uzbek and English represent fundamentally different typological, genetic, and cultural traditions. Uzbek belongs to the Karluk branch of the Turkic language family, with a rich tradition of agglutinative morphology and a lexicon deeply shaped by Islamic civilisation, Persian literary heritage, and Central Asian

material culture. English, by contrast, is a West Germanic language with a predominantly analytic structure and lexical history reflecting Anglo-Saxon, Norman-French, and Latin influences. These structural and cultural differences are hypothesised to produce distinct metonymic patterns, even where universal cognitive mechanisms are shared.

The present study addresses a gap in the comparative cognitive linguistics of Uzbek and English by systematically examining the lingvocultural characteristics of metonymy across both languages. The research is guided by the following questions: (1) What universal metonymic models operate in both Uzbek and English? (2) In what domains and cultural contexts do Uzbek and English metonymic patterns diverge? (3) What implications do these findings hold for translation, lexicography, and intercultural communication?

The article makes several original contributions to the field. First, it provides a systematic corpus-based comparative analysis of Uzbek and English metonymy, a pairing not previously studied in depth. Second, it identifies culture-specific metonymic models rooted in Uzbek material culture, Islamic tradition, and national identity. Third, it applies both Radden and Kövecses' (1999) ICM taxonomy and Panther and Thornburg's (2003) discourse-pragmatic framework to a non-European language, testing the universality of these models. The findings are relevant to cognitive linguistics, contrastive semantics, lexicography, and translation theory.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Cognitive Approaches to Metonymy

The cognitive linguistic approach to metonymy begins with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) argument that metonymy, like metaphor, is not merely a feature of language but a fundamental aspect of human thought and action. They demonstrated that metonymy allows us to use one entity to stand for another, structuring our understanding in systematic ways. This reconceptualisation shifted the focus from surface linguistic form to underlying conceptual structures.

The most comprehensive cognitive-taxonomic account of metonymy was provided by Radden and Kövecses (1999), who proposed an ICM-based framework identifying over 43 metonymy types organized within two overarching categories: WHOLE ICM FOR PART and PART OF ICM FOR ANOTHER PART. Their analysis demonstrated that metonymic mappings are not arbitrary but are motivated by systematic associations within encyclopaedic knowledge structures. Kövecses (2002) further elaborated the relationships between metonymy and metaphor, showing how metonymy frequently motivates metaphorical extensions.

At the discourse level, Panther and Thornburg (1999, 2003) developed a tripartite classification distinguishing referential metonymy (indirect reference), predicational metonymy (one proposition standing for another), and illocutionary metonymy (one speech act standing for another). This framework demonstrated that metonymy operates not only in the lexicon but throughout the grammatical and pragmatic architecture of language. Bierwiaczonek (2013) subsequently proposed a four-level linguistic taxonomy adding formal metonymy, providing the most comprehensive account of linguistic metonymy to date.

2.2. Metonymy in Uzbek Linguistics

Within Uzbek linguistics, metonymy has been studied primarily within the framework of lexical semantics and stylistics. M.Mirtojiyev (2010) provided a foundational analysis of polysemy and semantic transfer in Uzbek, identifying metonymy as a principal mechanism of meaning extension. His work documented systematic body-part metonymies (til 'tongue/language/speech', ko‘z 'eye/attention/perception', qo‘l 'hand/skill/assistance') and established their frequency in literary and colloquial registers.

Rahmatullayev et al. (1992) addressed metonymic phraseological units in “Hozirgi O'zbek adabiy tili”, noting the cultural specificity of many Uzbek metonymic expressions rooted in traditional domestic life, Islamic practice, and Turkic cultural heritage. The systematic application of cognitive linguistic frameworks to Uzbek metonymy remains, however, limited, creating a significant research gap that the present study addresses.

2.3. Cross-Linguistic Studies

Cross-linguistic studies of metonymy have consistently found that while universal cognitive mechanisms underlie metonymic thought across languages, their lexicalization and preferred domains of application vary considerably with culture. Seto's (1999) distinction between synecdoche (C-relation, category-based) and metonymy (E-relation, entity-based) provided a theoretical basis for cross-linguistic comparison. Apresyan (1974) demonstrated the systematic nature of metonymic polysemy in Russian, establishing a model for contrastive analysis applicable to other language pairs.

