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A Comparative Cognitive Analysis of Emotional Metaphors in English And Uzbek

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Abstract: This article provides a cognitive-comparative analysis of conceptual metaphors in the English source text of George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984 and its Uzbek translation. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) pioneered by Lakoff and Johnson, the study examines how abstract emotion-related domains are mapped onto concrete source domains across both languages. By analyzing specific textual units, this paper demonstrates how universal cognitive models manifest through culturally distinct linguistic frameworks, revealing the strategies used by translators to preserve cognitive equivalence.

Keywords: Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor, Source Domain, Target Domain, Orwell, Uzbek Translation, Cross-Linguistic Mapping.

Introduction: Cognitive linguistics is a modern branch of linguistics that studies language in its inextricable connection with human consciousness, thought, and physical experience. It considers language not simply a set of formal rules, but a means of receiving, processing, and understanding information. In modern cognitive linguistics, metaphor is seen not only as a decorative stylistic device, but also as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that compares abstract concepts with concrete, physical experiences. Conceptual metaphor theory was founded by J. Lakoff and M. Johnson and is a central pillar of cognitive linguistics. A metaphor is not just figurative speech of language. It is a mechanism for understanding abstract (invisible) concepts using concrete and physical concepts known to us from our experience. According to the founders of cognitive linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson, authors of the book The Metaphor We Live By, human thought processes consist mainly of metaphors.

Conceptual metaphors allow us to understand abstract emotional states by comparing them to physical experiences, objects, and actions. Because emotions are internal and invisible, we rely on bodily sensations—heat, pressure, movement, and spatial relationships—to give them form.

The expression of emotions through conceptual metaphors in English and Uzbek has both universal (universal) and national-cultural (specific) characteristics. Since our biological bodies are the same, universal metaphors are similar, but because our cultures and worldviews are different, their linguistic expression differs.

Dystopian literature, particularly George Orwell's 1984, provides a rich basis for cognitive analysis. Orwell constructs a world in which abstract entities such as absolute totalitarian power, existential terror, and irrational hope constantly clash with human physiology. When translating such a text into a structurally and culturally specific language such as Uzbek, the translator is faced with the task of not only translating words but also successfully mapping cognitive domains. This article analyzes specific metaphorical expressions of emotion in 1984 and examines how these conceptual maps operate comparatively in English and Uzbek.

METHODOLOGY & DISCUSSION

The main and foundational rule of defining a conceptual metaphor is that it must structurally map a concrete domain of experience onto an abstract domain of experience. In cognitive linguistics, this rule is governed by a strict formula: {TARGET DOMAIN is SOURCE DOMAIN}.

This study analyzes some examples from the book “1984”:

I. Source text (ST):“Hatred would fill him like an enormous roaring

flame.”

Target text (TT): “Nafrat uni ulkan, guvullagan olov kabi to’ldiradi.”

Although the sentence takes the stylistic form of a simile, in this sentence the human brain can decode two basic, unconscious conceptual metaphors. This sentence is direct linguistic evidence of two major conceptual metaphors working together simultaneously:

A) EMOTION IS A FLUID/GAS IN A CONTAINER

The Mapping: THE BODY IS A CONTAINER → HATRED IS A SUBSTANCE

Evidence: The phrase (ST) “would fill him”, (TT) “uni to’ldiradi”

Cognitive Reality: The human body is conceptualized as an empty vessel. The abstract emotion (hatred) enters the body and takes up physical space, leaving no room for other feelings.

B) EMOTION IS FIRE

The Mapping: HATRED IS A ROARING FLAME

Evidence: The phrase (ST)“like an enormous roaring flame”, (TT) “ulkan, guvullagan olov kabi”

Cognitive Reality: Fire is hot, consumes everything in its path, produces noise (“roaring”, “guvullagan”), and is incredibly difficult to control once it spreads. By mapping fire onto hatred, the brain instantly understands that the character's hatred is destructive, highly intense, painful, and blinding.

II. ST: “...had filled him with black terror.”

TT: “...uning yuragiga qora qo’rquv kirdi.”

In this sentence, two conceptual metaphors are simultaneously operating in parallel:

A) THE BODY IS A CONTAINER

Evidence: "...had filled him..." (uni to‘ldirdi)

Cognitive reality: The human body is an empty vessel, and fear is liquid or gas that has completely taken over its interior. The person is passive in this situation (he is being filled).

B) EMOTION IS COLOUR

Evidence: "...black terror" (qora qo‘rquv).

Both texts share the exact color mapping FEAR IS BLACK (black terror / qora qo'rquv), which is rooted in a shared human evolutionary fear of darkness and danger. In Western and many cultures, black is a symbol of the absence of light, meaning despair, death, and the ultimate threat.

In the Uzbek translation, the human mind (cognition) has adapted the sentence to its own cultural model and changed its structure.In English, the whole BODY ("filled him") was a vessel. In Uzbek, the universal vessel of emotion is not the body, but the HEART. Fear does not fill the whole person, but "enters" his heart. In Uzbek cognition, fear is not just a liquid to be poured, but an object or being capable of movement. It independently steps inside the threshold of the heart. If the translator had translated it literally as “Bu uni qora qo’rquv bilan to’ldirdi,” it would have sounded unnatural due to the nature of the Uzbek language. The introduction of the concept of the heart made the translation cognitively perfect and suitable for the Uzbek reader.

