

Conceptual Metaphors in English And Karakalpak Literary Language

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Abstract: This article explores the essence, development, and functions of conceptual metaphor within modern linguistics and literature. The study highlights the role of metaphor not only as a stylistic device in language but also as a fundamental mechanism of human thinking and perception. The theoretical views of G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, M. Black and other scholars are discussed in relation to metaphor formation and modeling. The practical part of the paper analyzes conceptual metaphors in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" and in the works of Karakalpak writer T. Kayipbergenov "Baxitsizlar", comparing metaphorical imagery in English and Karakalpak literature. Examples demonstrate how metaphors reflect emotional experience, worldview, national identity, and spiritual transformation of characters.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, metaphorical model, metaphorical domain.

Introduction: "Cognitive science is a discipline that studies the representation and storage of knowledge within the framework of understanding, perceiving, categorizing, and evaluating the world," as noted by the Russian linguist E. S. Kubryakova [7, p. 245]. On this basis, metaphor plays a central role within this field as a manifestation of the similar capacities of human consciousness and cognition. Through metaphor, individuals convey their thoughts and make use of its aesthetic potential; they think by means of metaphor and explore the world they create. Thus, owing to its emotional-evaluative capacity and aesthetic character, metaphor enables the reinterpretation of phenomena that are familiar to us by introducing them into new conceptual categories.

In traditional linguistics, metaphor has been understood primarily as a mechanism of semantic transfer or as a nominative (naming) device. However, in modern linguistics, metaphor is regarded not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a process that emerges at the subconscious level and within human cognitive activity. In this regard, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson argue that "our everyday conceptual system, in terms of how we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical" [4, p. 256]. Accordingly, cognitive

metaphor serves as the basis for the emergence of linguistic metaphor. Cognitive metaphor may be defined as a mental mechanism by which a particular concept is understood through other conceptual domains that already exist in human experience. In other words, cognitive metaphor is understood as a means of comprehending or interpreting an unfamiliar concept by comparing it with another concept that is similar in certain respects and grounded in prior experience [5, p. 13–22].

METHOD

Different scholars use various terms to refer to cognitive metaphor, such as "cognitive metaphor" (K. D. Arutyunova), "conceptual metaphor" (V. N. Telia, E. O. Oparina), "basic metaphor", "image schema" (G. Lakoff, M. Johnson), "metaphorical model" (A. N. Baranov, Yu. N. Karaulov, A. N. Chudinov, N. A. Ilyukhina), "metaphorical field" (G. N. Sklyarevskaya), "figurative paradigm" (N. V. Pavlovich), and "associative-figurative lexico-semantic field" (E. A. Yurina) [1, p. 63].

In *Models and Metaphors*, M. Black interprets metaphor as a linguo-creative process in which new meaning emerges through interaction between words, that is, through the interaction of focus and frame

within a given context [3, p. 153]. In contrast, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson define metaphors as models of thinking and cognitive tools through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of concrete and clearly defined entities [4, p. 256]. Moreover, within their theoretical framework, these scholars argue that metaphorization is based on the interaction between two knowledge structures: the source domain and the target domain. Consequently, the cognitive typology of the source domain largely determines the mode of conceptualization of the target domain, serving as a fundamental mechanism for decision-making and human action [2, p. 155].

In modern linguistics, the scope of metaphor usage and its functional characteristics are of particular significance, as they differ substantially from those of traditional metaphor. Thus, metaphor is no longer regarded merely as a means of creating aesthetic meaning in language, but rather as one of the fundamental mechanisms of human cognition. In literary discourse, metaphor is widely employed as a tool for deepening textual meaning, figuratively representing emotions and situations, depicting human experience, and simultaneously expressing the author's worldview. Through metaphor, reality in literary texts is reinterpreted and represented through another layer of reality.

Conceptual metaphors are not purely linguistic devices; instead, they constitute cognitive structures closely connected with human consciousness and subconscious processes. The concept of conceptual metaphor was first introduced into scholarly discourse by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, who emphasized that metaphors structure human knowledge and conceptualization of the world. According to their view, metaphor plays a crucial role in shaping human understanding and experience.

In English literature, conceptual metaphors have been extensively used since early periods and are primarily employed to reveal characters' inner states, the ideological orientation of literary works, or the development of dramatic plots. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in Shakespeare's works, metaphor functioned as a central tool for creating dramatic imagery, where human life was conceptualized as a stage and individuals were portrayed as actors, thereby illustrating the relationship between society and the individual.

Conceptual metaphor consists of four core elements: the target domain, which represents the conceptual area being described through metaphor; the source domain, which provides the primary semantic basis for metaphorical mapping; the mapping process, which

establishes correspondences between the source and target domains; and the metaphorical outcome or inference, which emerges as a result of this mapping and is manifested in the reader's interpretation and emotional response [4, p. 242]. In contrast, Uzbek linguists S. Khojiev and D. Mirzaeva, in their study "The Nature and Types of Metaphor," identify three main elements of metaphor: the theme, the expressive means, and the basis of comparison, emphasizing a more structurally oriented approach to metaphor analysis.

The study employs a qualitative comparative research design grounded in the principles of cognitive linguistics. Conceptual metaphors were identified through close textual analysis of selected literary excerpts and classified according to source and target domains. The analysis focuses on metaphorical models that reflect psychological, cultural, and ideological meanings in English and Karakalpak literary discourse.

RESULTS

The analysis reveals that Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* contains a wide range of conceptual metaphor models. The findings indicate that the narrative is systematically structured around symbolic and metaphorical imagery, which plays a key role in conveying characters' psychological states and thematic meanings.