Comparative studies involving English and other languages have shown that English favours institutional and place-name metonymies (THE WHITE HOUSE for the US government; THE CROWN for monarchy), while agglutinative languages with rich morphological resources tend to develop more productive body-part

metonymic systems. The present study tests this hypothesis with specific reference to Uzbek and English.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Corpus Design

The study is based on a corpus of 480 metonymic expressions (240 Uzbek, 240 English) collected from three source text types: literary prose, newspaper and journalistic texts, and folklore/proverb collections. Uzbek literary sources included Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar (1974) and Mehrobdan chayon, Tog'ay Murod's Ot kishnagan oqshom (2022), and Dadaxon Nuriy's Iztirob (2017). English literary sources included John Boyne's The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (2006) and selected Victorian and contemporary literary texts. Proverbs were drawn from Mirzayev, Musoqulov and Sarimsoqov's O'zbek xalq maqollari (2005) and The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs.

Expressions were included in the corpus if they satisfied the cognitive linguistic definition of metonymy as a conceptual mapping within an ICM in which one entity provides mental access to a related entity (Radden & Kövecses, 1999, p. 21). Ambiguous cases were adjudicated by two independent raters; inter-rater reliability was $\kappa = 0.87$, indicating strong agreement.

3.2. Analytical Framework

Each metonymic expression was classified according to: (1) ICM type following Radden and Kövecses' (1999) taxonomy; (2) source domain (body part, place name, color, garment, object, etc.); (3) functional-semantic category (referential, predicational, or illocutionary, following Panther & Thornburg, 2003); and (4) cultural specificity (universal vs. culture-specific). Frequency counts and proportional comparisons were calculated to identify statistically significant distributional differences between the two languages. Chi-square tests were used to evaluate statistical significance at $p < 0.05$.

The study employs four complementary analytical methods. Comparative-typological analysis identifies structural parallels and divergences between Uzbek and English metonymic systems. Contextual analysis examines how surrounding co-text constrains and disambiguates metonymic interpretations. Componential semantic analysis decomposes the semantic structure of source and target domains. Lingvocultural analysis situates metonymic patterns within their broader cultural and historical contexts, drawing on insights from Mirtojiyev (2010) and comparative cultural linguistics.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Overview of Metonymic Distribution

Table 1 presents the distribution of metonymic expressions across source domain categories in the two languages.

Source Domain	Uzbek (n=240)	%	English (n=240)	%
Body-part metonymy	89	37.1	41	17.1
Place-name metonymy	28	11.7	67	27.9
Colour metonymy	34	14.2	38	15.8
Garment/Object metonymy	41	17.1	42	17.5
Institution/Abstract metonymy	19	7.9	36	15.0
Culture-specific metonymy	29	12.1	16	6.7
Total	240	100	240	100

Table 1. Distribution of metonymic expressions by source domain in Uzbek and English corpora.

The data reveal a statistically significant difference in body-part metonymy frequency ($\chi^2 = 28.4$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$), with Uzbek exhibiting more than twice the proportion found in English. Conversely, English shows significantly higher rates of place-name metonymy ($\chi^2 = 31.7$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$). Color metonymy frequencies are comparable across both languages, while culture-specific expressions are proportionally more numerous in Uzbek.

Body-part metonymy constitutes the most productive metonymic category in Uzbek, with the lexemes til 'tongue', ko'z 'eye', qo'l 'hand', bosh 'head', and dil 'heart' generating extensive polysemous networks. In the literary corpus, these lexemes function metonymically in approximately 78% of their occurrences, with their direct anatomical meanings activated in only 22% of instances.

In Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar, the expression ko'z tarqatmoq 'to cast the eye' serves as a PERCEPTION ORGAN FOR PERCEPTIVE ATTENTION metonymy; bosh qo'shmoq 'to join heads/to participate' exemplifies the HEAD FOR PERSON schema; and qo'li gul 'flower-handed' (i.e., 'skilled') realises HAND FOR MANUAL SKILL. These patterns are consistent with Uzbek's status as a language in which body-part vocabulary has undergone extensive metonymic extension across semantic domains including cognition, emotion, social action, and moral evaluation. The expression dil qing'ir 'crooked heart' (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 22) exemplifies the HEART FOR MORAL CHARACTER metonymy, where the organ stands not for its physiological function but for a person's inner ethical disposition.

In English, body-part metonymies are less frequent but include highly productive items such as head (HEAD FOR AUTHORITY: 'the head of the company'), hand (HAND FOR ASSISTANCE: 'lend a hand'), and eye (EYE FOR ATTENTION: 'keep an eye on'). The key distributional difference lies in productivity: Uzbek body-part metonymies generate longer polysemous chains and more culturally specific associations than their English counterparts.