III. ST: “His heart seemed to be frozen”

TT: “Uning yuragi go’yo sovib qolgandi”

These examples describe the emotional emptiness, the state of numbness, that results from anger and hatred (or deep sadness). Although the conceptual metaphors used in both languages have a single universal biological basis, their grammatical and lexical expression in the language reveals cultural differences.

General conceptual basis: EMOTION IS WARMTH.

Underlying both sentences are the conceptual metaphors “KINDNESS IS WARMTH” and its opposite “BEING SENSELESS IS COLDNESS". When a person loves someone or is excited, their body temperature rises, their blood flows faster (hot). In fear, hatred, or depression, their blood vessels constrict and their body cools. This biological truth has been translated into languages. In English cognition, the heart is not just

cold, it is “frozen”. Ice is a symbol of hardness, absolute immobility, and death. When a heart is frozen, it means that it has completely stopped beating (i.e., feeling), has turned to stone. In the Uzbek translation, the cognitive model is slightly softened and adapted to the nature of the Uzbek language. In Uzbek, it can be also said “muzlab qolgandi” but the expression “sovib qolgandi” has a very deep cultural meaning. In Uzbek culture, “ko’ngli sovidi” or “qalbi sovidi” means the end of a relationship, the fading of passion, and the emergence of indifference to those around the person.

IV. ST: “his heart sank”

TT: “ko’ngli cho’kadi”

Both expressions are rooted in the universal orientational metaphor HAPPY IS UP / SAD IS DOWN, which has a direct bodily basis (embodiment). When experiencing disappointment or sadness, human posture naturally drops. Both languages map this physical downward movement onto a psychological state. Despite the common conceptual root, the exact cognitive mappings differ in two critical ways: in English, the focus is on a physical, anatomical organ: THE HEART. In Uzbek, the focus shifts to a highly abstract, psycho-spiritual concept: KO’NGIL (soul/inner mind). While English uses physical anatomy to anchor the emotion, Uzbek prefers a philosophical locus.

V. ST:“His heart bounded violently”

TT: “yuragi qinidan chiqquday urardi”

Both expressions are rooted in the universal conceptual metaphor EMOTION IS PHYSIOLOGICAL REACTION (specifically, EMOTION IS AN INCREASED HEART RATE). When humans experience intense emotions (like terror or extreme joy), adrenaline causes the heart to beat faster and harder. Both English and Uzbek map this internal, uncontrollable bodily sensation onto language to describe the intensity of the emotion. While English maps the emotion onto the wild, vertical leaping motion of the heart inside the body, Uzbek anchors it in a deeply cultural, traditional image of a weapon trying to burst out of its sheath due to intense internal pressure. The Uzbek model provides a much higher sense of physical confinement and explosive tension than the English counterpart.

VI. ST: “Unreasonable hope persisted…”

TT: “…bema’no umid so’nmagandi”

Unlike the previous physiological examples, these two phrases use completely different source domains to conceptualize the persistence of hope. In English cognition, HOPE IS A LIVING ENTITY / SURVIVOR. The verb persist implies outlasting an obstacle, continuing to exist, or refusing to give up. English conceptualizes "hope" as an autonomous agent or creature that possesses its own will to live, staying alive even when logic ("unreasonable") dictates it should die. In Uzbek cognition, HOPE IS A LIGHT / FIRE (UMID — BU YORUG'LIK / OLOV).The verb “so’nmoq” strictly means to be extinguished, go out, or fade away (used for fire, candles, or light). Uzbek conceptualizes hope not just as a living entity, but specifically as a flickering flame or light source inside the character’s soul. The phrase “so’nmagandi” means that despite everything, a small spark of light remained in the darkness.

CONCLUSION

All the analyses considered above clearly demonstrate the most basic rules of the theory of conceptual metaphor and the system of interlingual thinking using the examples of English and Uzbek languages. The general conclusions drawn from them can be summarized in the following three important aspects:

1) In both languages, emotions (fear, sadness, excitement, hope) are perceived through the physical body and experience (embodiment). Biological responses such as changes in body temperature (freezing/cold), physical movement (sinking/slowing down), and increased heart rate serve as universal bases for expressing emotional states in the minds of both cultures.

2) Although the biological basis is the same, each language maps existence through its own cultural prism. While English is more likely to present an anatomical organ — “the Heart” — as a physical object, Uzbek is more likely to present a philosophical-spiritual concept — “Ko’ngil” — as its primary source. While in English, an emotion is often depicted as an independent living entity or physical force (for example, a force that jumps or survives on its own), in Uzbek it is more strongly associated with the environment, equipment, or elements of nature (fire/light, a knife in a sheath, a building).

3) The examples show that successful translation is not just about translating words, but about translating

conceptual metaphors. Only when abstract or physical images in the English text are adapted to the national-cultural codes of the Uzbek language they can evoke in the reader the same emotions felt by the hero.

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