1. Her sin, her ignominy, were the roots which she had struck into the soil. It was as if a new birth, with stronger assimilations than the first, had converted the forest-land, still so uncongenial to every other pilgrim and wanderer, into Hester Prynne's wild and dreary, but life-long home [9,74].

The analysis demonstrates that one of the most prominent conceptual metaphors in *The Scarlet Letter* is constructed through the imagery of roots, soil, rebirth, and home. Hester Prynne's sin, shame, and social degradation are metaphorically represented as roots embedded in the soil. Although this experience initially appears as a painful process of learning and transformation, it ultimately becomes a form of rebirth that binds her to the forest landscape. Despite its wild and desolate nature, this space is conceptualized as Hester's lifelong home. This metaphorical model effectively conveys her spiritual transformation, acceptance of guilt, and integration with nature through lexical units such as root, soil, new birth, and life-long home.

Another significant conceptual metaphor is revealed through the character of Dimmesdale. In the episode described as

"With a convulsive motion, he tore away the ministerial

band from before his breast. It was revealed!" [9, p. 245],

the act of tearing away the band functions as a metaphor for confession and spiritual catharsis. The analysis shows that this metaphor symbolizes the disclosure of long-concealed guilt, leading to moral purification and psychological release. The physical gesture thus represents an internal transformation, where revelation becomes synonymous with redemption.

A central metaphorical model in the novel is further exemplified in the image of the chain:

"The chain that bound her here was of iron links, and galling to her inmost soul, but could never be broken" [9, p. 75].

This metaphor conceptualizes guilt and social condemnation as an unbreakable iron chain. The findings indicate that Hester's sin is not depicted merely as an internal burden but as a form of imprisonment imposed by society. Through this metaphor, the author represents moral suffering, enforced social attachment, and irreversible stigma.

Turning to Karakalpak literary texts, the results show that conceptual metaphors are widely employed, particularly in folk oral literature and epic traditions, where images of nature, heroism, and love serve as primary metaphorical domains. In twentieth-century Karakalpak literature, T. Kayipbergenov emerges as one of the most prominent writers who extensively uses metaphor to express national spirit, social realities, and the inner world of individuals. His metaphorical system is largely based on concepts of struggle, fate, time, and spiritual endurance, through which collective aspirations and moral values are artistically conveyed.

The analysis of Kayipbergenov's novel *Baxıtsızlar* reveals a dense network of conceptual metaphors with strong philosophical implications. Metaphorical expressions such as

"-Ómir, òmir degen jaqsı jasap òtiw, kisiler menen jarısıp at shabıw. "Ómir-duwpıyazlıq, òmir- tenteklik."

"Life, life means living well, racing alongside others as if riding a galloping horse. Life is rivalry; life is recklessness" (author's translation).

- Áne, jumbaq,- dedi Jaqsılıq ġarrı.-Ne derseń? Bul dúnyada jasaw barhá jumbaq sheshiw. Hár adam túwe álemniń ózi jumbaq. Awa, qozım. Oylan. Meniń barlıq ġápimdi saban deme, arasında jilt eter dānesi-ām bar. Saralap ala bilgeniń ózińe payda[8,44].

"There, a riddle," said the old man Jaqsılıq. "What do you think? Living in this world is nothing but solving riddles. Every person is a riddle of the entire universe. Oh, my child, think. Do not take all my words as mere

straw; among them there are grains that may shine. Being able to discern them will be to your benefit" (author's translation).

-Juwabıń kútá durıs, shabazım. Lekin, oylap otırsań biziń xalıq azdan kelip, sonsha shawkımlı!... Hayran qalasań! Haslında tek sayız dāryalar shuwıldap aġadı-aw! Eger meniń balamniń zamanında xalıq tereń dāryaġa aylanatuġınına kózim jetse, hāzir maqtanar edim. Tereń dārya ózińe mālím, tınısh aġadı" [8,290].

Your answer is almost correct, my brave one. Yet, if you think about it, our people came from very little and became so loud and restless. One cannot help but marvel at it. In truth, only shallow rivers make noise as they flow. If I were certain that in my child's time our people would become a deep river, I would already take pride in it. A deep river, as you know, flows quietly" (author's translation).

"Life is rivalry," "Life is recklessness," "Life is a riddle" illustrate how abstract concepts of existence, destiny, and national character are understood through concrete experiential domains. In particular, the metaphor of the river distinguishes between shallow, noisy waters and deep, silent currents, symbolizing superficial social activity versus profound collective wisdom. These findings confirm that in Karakalpak literature, conceptual metaphors primarily function as tools for representing historical experience, social life, and human psychology.

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis demonstrates the presence of both universal and culture-specific patterns in the use of conceptual metaphors. In English literary discourse, conceptual metaphors predominantly foreground individual psychological experience, inner conflict, and personal moral struggle, reflecting an inward-oriented mode of conceptualization. By contrast, Karakalpak literature places greater emphasis on collective identity, national mentality, and shared historical memory, revealing a community-centered worldview shaped by cultural and social experience.

Despite these differences, the findings confirm that conceptual metaphors in both literary traditions function as cognitive models that enable readers to comprehend abstract concepts through concrete, embodied experience. In this sense, metaphor operates not merely at the linguistic level, but also as a mechanism of thought that mediates cultural interpretation and meaning construction. Consequently, conceptual metaphor serves as a bridge between language, cognition, and culture, allowing literary texts to encode both individual and collective modes of understanding.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in the literary texts of both traditions, natural phenomena and elements of the physical world, human life, and lived experience serve as the primary source domains for the creation of metaphors. In the examples discussed above, English literature tends to conceptualize nature as a reflection of the human inner world and emotional state. In contrast, in Karakalpak literary discourse, metaphor functions as a poetic device for expressing national spirit, while in folk oral traditions it is employed to represent the people's worldview and way of life.

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