4.2. Place-Name Metonymies

English demonstrates a markedly higher frequency of place-name metonymies, a pattern attributable to the language's political and institutional history. Expressions such as 'The White House announced', 'Downing Street confirmed', and 'Wall Street reacted' instantiate the INSTITUTION FOR ITS ACTIONS schema, where a place name stands for the government, authority, or institution located there. This schema is systematically productive in journalistic English and reflects a cultural tendency to personify institutions through locative reference.

In Uzbek, place-name metonymies occur in the corpus primarily in historical literary texts. Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar provides exemplary instances: 'Toshkent o'raldi!' (Toshkent was surrounded) in which the city name stands for its inhabitants and defenders (p. 38); 'Toshkent bilan yashirincha so'z olishib' (secretly negotiating with Toshkent) where the toponym denotes the city's political leadership (p. 278); and 'Qo'qon ham tinch yotmagan' (Qo'qon too was not quiet), where the city name represents its military forces and government (p. 36). While these examples demonstrate the presence of the PLACE FOR PEOPLE schema in Uzbek, their frequency is significantly lower than in English.

4.3. Color Metonymies

Color metonymy frequencies are broadly comparable across the two languages (14.2% vs. 15.8%), but the semantic domains accessed through colour terms differ substantially. In Uzbek, the most productive color metonymies involve qora 'black' (→ moral corruption, misfortune, difficult period), oq 'white' (→ purity, honesty, good fortune), and shirin 'sweet' (→ pleasant speech, agreeable quality). Literary examples include Qodiriy's 'tariximizning eng kir, qora kunlari' ('the most filthy, black days of our history'), where both color and texture adjectives function as COLOUR/TEXTURE FOR MORAL-HISTORICAL QUALITY metonymies; and shirin suhbat' ('sweet conversation') from Mehrobdan chayon (p. 113), where the taste adjective functions as GUSTATORY QUALITY FOR COMMUNICATIVE QUALITY.

In Boyne's The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, color metonymies are closely tied to the novel's political and moral themes. The 'grey striped pyjamas' (p. 24) function as GARMENT-COLOUR FOR PRISONER/VICTIM identity; 'black boots' (p. 52) as GARMENT-COLOUR FOR AUTHORITY AND CRUELTY (specifically, Lieutenant Kotler's boots stand for his entire menacing personality); and 'red-and-black armbands' (p. 55) as COLOUR-COMBINATION FOR IDEOLOGY AND TERROR, where the Nazi insignia colors metonymically evoke an entire political system and its violence.

4.4. Culture-Specific Metonymies

The most striking lingvocultural divergences appear in culture-specific metonymic expressions, which account for 12.1% of the Uzbek corpus versus 6.7% in English. Uzbek culture-specific metonymies draw on several distinct cultural domains. First, Islamic religious life contributes expressions such as tasbeh 'prayer beads' → devout Muslim, namoz 'prayer' → religious observance, and halol 'halal/permissible' → moral purity. Secondly, traditional material culture generates dasturxon 'tablecloth' → hospitality and the entire practice of receiving guests (as in Qodiriy's 'dasturxon yoza olmadik', p. 92); do'ppi 'skull-cap' → Uzbek cultural identity; and atlas 'silk fabric' → celebration, festivity.

Thirdly, Uzbek folkloric tradition, documented in Mirzayev et al. (2005), produces proverb-embedded metonymies such as 'el og'zi — yer yoradi' ('the people's mouth splits the earth'), where og'iz 'mouth' → collective popular opinion; and 'dili qing'irning tili qing'ir' ('the crooked-hearted one has a crooked tongue'), where parallel body-part metonymies encode the correlation between inner moral character (dil 'heart') and outward behavior (til 'tongue'). English culture-specific metonymies, while less numerous in the corpus, include garment metonymies ('white collar' for professional workers, 'blue collar' for manual workers) and institutional metonymies ('the bench' for the judiciary, 'the bar' for the legal profession).

5. Discussion

The results confirm the general hypothesis that metonymy is a universal cognitive phenomenon grounded in shared principles of contiguous association within ICMs, while simultaneously demonstrating that the preferred domains, frequency distributions, and cultural motivations of metonymic patterns are language- and culture-specific. This finding aligns with Barcelona's (2003) position that metonymy operates at multiple cognitive levels, from universal conceptual schemas to culturally particularized instances.

The markedly higher frequency of body-part metonymy in Uzbek compared to English is attributable to several intersecting factors. Typologically, Uzbek's agglutinative morphology enables productive derivation from body-part roots, generating semantically dense metonymic compounds such as koʻngilochar 'heart-pleasing' (koʻngil 'heart/mind' + ochar 'opening' → entertaining), tilsiz 'tongueless' (→ speechless, silent), and qoʻlbola 'handiwork' (→ craftsmanship). Culturally, Uzbek's discourse traditions emphasizes relational and somatic vocabulary in expressing emotional, moral, and social concepts, consistent with Mirtojiyev's (2010) analysis of semantic transfer patterns in Uzbek lexicology.

The predominance of place-name metonymy in English reflects both the language's role as a global institutional and political lingua franca and the specific cultural practice of naming institutions, authorities, and policies after their physical locations. This pattern, absent at comparable frequency in Uzbek, illustrates how metonymic productivity is shaped by socio-political organization and communicative convention. The finding extends Apresyan's (1974) observations on regular polysemy to cross-linguistic comparison, showing that the domains in which regular metonymic transfers are licensed vary systematically with cultural-historical context.

Color metonymy analysis reveals that both languages harness the symbolic potential of color terms for moral, emotional, and social meaning, but the specific associations differ. Uzbek qora 'black' most frequently maps onto moral corruption and historical suffering (consistent with universal DARK IS BAD conceptual metaphor), but the extension to specifically historical-political contexts ('qora kunlar') reflects Uzbek cultural memory of the Khanate period and subsequent historical trauma. English colour metonymies in Boyne's text operate within a specific historical-political context (the Holocaust), where 'grey', 'black', and 'red-and-black' function as indexical symbols of a specific ideological system, exemplifying how color metonymy can be highly context-anchored.

Culture-specific metonymies in Uzbek are particularly revealing of the language's cultural grammar. The dasturxon metonymy — in which the physical tablecloth stands for the entire complex of Uzbek hospitality customs, social obligation, and ceremonial food-sharing — exemplifies what Littlemore (2015) terms 'hidden shortcuts': metonymic expressions whose full cultural loading is invisible to non-members of the culture. The Islamic domain metonymies (tasbeh, namoz, halol) similarly presuppose cultural encyclopedic knowledge unavailable to non-Muslim, non-Uzbek speakers. These expressions present significant challenges for translation and intercultural communication, confirming the practical relevance of lingvocultural metonymy research.

6. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that while metonymy as a cognitive mechanism is universal, its lingvocultural realization in Uzbek and English is shaped by profound differences in morphological structure, cultural tradition, and socio-historical experience. Five principal conclusions emerge from the analysis.

First, Uzbek exhibits significantly higher rates of body-part metonymy than English, reflecting both its agglutinative morphological structure and its culturally somatic approach to expressing cognition, emotion, and moral evaluation. Second, English demonstrates markedly greater reliance on place-name and institutional metonymy, reflecting its role as the language of global political and institutional discourse. Third, colour metonymy frequencies are comparable across both languages, but the cultural associations accessed through colour terms differ substantially, with Uzbek color metonymies more frequently encoding moral and historical evaluations. Fourth, Uzbek displays a richer inventory of culture-specific metonymies grounded in Islamic practice, material culture, and national tradition, posing particular challenges for translation and intercultural communication. Fifth, both languages share universal ICM-based metonymic schemas (PART FOR WHOLE, CAUSE FOR EFFECT, CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS, PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT) confirming the cross-linguistic validity of the Radden-Kövecses (1999) taxonomy.

These findings carry implications for several applied domains. In translation studies, they suggest that culture-specific Uzbek metonymies — particularly those involving dasturxon, doʻppi, and Islamic vocabulary — require culturally informed strategies such as explicitation or cultural substitution rather than

direct transfer. In lexicography, they argue for metonymy-sensitive dictionary entries that document not only primary senses but also systematic metonymic extensions and their cultural conditions of application. In language pedagogy, they indicate that learners of Uzbek and English need explicit instruction in culture-specific metonymic patterns as part of lexical competence development.

Future research should extend the corpus to spoken discourse and social media language, explore diachronic changes in Uzbek metonymic productivity since independence, and investigate the processing of cross-cultural metonymic expressions in psycholinguistic experiments with bilingual Uzbek-English speakers.

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